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HSTA 347.01: Voodoo, Muslim, Church - Black Religion

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HSTA 347 Voodoo, Muslim, Church: Black Religion

Tobin Miller Shearer
Fall 2021
T/TH 12:30-1:50 p.m.

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.
- demonstrate the following Writing Learning Outcomes:
 - o compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
 - o formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
 - o use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
 - o revise written work based on constructive feedback
 - o find, evaluate, and use information effectively

- o begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
- o demonstrate appropriate English language usage

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.

This course requires electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university’s writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the Writing Learning Outcomes listed above. This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university.

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:

- Earning 4 points for each 4-5 paragraph summary of the week's readings that you write and turn it in as a printed document on the last class of the week (usually Thursday; if we don't meet on Thursday the summary is due in class on Tuesday) (14 weeks 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 text or phone at 406-662-8227.

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/VP/SA/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)

- Best, Wallace D. *Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*. Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1991, 2001.
- Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*. New York: Seabury Press, 1969.
- Fulop, Timothy Earl, and Albert J. Raboteau. *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*. Routledge, 1997.
- Sensbach, Jon F. *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Turner, Richard Brent. *Islam in the African-American Experience*. Indiana University Press, 2003.
- (Books above available at the university bookstore and on traditional reserve at the Mansfield Library.)

Course pack (available on the course website)

- Albanese, Catherine L. "Introduction: The Elephant in the Dark." In *America, Religions and Religion*, 2nd ed., 1-20. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1992.
- Frazier, Edward Franklin, and C. Eric Lincoln. "The Religion of the Slaves." In *The Negro Church in America/The Black Church since Frazier, Sourcebooks in Negro History*, 9-25. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.
- Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. "Spirituals and the Quest for Freedom." In *Modern Christianity to 1900*, edited by Amanda Porterfield, 317-28. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Klassen, Pamela E. "The Robes of Womanhood: Dress and Authenticity among African American Methodist Women in the Nineteenth Century." *Religion and American Culture* 14, no. 1 (2004): 39-82.
- Lawrence-McIntyre, Charshée Charlotte. "The Double Meanings of the Spirituals." *Journal of Black Studies* 17, no. 4 (1987): 379-401.

- Moore, R. Laurence. "Black Culture and Black Churches - The Quest for an Autonomous Identity." In *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, 173-200. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Nash, Gary B. "'To Arise Out of the Dust.'" *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*, 100-133. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Riley, Peggy. "Women of the Great Falls African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870-1910." In *African American Women Confront the West: 1600-2000*, edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, 122-39. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.
- Shearer, Tobin Miller. "Moving Beyond Charisma in Civil Rights Scholarship: Vincent Harding's Sojourn With the Mennonites, 1958-1966," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* April 2008.

Schedule

Week 1 – August 31 & September 2: What is Religion? What is Af-Am rel.?

Fulop and Raboteau, 1-56.
Albanese.

Week 2 – September 7 & 9: Slave Religion – African Religions, Conjure, Santería

Fulop and Raboteau, 415-462.
Sensbach, 1-44.
Turner, 11-46.

Week 3 - September 14: Evangelizing the Slaves and the Great Awakenings
No class on Thursday. Sign up to meet with professor in small groups by Zoom to discuss paper topics.

Fulop and Raboteau, 89-132.
Sensbach, 45-100.
Frazier/Lincoln.
Research paper topic due by Wednesday, September 15, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 - September 21 & 23: The Singing of Spirituals

Fulop and Raboteau, 57-88.
Kirk-Duggan.
Lawrence-McIntyre.

Week 5 - September 28 & 30: The Founding of the Independent Black Church

Fulop and Raboteau, 133-152.
Klassen.
Nash.
Research paper bibliography due by Thursday, September 30, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 6 - October 5 & 7: Emancipation and Reconstruction – An African-American Exodus

Sensbach, 101-161.

Week 7 - October 12 & 14: Islam

Fulop and Raboteau, 278-294.
Turner, 71-173.
Research paper outline due by Thursday, October 14, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 8 - October 19 & 21: The Great Migration, Pentecostalism and Azusa Street;

writing workshop

Best, 1-94.
Riley.

Week 9 - October 26 & 28: Religion in the Civil Rights Movement

Fulop and Raboteau, 341-364.
Research paper draft 1 due by Thursday, October 28, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 – November 2 & 4: Exploring Voodoo in the Americas and Caribbean

Fulop and Raboteau, 433-461.
Brown, Chapters 6-12

Week 11 – November 9: Black Theology (no class on Thursday, Veteran's Day)

Cone, 5-152.
Research paper draft 2 due by Thursday, November 11, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 12 – November 16 (no class on Thursday – meet with professor or graders to review paper): Minority within a Minority – Black Mormons and Mennonites

Moore.
Shearer.

Week 13 – November 23 (no class on Thursday due to Thanksgiving holiday):

Research consultation.
Professor available for research and writing consultations during class time.

Week 14 – November 30 & December 2: Womanist Theology

Fulop and Raboteau, 201-226, 365-388.
Best, 147-190.

Week 15 – December 7 & 9: African-American Religion and Masculinity

Sensbach, 162-248.
Fulop and Raboteau, 177-200.
Research paper final draft due by Thursday, December 9, at 11:59 p.m.

Final class: Wednesday, December 15, 3:20-5:20 p.m., regular meeting room