

Social Justice and Religion
(RELG/AFAM 336)
University of South Carolina
Spring 2022

Instructor: Dr. Harry Singleton

Contact Information: AFAM Main Office, e7248;

Email: HSINGLET@mailbox.sc.edu; hhs3@aol.com

Office Location: AFAM Main Office, Gambrell Hall, Room 258

Office Hours: by appointment or correspondence

Course Overview

This course explores the interrelationship between the human quest for justice and the life of faith. In particular, the historical, contextual, and developmental aspects of social justice will be examined as a significant function of religion. Class discussions will consist of critical questions that address topics including poverty, gender, enslavement, race, and the criminal justice system. Religious practices will be analyzed including use of sacred texts and theologies that operate in contexts of human oppression and liberation.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- identify passages from sacred texts that have affirmed social justice stands;
- discourse about religious systems/thinkers rooted in social justice
- provide a more nuanced analysis of their burgeoning social justice philosophies.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend class on time and to not leave early. In accordance with university policy, each student is permitted three (3) absences for the semester (for any reason whatsoever). All other absences must be excused by the instructor so not to count against the total. When in class, students are expected to take lecture notes and participate in class discussions. Students doing neither of these and constantly disrupting the general decorum of the classroom may be dismissed from the classroom by the instructor.

Course Requirements

Attendance and informed participation. Make sure to read materials by their due dates and be ready to make substantive contributions to class discussions!!!

Five objective/short answer tests, one on each phase of the course @17% each;

Final Contemporary "Letter"/Position Paper @15%

Exams

Students will be given an exam on each of the five phases of the course. The exams will be administered at the end of each phase of the course and may consist of any combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. The questions are designed to measure each student's knowledge of course materials and command of course concepts. Exam questions will cover class lectures, readings, and discussions. **Make-up exams will be given only in cases of emergency (to be determined by the instructor) or for an**

official college-related function. If a student wishes to take a make-up exam, he/she must consult with the instructor before the scheduled exam. Only in rare instances will the instructor permit a make-up exam if consulted after the scheduled exam. Students have up to the next class meeting after the scheduled exam to take the make-up. No make-ups will be given after that! Students not taking either the scheduled or make-up exam will be given a numeric grade of zero for that exam. Students are also required to be on time and ready to take the exams before they are administered. Students entering the lecture hall after the exam has been administered will **NOT** be allowed to sit for the exam and will be given a numeric grade of zero for that exam!

Final Project

A final project will be required of each student on their most passionate aspect of social justice reform. An oral presentation will be rendered by each student during the last week of class. A paper of five to ten pages detailing the student's chosen aspect of social justice will be submitted. The papers are to take on a creative bent similar to the final reading of the semester – Martin King's article, "Paul's Letter to Contemporary Christians." More details will be provided later in the semester.

Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B+	89-86%
B	85-80%
C+	79-76%
C	75-70%
D+	69-66%
D	65-60%
F	<59%

Required Text

Required reading materials will be taken from a plethora of thinkers/sources whose works have withstood the test of time and have become, in a real way, classics in social justice. Thinkers/sources will also come from more contemporary works that have raised insightful approaches to social justice and religion worthy of the course's attention. The intent is to demonstrate the scope of the social justice movement's impact on organized religion and vice versa.

Plagiarism and Citation

According to the *Carolina Creed*, plagiarism is the most serious academic offense a student can commit in this or any other university and has serious repercussions.

See <http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/THETENETS.HTM>.

Plagiarism is when you take credit for the work or wording of another person although you are not the original author --- that can mean the work or wording of a scholar or author or the work or wording of a fellow classmate. So, when in doubt always paraphrase (put in your own words) and cite (give written credit).

With your writing assignments, do not use footnotes. The method of citation I want you to use with all of your writings is the author-work-pages format. Give the last name of the author(s), the title of the publication, and the relevant page numbers in parentheses. Example: (Cone, Black Theology of Liberation, 125-128); or two or more authors (Cone and Wilmore, Black Theology: A Documentary History, 297).

Electronic Devices

Other than a laptop or recording device for lectures, electronic devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom. **In particular, cell phones and listening devices are prohibited from use during class!** They are to be turned off before entering the classroom and not used for the duration of the class. Students in violation will be disciplined or dismissed from the class. If for any reason you must monitor your phone in case of a personal emergency, please let the instructor know this ahead of time.

Additional Learning Resources

Each student is highly encouraged to make use of the following on-campus resources to assist with the writing of papers and guidance with regards to your academic performance:

USC Writing Center (Byrnes 703) <http://www.cas.sc.edu/write/>

Academic Success @ USC <http://www.housing.sc.edu/academicsuccess/>

Special Needs

The instructor of this course will make every effort to accommodate students with special needs. If you have any special needs that may impact your ability to learn, you should inform the instructor sometime during the first week of class. You will also need to provide supporting documentation from the Office of Student Services – <http://www.sa.sed/sds/>

Course Outline

Week One

1/11 Course Introduction

1/13 Course Syllabus

Phase One – Setting the Stage, Why the Course is Pertinent

Week Two

1/18 Sacred Texts as Sources of Oppression/Sources of Justice

1/20 A Social Gospel, A Social Theology

Monday, January 17, King Day Holiday (No Classes)

Reading: Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, Chapter One

Week Three

1/25 The Kingdom and the Poor

1/27 Examination One

Phase Two – Social Justice and Conflicts with Nations

Week Four

2/1 Return Exam One/National Life and the Quest for Justice

2/3 National Life and the Quest for Justice, Part II

Reading: Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, Chapter Four

Week Five

2/8 National Morality, National Immorality

2/10 Examination Two

Phase Three – Race and Social Justice

Week Six

2/15 Return Examination Two/Christian Racism or Racist Christianity

2/17 American Laws, American Morality

Reading: Lincoln, Race, Religion and the Continuing American Dilemma, Chapter Two

Week Seven

2/22 Combatting a Theology of Chattel

2/24 The Religion of Jesus

Reading: Thurman, Jesus and the Disinherited, Chapter One

Week Eight

3/1 Review

3/3 Examination Three

Week Nine: 3/7-11 Spring Break (No Classes)

Phase Four – Gender and Social Justice

Week Ten

3/15 Patriarchy as an Obstacle to Justice

3/17 Sex, Sexism, and the Woman's Place/Base

Reading: Reuther, Sexism and God-Talk, Chapter Seven

Week Eleven

3/22 Womanism and Black Women's Unique Experience of Oppression

3/24 Examination Four

Reading: Teresa Hoover, Black Women and the Churches: Triple Jeopardy, Black Theology: A Documentary History, Volume One

Phase Five - Poverty

Week Twelve

3/29 Return Exam Four/The Catholic Church's Reckoning with the Poor

3/31 Theological Renewal and Social Justice

Reading: Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church In The Modern World, #64

Week Thirteen

4/5 Extra Ecclesia Nulla Salus

4/7 Extra Pauperes Nulla Salus

Reading: Sobrino, No Salvation Outside the Poor, Chapter Three

Week Fourteen

4/12 Examination Five

4/14 Return Examination Five/Preparation for Final Project

Reading: Martin Luther King, Jr., Paul's Letter to American Christians!

Week Fifteen

4/19 Primary Commitment to Social Justice

4/21 Oral Presentations to the Class

Week Sixteen

Monday, 4/25 Last Day of Classes

Reading Day ***Tuesday, April 26***

Final Examinations ***Wednesday, April 27 – Wednesday, May 4***

Commencement Exercises ***Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7***

Although this is the printed outline, it is subject to time availability or unforeseen circumstances.

COVID-19 Mitigation & Notification Information:

Class Meetings:

- Masks must be worn at all times in the building and during our class meetings. If you lose your mask or it gets damaged, let Dr. Singleton know immediately/before class time starts.
- Try to sit in the same seat every class meeting to assist with contact tracing efforts. I will try to get a photo grid of our class on the first or second day of class to help us remember our seats.
- Handouts will be kept to a minimum but if you would like a free paper copy of the syllabus, let me know on the first day of class.
- Use hand sanitizer before and after you leave the classroom. Disinfecting materials will also be available in our room, if you would like to clean desk surfaces on your own.
- Do not leave any materials, food, drink, or personal items in the classroom.

Student Health and Notification Procedures:

- If you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the Delta variant, or the flu, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. Go to the student health center to be tested and evaluated immediately. They will give you a class attendance excuse if you have to miss class and that documentation can be shared with me via email for your excused absence.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, immediately begin quarantine procedures. You do not have to notify me of your positive test result (unless you want to) but **be sure to document your status with the Campus Ombudsman Office using a COVID-19 student report form** that you upload with supporting documentation. That office will notify me that someone in our class has tested positive and we can all start mitigation procedures like contact tracing, testing and quarantining if necessary. Confidentiality will be maintained by myself and any campus staff involved.
- If you have to miss classes due to a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, I will work with you to make sure you don't miss assignments or course content. Feel free to select a class study partner who can take notes and share notes digitally in the event that one of you is absent. This course has built in virtual options for missed in-class activities & assignments.
- For more information about campus resources for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and exposure protocols, see https://sc.edu/safety/coronavirus/testing_and_services/index.php