

Ethnic Studies 188/Urban Studies & Planning 132
African Americans, Religion, and The City
Winter 2017
Centre 201
M,W,F 4:00-4:50pm

Instructor: R. Xach Williams

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*Please write "ETHN 188 or USP132" in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder.

Office Hours: Fridays 12:00-2:00pm and **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 that emerges from the Great Migration of early to mid-20th century. We will begin with the history of African chattel slavery's impact on the religious practices of Black people in the United States in order to give contexts to the role of religion in the formation of urban Black communities across the US. Structured historically and thematically, this class explores the impact of migration and urbanization upon African American culture and the religious identities of Black people. Through reading both primary and secondary source materials, students will learn to analyze and interpret religious beliefs and practices in their proper historical contexts using standard scholarly methods. Each student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central themes, ethical understandings (including Abolition and resistance to inequality), and practices of certain 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 within 1 business day; however, 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: With exceptions for 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 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. 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 percent. The same goes for students who are sleeping or reading non-relevant materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Zora Neal Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God
James Baldwin, Going To Meet the Man
Toni Morrison, Beloved

Selected chapters and journal articles will be placed on TED course website and/or emailed to you.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation, Reading:

1. I expect each student to attend all class sessions. You may miss **three (3) class sessions**, no questions asked. **But if you have more than those three 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 **about four hours per week on the assigned readings**. (There are 168 hours in a week.)
3. **You are responsible for checking the TED website and your UCSD email frequently (at least once a week, though I recommend daily).**

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

Three Pop Quizzes: At three 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.

Weekly Journal and In-Class Writing: We will often spend time writing in class responding to a prompt in order to help us develop our ideas and aid in conversation. This will be a time where you can engage with assigned reading materials in depth before sharing with you fellow classmates. Additionally you will be asked to write weekly reflections. More information on the Weekly Journal assignment will be distributed at the end of week 1.

Midterm: For your midterm exam you will write a short essay (about 5 pages) analyzing and engaging with Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*. I will introduce the technique of ‘close reading’ to you and you will be asked to use it on your midterm assignment. The midterm will help you prepare for your final paper. The Midterm is Due Monday, February 13 in class.

Final Paper: Students will be required to write a literary analysis paper in which you analyze a novel in depth, using themes, ideas, and concepts developed in lecture, discussion and through the assigned course materials. More information will be distributed beginning in week 5. The Final is due Wednesday, March 22 at 5 pm.

Grade Distribution

Attendance: 5% (more than 3 absences will result in a failing grade)

Participation: 10%

Pop Quizzes: 15%

Weekly Journal and In-Class Writing: 20%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Paper: 25%

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*****

Schedule

Week 1 (Jan. 9)—Origins of African American Religion(s)

Course Introduction and Overview

- David W. Wills, "The Central Themes of American Religious History: Pluralism, Puritanism, and the Encounter of Black and White," *African American Religion*, 7-20.
- Charles H. Long, "Perspectives for a Study of African-American Religion in the United States," *African American Religion*, 21-35
- William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," *Souls of Black Folk*, 43-53.

Week 2 (Jan. 16)— Slavery, Gender, Oppression and Formations of African American Religious Beliefs

- Lawrence W. Levine, "Slave Songs and Slave Consciousness: An Exploration in Neglected Sources" *AAR*, 57-88
- Vincent Harding, "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Slaves, 1800-1860," *AAR*, 107-32
- Angela Y. Davis, "The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood," *Women, Race, and Class*, 3-29.
- Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. "Bent Twigs and Broken Backs," *Exodus!*, 3-18.

Week 3 (Jan. 23)—The Black Church North of Slavery

- Will B. Gravelly, "The Rise of African Churches in America (1786 – 1822): Re-examining the Contexts," *AAR*, 133-152.
- Carol V.R. George, "Widening the Circle: The Black Church and the Abolitionist Crusade, 1830-1860," *AAR*, 153-175.
- Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. "Of the Black Church and the Making of a Black Public," *Exodus!*, 19-43.
- David Walker, "Appeal" (1830)

Week 4 (Jan. 30)

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. In its entirety.
- Recommended: W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of the Dawn of Freedom," *Souls of Black Folk*, 54-78.

Week 5 (Feb. 6) —Bound for the Promised Land: The Great Migration

- 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) 1-40.
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," *Souls of Black Folk*, 210-225.
- Farah Jasmine Griffin, "Intro," *Who Set You Flowin'?*, 3-12

MIDTERM EXAM due Monday FEB. 13

Week 6 (Feb. 13)—The Great Migration pt. II

- Shirley Ann Moore, "Getting There, Being There: African American Migration to Richmond, California, 1910-1945," *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective*, 106-126.
- Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective*, 127-146.
- St. Clair Drake & Horace R. Cayton, "The Power of Press and Pulpit," *Black Metropolis*, 398-429.

Week 7 (Feb. 20)

- James Baldwin, *Going to Meet the Man*. Selections.

Week 8—Urbanization, Religious Movements, and Social Activism

- Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, "Toward a Typology of Black Sectarianism as a Response to Racial Stratification," *AAR*, 257-276.
- C. Eric Lincoln, "The Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History," *AAR*, 277-294.
- Randall K. Burkett, "The Baptist Church in the Years of Crisis: J.C. Austin and Pilgrim Baptist Church, 1926-1950," *AAR*, 311-340.

Week 9 (March 6) — The Black Church and the Civil Rights Movement

- Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the African-American Social Gospel," *AAR*, 341-364.
- Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*. Selections.
- Shana L. Redmond, "Introduction: Anthem, Toward a Sound Franchise," *Anthem*, 1-19.

Week 10 (Mar. 13)— Final Prep.

- Zora Neal Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
- Reading list TBD

***FINAL EXAM DUE Wednesday, MARCH 22 at 5 PM**