

**Ethnic Studies 188/Urban Studies & Planning 132**  
**African Americans, Religion, and The City**  
**Winter 2013**  
**Cognitive Sciences Building 004**  
**Tu&Th 9:30-10:50am**

**Prof. Gabriel N. Mendes**

**Office:** Social Science Building 229 (next to RIMAC)

**Mailbox:** Department of Ethnic Studies, Social Science Building 201

E-mail is the best way to contact me: [gmendes@ucsd.edu](mailto:gmendes@ucsd.edu)

\*Please write "188/132" in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder.

**Office Phone:** 858-822-5118

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1:30-3:00pm & Thursday 12-1:30pm, **by appointment**

**Course Description**

“The history of African Americans is in large part a religious history.”

Wallace D. Best

This course examines the development of an urban African American religious tradition emerging from the Great Migration of the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet we begin with the history of African chattel slavery’s impact on the religion of Black people in America and end with your own explorations of the role of religion in lives of contemporary Black American communities. Structured thematically and historically, this class explores the impact of migration and urbanization upon African American culture and the religious identity of Black people. Through reading both primary and secondary sources students will learn to analyze and interpret religious texts, beliefs, and practices using standard scholarly methods and tools. Each student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understandings and practices of African American religious traditions in America.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the intersections between black urban religion(s) and selected contemporary issues, including race, gender, sexuality, and economic inequality.

**Logistics**

You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during the quarter. I respond to students’ emails by 10am every weekday; I do not answer students’ emails on weekends.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class or by email.

**Computers of any type are not allowed in this class.**

**ADA Statement:** If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, **you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs.** I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you need to notify me in writing within one week of receiving it.

**Policy on Late Papers and Make-up Assignments:** Excepting emergencies, I do not allow late papers and do not allow make-up assignments. You have the syllabus well enough in advance to know what is due and when.

**Primary Ground Rules:** (a) The number one ground rule to which we will all adhere is to engage in respectful and considerate debate and discussion in the classroom. You will be expected to approach this course with a patient, open mind, ready to absorb new facts and new ideas about topics that are, by their nature, subjects of controversy and disagreement. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourselves and raise critical questions based upon a thorough survey of the evidence before you. Please take note that abusive and harsh language will not be tolerated in this classroom. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www-vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

(b) Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This means plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty such as producing assignments for others. Please become familiar with the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/app2.htm>). Any academic work that you submit in this course, which violates the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship will automatically receive an “F” for the assignment and may result in you failing the course.

**Other Ground Rules:** All phones and portable electronic devices (PDA/ Smartphones/ iPads/etc.) must be turned off and may not leave your bag in the classroom. With the exception of students with a documented need for accommodation, laptop computers cannot be used in lecture or section. Students with permission to take notes on their laptops must mute all sounds, disable their wireless connections, and sit in the front row of class. For all cases of students texting/facebooking/instant messaging, I have a zero tolerance policy: you will promptly be asked to leave class and your participation/attendance grade will drop 5 points. The same goes for students who are sleeping or reading. Rest assured, I will notice. You are not invisible and not anonymous in my classroom.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

(Available at the UCSD Bookstore)

James Baldwin, Go Tell It on the Mountain (ISBN 0385334575)

Samuel Freedman, Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church (ISBN 0060924594)

Selected chapters and journal articles will be placed on electronic reserve (<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/reserves.html>)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*Attendance, Participation, Reading:*

1. I expect each student to attend all class sessions—there are only 20 of them. You may miss **two class sessions**, no questions asked. **But if you have more than those two unexcused absences you will fail the course.**

2. Since each regular class session will consist of a lecture and discussion it is vital that you keep up with the reading so that you can contribute to the class. You should expect to spend **at least five hours per week on the assigned readings**. (There are 168 hours in a week.)
3. **Please also begin reading the Baldwin and Freedman books immediately, so you'll be finished by weeks 4 and 9.**

Please feel free see me to discuss strategies for productive reading for the course.

*Two Pop Quizzes:* At two points in the course I will administer a short quiz consisting of five short identification/definition questions. They will be profoundly basic—meaning that if you've come to class and cracked the books open you'll do fine. Your response only needs to be one or two sentences.

*Midterm:* This exam will be a pretty standard test consisting of several identifications and an essay question, for which you'll have a choice between two prompts.

*Take Home Final Exam:* This exam will consist of two brief essays (approximately 3 pgs. Double-spaced, typewritten) derived from three possible prompts.

*Final Presentation/Poster:* In groups of five students, you will identify a research question about a specific aspect of religion in the life of contemporary Black American communities. You will then collaborate on constructing a poster on your topic to present to your classmates and share in class during the last week of the quarter. You will be evaluated as a group so it is imperative that you maintain consistent contact with your fellow group members. Each group will meet with me just after the midterm to discuss its topic. More details will follow throughout the quarter.

### **Grade Distribution**

Attendance and Participation:	15% (more than 2 absences will result in a failing grade)
Pop Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Final Presentation/Poster	20%

### **General Grading Standards:**

A = **Superior** performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates exceptional execution of those requirements (meaning that your work exceeds the ordinary effort and execution); reflects outstanding insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically excellent; would be considered a model example of assignment completion.

B = **Good**, solid performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates competent execution of those requirements; reflects insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically strong; may have one or more problem areas.

C = **Average** performance; meets assignment requirements, minimally; grammatically and stylistically adequate; may have two or more problem areas; papers have more than two factual, typographical, or grammatical errors per page.

D = **Below average** performance; does not meet minimal assignment requirements; has several fundamental problem areas; has several errors throughout the paper.

F = **Inferior** performance; does not meet assignment requirements; not deserving of credit.

**\*\*\*If you are taking this course P/NP, you must take the quizzes, take the midterm, and submit a final paper, attend class and participate in order to get a passing grade\*\*\***

Obviously the same goes for those enrolled for a letter grade.

### **Schedule**

*\*All readings for the date listed must be completed prior to the Tuesday session of each week. Schedule of reading is subject to change.*

#### **Week 1 (Jan 8<sup>th</sup>)—Origins of African American Religion(s)**

*Course Introduction and Overview*

Albert Raboteau, "Religion, Rebellion, and Docility," *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, 290-318.

William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," *Souls of Black Folk*, 28-33.

#### **Week 2 (Jan 15<sup>th</sup>)—Of Our Spiritual Strivings: The Black Church and the Meaning of Freedom**

Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African-American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Public Culture* 7 (Fall 1994),

W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," *Souls of Black Folk*.

#### **Week 3 (Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>)—Bound for the Promised Land: The Great Migration**

Eric Arnesen, "Introduction: 'The Great American Protest,'" in *Black Protest and the Great Migration*, 1-37.

Beryl Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality," *American Quarterly* 48.1 (1996), 43-76.

Strongly Recommended: St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, "The Power of Press and Pulpit," in *Black Metropolis*, 412-429

#### **Week 4 and 5 (Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> and Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>)**

James Baldwin, *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (Entirety)

<b>MIDTERM EXAM, TUESDAY FEB. 12<sup>h</sup></b>
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#### **Week 6 and 7 (Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>/Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>)—The Black Church and the Civil Rights Movement I**

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Melani McAlister, "One Black Allah: The Middle East in the Cultural Politics of African American Liberation, 1955-1970," *American Quarterly* 51.3 (1999) 622-656.

#### **Week 8—Black Power/Black Theology (Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>)**

Angela D. Dillard, "Religion and Radicalism: The Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr. and the Rise of Black Christian Nationalism in Detroit," in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*, 153-175.

**Week 9 (March 5<sup>th</sup>) —The Black Church and the Urban Challenge: A Case Study**

Read Entirety of Freedman, *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church* (very readable journalistic account of Rev. Johnny Ray Youngblood's St. Paul Community Baptist Church in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn.)

Cathy Cohen, "Willing to Serve, but Not to Lead," in *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago, 1999), 250-92.

**Week 10 (March 12<sup>th</sup>)—Group Presentations on the Role of Religion in Contemporary Black America**

<b>*FINAL EXAM DUE BY TUESDAY, MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 5 PM</b>
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