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AAS 347.01: Voodoo, Muslim, Church - Black Religion

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AAS/HSTA 347 Voodoo, Muslim, Church: Black Religion

Spring 2017

Tobin Miller Shearer

CRN: 34994 and 35055

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, take two exams, and actively participate in class discussions. *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.

The *midterm exam* will feature five of seven identifications and two of three short essays. The *final exam* will consist of eight of ten identifications, one of two short essays, and one of one long essay. The course study guide includes more details and a full listing of terms and questions.

Grading:

Class participation – 20%

Mid-term – 20%

Research paper – 40%

Final – 20%

You will receive full credit *for participation*, 5 points per day, if you attend, show evidence of having read the assigned reading, and contribute to the class discussion. You can earn up to 200 points in the course of the semester out of a 200-point scale. Points will be posted by the end of the week on the course Moodle site. If you are absent for an unexcused reason, you may make up absences by coming to office hours (or setting up an appointment) to talk with the professor about that week's assigned readings within two weeks of the absence OR you may write a one-page, single-spaced reflection on the week's reading for each day missed due within two weeks after the absence.

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 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 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. You may contact me by phone (voice or text) 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 of the fifteenth instructional day.

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):

- 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.
- Brown, Elsa Barkley. "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom." In *The Black Public Sphere: A Public Culture Book*, 111-50. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- 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.
- Gilkes, Cheryl Townsend. "With My Face to the Rising Sun: Islam and the Construction of Afro-Christian Tradition in the United States." *Souls* 16, no. 1-2 (September 2014): 28-49.
- 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, Charshee 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 - January 23, 25 [No class on Friday, January 27 – Reading day]: What is Religion? What are the issues in African-American Religion?

Fulop and Raboteau, 1-56.
Albanese.

Week 2 – January 30, February 1, and 3: Slave Religion – African Religions, Conjure, Santería

Fulop and Raboteau, 415-431.
Sensbach, 1-44.
Turner, 11-46.

Week 3 – February 6, 8, and 10 (meet with prof or Grader in lieu of Friday class- set up sign-up sheet): Evangelizing the Slaves and the Great Awakenings

Fulop and Raboteau, 89-132.
Sensbach, 45-100.
Frazier/Lincoln.
Research paper topic due by Thursday, February 9, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 - February 13, 15 and 17: The Singing of Spirituals

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

Week 5 - [no class on Monday, February 20, President's Day], February 22 and 24: The Founding of the Independent Black Church

Fulop and Raboteau, 133-152.
Klassen.
Nash.
Research paper bibliography due by Thursday, February 23, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 6 – February 27, March 1, and 3: Emancipation and Reconstruction – An African-American Exodus

Sensbach, 101-161.
Brown.

Week 7 - March 6, 8, and 10: Islam

Fulop and Raboteau, 278-294.
Turner, 71-173.
Gilkes.

Research paper outline due by Thursday, March 7, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 8 - March 13, 15, and 17: The Great Migration, Pentecostalism and Azusa Street

Best, 1-94.
Riley.
Midterm on Friday, March 17.

Spring Break: No class week of March 20-24

Week 9 - March 27, 29 [No class on March 31 – writing and research day]: Religion in the Civil Rights Movement

Fulop and Raboteau, 341-364.
Brown, Introduction, Chapters 1-5
Research paper draft 1 due by Friday, March 31, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 – April 3, 5, and 7: Exploring Voodoo in the Americas

Fulop and Raboteau, 432-461.
Brown, Chapters 6-12

Week 11 - April 10, 12, and 14: Minority within a Minority – Black Mormons and Mennonites

Moore.
Shearer.

Week 12 - April 17, 19, and 21: Black Theology

Cone, 5-152.

Research paper draft 2 due by Thursday, April 20, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 13 – April 24, 26. [No class on the 28th - research and writing day: Womanist Theology

Fulop and Raboteau, 201-226, 365-388.

Best, 147-190.

Week 14 - May 1, 3, and 5: African-American Religion and Masculinity

Sensbach, 162-248.

Fulop and Raboteau, 177-200.

Research paper final draft due by Thursday, May 4, at 11:59 p.m.

Final: Wednesday, May 10, 3:20-5:20 p.m., regular meeting room