HSTA 347.01: Voodoo, Muslim, Church - Black Religion

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The African-American religious experience encompasses Islam, Christianity, Santería, voodoo, and many others. In this course, students will examine the history of religious expression within the African-American community from the colonial era through the twentieth century. Central to the course is the question, “How did religion shape the experience of the African-American community?” Rather than chasing after the illusive and ultimately intellectually unproductive question of whether African Americans experienced, in the words of Jon Butler, a “spiritual holocaust,” this course shifts the direction of inquiry by noting the ways in which religious practice did occur and examining how that practice influenced ethical, social, political, and cultural changes in American history.

Objectives: students will be able to –
- identify the primary religious expressions within the African-American community;
- define religion from a phenomenological perspective;
- analyze how African-American religious practice influenced key historical events in American history through moral and ethical frameworks;
- examine how African-American religious traditions have shaped individual and corporate identities over time.

Assignments:
To meet these objectives students will write one research paper and fourteen 4-5 paragraph reading summaries. For the research paper, students will analyze how practitioners of a particular religion drew on their religious experience in a given period in order to influence their social, political, and/or cultural conditions. The multi-drafted, 18-20 page paper will draw on class readings, lectures, and additional secondary sources, make a clear and sustainable argument, and identify the period that they are studying. Students might, for example, discuss how African-American Moravians challenged slavery, how African-American Baptist women contributed to Reconstruction, or the ways in which members of the Nation of Islam countered urban crime. The research paper will be submitted once as a research topic, once as a bibliography, once as an outline, once as an initial draft, once as a second draft, and once as a final draft with the expectation that each draft will improve upon the previous one. In order to receive full credit for the paper, each draft must be submitted in full.

Grading:
Class participation – 40%
Research paper – 60%

Participation
For each class you attend having read the assigned readings by their respective deadlines, you earn two points (27 classes x 2 points = 54 points). You can earn the remaining 46 points of the possible 100 participation points by:
- Earn up to 4 points for each 4-5 paragraph readings summary you write and turn in by the date it is assigned (14 reading x 4 points = 56 points)

If you write all possible summaries and attend all classes, you can earn a total of 110 points. Any points earned over 100 will be added to the grade of your third research paper draft.

Your research paper is worth 200 points. You can earn those points in the following manner:
1) turn in a clearly focused research topic by the assigned date = 10 points
2) turn in a bibliography as assigned
   a. on time = 5 points
   b. identifies ten secondary sources that will be used = 5 points
3) turn in a paper outline:
   a. on time = 5 points
b. meets minimum length requirement = 5 points

4) turn in draft one of a research paper:
   a. on time = 5 points
   b. meets minimum length requirement (18 ½ pages) = 10 points
   c. is written with complete sentences in standard paragraph form = 5 points
   d. includes minimum of ten secondary sources = 5 points

5) turn in draft two of a research paper:
   a. on time = 5 points
   b. meets minimum length requirement (18 ½ pages) = 10 points
   c. is written with complete sentences in standard paragraph form = 5 points
   d. includes minimum of 10 secondary sources = 5 points
   e. demonstrates clear improvement over previous draft = 5 points

6) turn in final draft of research paper
   a. on time = 15 points
   b. meets all criteria of the research paper rubric = 100 points
      (pro-rated according to grade scale below)

Note that for each 24-hour period that an assignment is late, 5 points are subtracted from the assignment total up to the full value of that assignment.

Grade scale:
A+ 98-100  A  93-97   A-  90-92
B+ 87-89   B  83-86   B-  80-82
C+ 77-79   C  73-76   C-  70-72
D+ 67-69   D  63-66   D-  60-62   F  ≤59

Classroom etiquette:
I expect that all students will join me in creating an effective learning environment by:
- turning off all cell phones (and thus doing no texting, e-mailing or instant messaging);
- using laptops only for note taking;
- not doing crosswords, reading newspapers, or other recreational activities;
- not talking or whispering with fellow classmates unless instructed to do so.

During lectures, I will give you my complete attention. I ask the favor of the same from my students. Should a student’s behavior interrupt our learning environment, he or she will first be given a private verbal warning, then be given a public warning. Should disruptive behaviors continue following two warnings, the student will be issued a warning in writing and docked a letter grade on his or her most recent project. Any subsequent disruptive behaviors will be turned over to the University’s disciplinary committee.

Instructor contact:
I will hold office hours every Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or by appointment. My office is located on the second floor of the Liberal Arts Building (facing Mt. Sentinel), Room 262. You are also welcome to contact me by e-mail at tobin.shearer@umontana.edu. My goal is to respond within 24 hours. In case of emergency, you may contact me by phone at 406-243-6225.

Grade changes or drops:
Unless in the case of documented major life emergencies (death of a loved one, extended illness, etc.), this class may not be dropped and grading options may not be changed after the university deadline identified by the registrar’s office.
Missed deadlines:
My goal is always to encourage your best work in the midst of multiple classroom demands and real life emergencies. Limited deadline extensions can be arranged if the student makes advance contact. Late assignments will be marked down 5 points for every 24-hour period. Make-up exams will be offered when they are arranged along with appropriate documentation from medical, athletic, or administrative officials.

Academic honesty:
Stealing someone else’s ideas is the same as stealing someone’s property. Cite others’ ideas in standard footnote or endnote format (in written work and all projects). Paraphrase whenever possible. In general, a paraphrase uses no more than three of the same words in a sentence as the original source. See: http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode for a full review of the University of Montana’s student conduct code.

Accessibility:
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154 or visit their website http://www.umt.edu/disability. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Required readings (Due Thursday, or on Tuesday if class does not meet on Thursday):
(Books above available at the university bookstore and on traditional reserve at the Mansfield Library.)

Course pack (available on the course website):
Schedule:

Week 1 – August 27 & 29: What is Religion? What is Af-Am rel.?
- Fulop and Raboteau, 1-56.
- Albanese.

Week 2 – September 3 & 5: Slave Religion – African Religions, Conjure, Santería
- Fulop and Raboteau, 415-462.
- Sensbach, 1-44.
- Turner, 11-46.

Week 3 - September 10 (no class on Thursday – Reading day): Evangelizing the Slaves and the Great Awakenings
- Guest lecture by Rev. Nelson Rivers
- Fulop and Raboteau, 89-132.
- Sensbach, 45-100.
- Frazier/Lincoln.
- Research paper topic due by Wednesday, September 11, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 - September 19 (no class on Tuesday – Reading day): The Singing of Spirituals
- Fulop and Raboteau, 57-88.
- Kirk-Duggan.
- Lawrence-McIntyre.

Week 5 - September 24 & 26: The Founding of the Independent Black Church
- Fulop and Raboteau, 133-152.
- Klassen.
- Nash.
- Research paper bibliography due by Thursday, September 26, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 6 - October 1 & 3: Emancipation and Reconstruction – An African-American Exodus
- Sensbach, 101-161.

Week 7 - October 8 & 10: Islam
- Fulop and Raboteau, 278-294.
- Turner, 71-173.
- Research paper outline due by Thursday, October 10, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 8 - October 15 & 17: The Great Migration, Pentecostalism and Azusa Street; writing workshop
- Best, 1-94.
- Riley.

Week 9 - October 22 & 24: Religion in the Civil Rights Movement
- Fulop and Raboteau, 341-364.
- Research paper draft 1 due by Thursday, October 24, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 – October 29 & 31: Exploring Voodoo in the Americas and Caribbean
- Fulop and Raboteau, 433-461.
- Brown, Chapters 6-12

Week 11 – November 5 & 7: Black Theology
- Cone, 5-152.
- Research paper draft 2 due by Thursday, November 7, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 12 – November 12 (no class on Thursday – meet with professor to review paper): Minority within a Minority – Black Mormons and Mennonites
- Moore.
- Shearer.
- African-American Studies soup and pie night, Friday, November 15, 6-9 p.m.

Week 13 – November 19 & 21: Womanist Theology
- Fulop and Raboteau, 201-226, 365-388.
- Best, 147-190.

Week 14 – November 26 (no class on Thursday due to Thanksgiving holiday):
- Research consultation
- No regularly scheduled class on Tuesday. Professor available for research and writing consultations during class time.

Week 15 – December 3 & 5: African-American Religion and Masculinity
- Sensbach, 162-248.
- Fulop and Raboteau, 177-200.
- Research paper final draft due by Thursday, December 5, at 11:59 p.m.

Final class: Wednesday, December 11, 3:20-5:20 p.m., regular meeting room