

Faculty:
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Black Theologies

TH 3623
FALL 2017
Mondays, 2:00-4:50 PM
Schlegel Hall 120

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a team-taught course for students interested in the historical development and contemporary engagement of black and womanist theologies. Students will explore internal critiques within the fields of black and womanist theology and current dynamics within the disciplines.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Students from a variety of programs enroll in this course. The work of the course has been designed to contribute to the following program-specific Student Learning Outcomes:

MDIV

SLO 3: Students will be able to think theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs.

SLO 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect critically and self-critically on relationships between Christian faith and various forms of systemic injustice.

QEP-SLO 2: Can articulate own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.

MAR

SLO3: demonstrate an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary

SLO4: demonstrate the ability to think theologically, strategically, imaginatively, and contextually about ethical issues

MAMFT

SLO 3: Graduating students will be able to think ethically and make appropriate clinical ethical decisions.

To contribute to these Outcomes, students will:

1. Read and analyze academic texts in theology.

Thus, the course will rely on primary texts that serve as examples of theology done well.

2. Write papers that interpret academic texts, explain and compare positions, and construct their own theological arguments.

Thus, the course will include instruction on writing in a seminary setting, as well as assignments that require demonstration of these skills.

3. Internalize critical thinking skills and practice them in the presence of others and in conversation with texts.

Thus, the course will introduce conceptual frameworks for theology, both doctrinal and methodological.

4. Discuss and evaluate criteria for doing theology well.

Thus, the course will explore what it means to be accountable to a community—past, present, and future—in the work of theology.

5. Collaborate in order to advance a theological position through dialogue.

Thus, the course will both model and instruct students in the use of a diversity of views as a resource to improve the adequacy and comprehension of one's own position.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance and informed participation, including in discussion sections (10%)
2. Two 1-2 page book reviews. (10%)
3. Three 5-6 page papers (20%, 20%, 20%)

Prompts for these papers will be handed out in class. All papers are to be submitted to both instructors electronically by midnight of the day they are due.

Papers will be written following the conventions of academic writing.

We highly recommend that you take advantage of the services of the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Schlegel Hall, in preparing your written assignments for this course.

In unusual circumstances, requests for extensions may be made in advance. Late papers submitted without an extension will be penalized by loss of up to a grade (e.g. from B+ to B) for each day they are late.

3. Oral final examination in groups: claiming the wisdom and role of theologian (20%)
Questions will concentrate on articulation of the student's emerging theological and ethical understandings, in awareness of and conversation with diverse positions.
Preparatory questions will be distributed in advance. Times for the meetings will be arranged for the final week of the semester.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

1. James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001. ISBN: 1570751579
2. Brian Bantum, *Redeeming Mulatto: A Theology of Race and Christian Hybridity*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010. ISBN: 9781602582934
3. Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash: a Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2017. ISBN: 9780664239039
4. Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999. ISBN: 1570754427
5. M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780800662745.

CAMS TEXTS:

1. Rosetta E. Ross, "Black Theology and the History of U.S. Black Religions: Post Civil Rights Approaches to the Study of African American Religions." *Religion Compass*, 6:4, April 2012, p. 249-261.
2. National Committee of Negro Churchmen, "Black Power." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 19-26.
3. "The Black Manifesto." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 27-36,
4. National Committee of Negro Churchmen, "Black Theology." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 37-39.
5. William R. Jones, "Theodicy and Methodology in Black Theology: A Critique of Washington, Cone, and Cleage." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 141-154.
6. James Cone, "Epilogue: An Interpretation of the Debate among Black Theologians." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 425-440.
7. Victor Anderson, "Ontological Blackness in Theology." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 893-921.

8. William R. Jones, "Divine Racism: The Unacknowledged Threshold Issue for Black Theology." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 89-853
9. William R. Jones, "James Cone: God, Champion of the Oppressed." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 854-873.
10. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "Womanist Theology as a Corrective to African American Theology." In *The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology*. Eds. Katie G. Cannon and Anthony B. Pinn. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 267-279.
11. Delores S. Williams, "A Womanist Perspective on Sin." In *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Sin and Evil*. Ed. Emilie M. Townes. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993. Pp.130-149.
12. Cheryl A. Kirk Duggan, "Confronting and Exorcising Evil Through Song." In *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Sin and Evil*. Ed. Emilie M. Townes. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993. Pp.150-171.
13. [Jawanza Eric Clark, *Indigenous Black Theology: Toward an African-Centered Theology of the African-American Religious Experience* \(New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, pp 1-20; 127-168.](#)
14. [Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* \(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008\), pp. 101-124.](#)
15. [Joseph L. Tucker Edmonds, "Diasporic Dances: Theological Musings Betwixt and Between Blackness" in *Black Theology: An International Journal*, 1-15*.](#)
16. [Josiah Ulysses Young III, "Do Black Lives Matter to 'God'?" in *Black Theology: An International Journal*, Volume 13, 2015, Issue 3, pp. 210-218.](#)
17. [Stephen C. Finley and Biko Mandela Gray, "God Is a White Racist: Immanent Atheism as a Religious Response to Black Lives Matter and State-Sanctioned Anti-Black Violence," in *Journal of Africana Religions*, Volume 3. Number 4, 2015, pp. 443-453.](#)

LIBRARY RESERVES:

1. Katie G. Cannon and Anthony B. Pinn, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology*. Eds. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
2. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., eds. *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
3. James Cone, ed. *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993.
4. Emilie M. Townes, ed. *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Sin and Evil*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993.
5. James Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds. *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 2*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1992.

Other resources are available, as indicated, on CAMS or on the Web; other readings may be added during the course.

Please have available your own copy of these readings on the day they are discussed in class.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS:

Many of us are becoming increasingly addicted to our electronics such that we are unable to focus on other (more important) matters for a period of time. Thus, we ask that we create a time and space to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be silenced and/or turned off and put away. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask us for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session.

LPTS CLASSROOM POLICIES:

As with all LPTS classes, this course will honor these Seminary policies:

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information see:

<http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885>

Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see *The Code of Student Conduct*, 6.11; the *Student Handbook*, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two days of class (or, even better, before the class begins) and should speak with the instructors as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructors.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructors of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

9/11 Introductions

1. Rosetta E. Ross, "Black Theology and the History of U.S. Black Religions: Post Civil Rights Approaches to the Study of African American Religions. *Religion Compass*, 6:4, April 2012, p. 249-261.
2. National Committee of Negro Churchmen, "Black Power." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 19-26.
3. "The Black Manifesto." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 27-36,
4. National Committee of Negro Churchmen, "Black Theology." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 37-39.

9/18 James Cone, Black Theology and Black Power

9/25 Critiques and Rejoinders

1. William R. Jones, "Divine Racism: The Unacknowledged Threshold Issue for Black Theology." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 849-853
2. William R. Jones, "James Cone: God, Champion of the Oppressed." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 854-873.

~~1.3.~~ Victor Anderson, "Ontological Blackness in Theology." In *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*. Eds. Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pp. 893-921.

~~2.4.~~ James Cone, "Epilogue: An Interpretation of the Debate among Black Theologians." In *Black Theology: a Documentary History, Vol. 1*. Ed. James Cone. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993. Pp. 425-440.

10/2 Brian Bantum, Redeeming Mulatto, ch. 1-3
Guest: Brian Bantum

10/9 Brian Bantum, Redeeming Mulatto, ch. 4-6

10/23 Introduction to Womanism

1. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "Womanist Theology as a Corrective to African American Theology." In *The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology*. Eds. Katie G. Cannon and Anthony B. Pinn. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 267-279.
2. Delores S. Williams, "A Womanist Perspective on Sin." In *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Sin and Evil*. Ed. Emilie M. Townes. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993. Pp.130-149.
3. Cheryl A. Kirk Duggan, "Confronting and Exorcising Evil Through Song." In *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Sin and Evil*. Ed. Emilie M. Townes. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993. Pp.150-171.

10/30 Wilda Gafney, Womanist Midrash (pages to be determined)
Guest: Wilda Gafney

11/6 Kelly Brown Douglas, Sexuality and the Black Church

11/13 Contemporary Black and Womanist Theology
Guest: Keri Allen

1. Jawanza Eric Clark, *Indigenous Black Theology: Toward an African-Centered Theology of the African-American Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2012, pp 1-20; 127-168

2. Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), pp. 101-124

3. Joseph L. Tucker Edmonds, "Diasporic Dances: Theological Musings Betwixt and Between Blackness" in *Black Theology: An International Journal*, 1-15*

11/20 NO CLASS

11/27 M. Shawn Copeland, Enfleshing Freedom

12/4 Essays on Black Theology and Black Lives Matter

1. Josiah Ulysses Young III, "Do Black Lives Matter to 'God'?" in *Black Theology: An International Journal*, Volume 13, 2015, Issue 3, pp. 210-218.
2. Stephen C. Finley and Biko Mandela Gray, "God Is a White Racist: Immanent Atheism as a Religious Response to Black Lives Matter and State-Sanctioned Anti-Black Violence," in *Journal of Africana Religions*, Volume 3. Number 4, 2015, pp. 443-453.
3. Rev. Osagyefo Sekou, "An Open Letter to Black Clergy on the Disdain for Protest," *Religion Dispatches*, December 18, 2015.
<http://religiondispatches.org/finding-our-way-to-the-altar-of-activism-an-open-letter-to-black-clergy/>
4. Rahiel Tesfamariam, "Why the modern civil rights movement keeps religious leaders at arm's length," *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2015
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-black-activism-lost-its-religion/2015/09/18/2f56fc00-5d6b-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html?utm_campaign=buffer&utm_content=buffer7908e&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_term=.dc886d1d2a83
5. Broderick Greer, "Black Joy is Black Resistance," *Huffington Post*, June 12, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/broderick-greer/joy-and-resistance_b_7558616.html
6. Hebah H. Farrag, "The Role of Spirit in the #BlackLivesMatter Movement: A Conversation with Activist and Artist Patrisse Cullors," *Religion Dispatches*, June 24, 2015. <http://religiondispatches.org/page/3/?s=black+lives+matter>

Times for the oral Final Examination will be arranged for the final week of the semester.

