HIST 4485 03: AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGION
Course Syllabus
5:30-8:00 p.m. Tuesday
Fall 2017

Larry O. Rivers, Ph.D.
Department of History
3220 Technology Learning Center
Office Hours: MW: 10:50 a.m.-1:50 p.m. and 3:20 p.m.-5:20 p.m.; and by appointment.
Phone: (678) 839-6038
Email: lrivers@westga.edu

DESCRIPTION

Religion, in the words of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a “system of faith and worship.” This course explores major topics in the history of African American religion. Our discussion topics will include: theology (liberal, evangelical, and fundamentalist), constructive development thought vs. compensatory thought, spirituality in sacred and secular music traditions, homiletics, the Independent African Church Movement, social ministry, the African American jeremiad, civil religion, Womanism, the Social Gospel Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Prosperity Gospel Movement, and lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgendered (LBGT) struggles.

GOALS

In this class, the instructor will work to help students develop and/or refine a number of skills. The first is the ability to craft and articulate well-reasoned arguments. The second is the ability to follow major current events pertaining to African American religion and trace their origins back to relevant historical antecedents in the time period covered by the course. The third is the ability to read and understand the central arguments of scholarly monographs and articles.

COURSE TEXTS


GRADING

Classroom Participation (10%)

Attendance is mandatory. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and answer questions pertaining to the material. Students will also be evaluated through in-class writing assignments and homework assignments that will be discussed in class.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (10%)

Students will be evaluated through weekly announced and unannounced quizzes on the assigned reading material.

Term Paper (20%)

Students will write a term paper that will test their reading comprehension skills, research skills, writing skills, and the ability to follow directions. The instructor will provide more details.

Exam #1 (30%)

Exam #2 (30%)

MAKE-UP TESTS

Make-up tests will consist entirely of essay writing and will only be granted if the student provides an excuse approved by the instructor. Examples of acceptable excuses include a coach’s letter or a doctor’s note.

FORMAT FOR WRITTEN WORK

Write your full name, course number, section number, and the date on ALL written work you submit to the instructor.

All papers and homework assignments must be typed. Use 12-point font and double-spacing.

HONOR CODE EXPECTATIONS

Students should make sure to understand and strictly follow the standards of the university’s Honor Code as outlined in the Student Handbook. Cheating and plagiarism constitute violations of the Honor Code.

The Student Handbook defines cheating as: “using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids.” It defines plagiarism as “representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.”
SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Please submit an official Student Accommodations Report (SAR) to the instructor if the Office of Disability Services has authorized you to receive special assistance during regular class meetings and/or test dates. For testing purposes, appropriate arrangements will be made in accordance with the following procedures outlined by the Office of Disability Services:

“Most Students With Disabilities (SWD) are entitled to 1.5 time on all tests in classes in which they have presented their Student Accommodations Report (SAR) to their professor and made advance arrangements with their professor for this extra time per test…Students have two options for receiving testing accommodations. They can make arrangements directly with their professor or test at the Learning Support and Testing Center.”

LECTURE RECORDING POLICY

Students are NOT permitted to record the instructor’s lectures. Exceptions will be made for students who submit a Student Accommodations Report (SAR) that explicitly requests permission to create recordings.

EXTRA CREDIT

Periodic extra credit opportunities may be available. The instructor will provide more details.

CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSIONS

At the beginning of each class meeting, there will be a discussion period during which the class will work to compare and contrast historical events related to the course topic with current events.

Please come prepared to share at least one current event on the topic of religion every class meeting. Your current event must come from a news report aired or published by a credible, professional news organization (e.g.: PBS NewsHour, New York Times, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, or Times-Georgian).

Each current events discussion will begin with the stories shared by volunteers. After that, the instructor might begin “cold-calling” students. Be prepared for the instructor to ask you follow-up questions about the current events you share. Your fellow classmates might have some follow-up questions for you, as well.

Make sure you watch the news, read newspapers, read online news articles, and come to class ready to talk. Your performance during the current events discussion will be part of your participation grade.
IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES*

*Note: Students are expected to complete the assigned readings BEFORE the dates they appear on the class schedule. Please come to class ready to discuss the reading selections. The instructor might ask you oral questions or administer unannounced pop quizzes on the content of the readings.

The instructor will distribute some reading selections as printed handouts. Other required selections are available online either at the designated URL or as JSTOR articles. This syllabus is subject to modification.

COURSE INTRODUCTION/STUDYING RELIGION
August 15

AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGION DURING SLAVERY
August 22

Raboteau, ix-60.

Darden, xi-69.

Howard Dodson, “America’s Cultural Roots Traced to Enslaved African Ancestors”

THE SPIRITUALS/ORIGINS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC
August 29

Darden, 70-129, 245-261, 296-298.

http://www.carnegiehall.org/honor/history/

WORSHIP AND SOCIAL MINISTRY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES
September 5

Raboteau, 61-103.

Franklin, 29-52.
WOMANISM IN FOCUS: NANNIE HELEN BURROUGHHS  
September 12


Raboteau, 128-129.

THE RISE OF GOSPEL MUSIC/ EXAM #1 REVIEW SESSION  
September 26

Darden, 130-220, 302-324.

NOTE: Friday, September 29 is the last day to withdraw and receive a grade of “W.”

EXAM #1  
October 3

HOWARD UNIVERSITY AND THE MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT  
October 10


AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT  
October 17

Raboteau, 104-123.

MALCOLM AND MARTIN
October 24

Clayborne Carson, “The Unfinished Dialogue of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.”


BARACK OBAMA AND JEREMIAH WRIGHT/THE CHALLENGE OF THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ERA
October 31

Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union”

Jonathan L. Walton, “Obama’s Pastor and the Politics of Patriotic Treason”
http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/135/obama_sPastor_and the_patriotic_treason/

Sarah Posner, “Wright’s Theology Not ‘New or Radical,’”
http://www.salon.com/2008/05/03/black_church/

Raboteau, 124-135.

Franklin, 53-128.

DISCUSSION OF “RAP AND RELIGION”
November 7

Utley, 1-92.

DISCUSSION OF “RAP AND RELIGION” (con’d)

EXAM #2 REVIEW SESSION
November 14

Utley, 93-190.

EXAM #2
November 28

IN-CLASS WRITING ACTIVITY
Tuesday, Dec. 5, 5:00-7:00 pm.