

African American Religious History (Rel 430 01)

Benedict College
Columbia, South Carolina
Fall 2011

Instructor: Dr. Harry Singleton

Office Location: HRC 101; **Office Phone:** e4689

Office Hours: M-W 12pm-2pm, T-Th 1230pm-230pm or by appointment

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Catalogue Course Description

This course is an historical analysis of the evolution of modern day African American religious thought.

Extended Course Description

This course examines the religious history of African Americans from their pre-colonial African roots to the contemporary setting. Primary emphasis will be given to the religion of the slave during the ante-bellum period as well as the emergence of the institutional black church and its theology for the purposes of providing the student with a foundation for critically assessing the contemporary black church regarding theological renewal and socio-political liberation. Hence, this course moves beyond the black church proper and the challenges posed to it by urbanization to a survey of the tapestry of the black religious experience in America and the significant events and figures that forged its development.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to identify:

- 1) the nature and circumstances out of which black religion emerged;
- 2) the origin of the black church in general and its various denominations in particular;
- 3) the major theological developments in the history of the black religious experience and the leaders that brought them about.

Course Requirements

Five Papers (25% each – lowest score dropped)

Papers

A paper of 3-4 pages is required of each student for each of the phases listed below. The topic of the paper is to be worked out between the student and the instructor. All papers must be typed (font size 12), and double-spaced with a cover page and supporting documentation. Papers will be graded on spelling, grammar, documentation, clarity of argument, and aesthetic quality. Papers will be accepted late only in rare circumstances to be determined by the instructor. Failure to turn in papers on time could result in a failing grade for the class.

Grade Scale

- A 100-90
- B 89-80
- C 79-70
- D 69-60
- F 59-below

Cheating

It is hoped that the student would conduct his/her research independently and that the student's work is an original construction. Duplicating someone else's work will result in a failing grade for the course. These measures will be taken in addition to whatever action(s) Benedict College deems appropriate.

Attendance

Benedict College maintains a standard attendance policy. Students should consult the Benedict College Student Handbook for specifics. Students in violation of the attendance policy may be administratively dropped from the class. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, to fulfill reading assignments and to participate in class discussion.

Required Course Text

Wilmore, Gayraud S., Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans (3rd edition, revised and enlarged).

Course Outline

Phase I - The Ante-Bellum Period and the Religion of the Slave

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
1	Chapter 1	Pre-Colonial African Religion
2-3	Chapter 2 Consultation	The Religion of the Slave PAPER ONE DUE

Phase II – The Emergence of the Black Prophetic Radical Tradition

4	Chapters 3-4	Religion and Resistance
5	Consultation	The Theology of the Slave Revolts PAPER TWO DUE

Phase III - Emancipation and the Emergence of the Black Church

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
6-7	Chapter 5	The Black Church Freedom Movement
8	Consultation	PAPER THREE DUE

*****9

Fall Break

No Classes*****

Phase IV - Socio-Political Liberation and its Challenge to the Church

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
10	Chapter 6	The Rise of Black Nationalism and its Challenge to the Church

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
11-12	Chapter 7 Consultation	The Black Church Deradicalizes PAPER FOUR DUE

Phase V - Black Religion, the Black Church and the Twentieth Century

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
13	Chapter 8	Religious Dimensions in the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements

14	AAR, Thanksgiving	NO CLASS
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15	Chapter 10 Course Wrap-Up	The Emergence of Black Theology and its Challenge to the Church PAPER FIVE DUE
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*****Senior Examinations***** Monday, November 28-Wednesday, November 30

*****Common Final Examinations***** Friday, December 2 - Saturday, December 3
8AM-6PM

*****Final Examinations***** Monday, December 5 - Friday, December 9

*****Commencement***** Saturday, December 10

Although this is the stated outline, it is subject to change as dictated by either time availability or unforeseen circumstances.