

Religions of the African Diaspora
AFAM/RELG 343
University of South Carolina
Fall 2021

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GLD Course!!!

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Course Overview

This introductory course will consider religions of the African Diaspora. To trace these complex views, we will focus on three overlapping sections: Africa; the Caribbean; and the United States. The intent is to explore the common themes regarding the religious/theological concepts of black people in these regions. We will consider three religious strands that sometimes overlap in these regions: African indigenous; Islam; and Christianity. While the focus of this course is contemporary, analysis of historical strands will provide contexts for our studies.

Learning objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- describe the socio-historical context in which African Diasporan religions emerged;
- identify major theological themes of African Diasporan religions; and,
- provide sophisticated analyses of African Diasporan religions in the American experience.

Course Requirements

Attendance and informed participation. Make sure to read materials by their due dates!!!

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

Final Ethnography Reflections @15%

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

Anthony B. Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*.
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

In addition, the required text will be supplemented with other required reading materials.

Course Outline

Week One

8/19 Course Introduction/Syllabus

Week Two

8/24 The Slave Trade: Diaspora Existence Begins

8/26 Setting the Stage

Reading: Boesak, "The Courage to Be Black"

Week Three

8/31 A Theology of Slave Existence

9/2 A New Reality: A New Creation

Reading: Lincoln, Mamiya "The Religious Dimension: The Black Sacred Cosmos."

Lecture: Historic/Apocalyptic Solutions to Black Freedom

Week Four

9/7 Examination One

9/9 Diasporic Existence and Vodun: Serving the Loa

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 1, 11-34

Monday, September 6, Labor Day Holiday (No Classes)

Week Five

9/14 Vodoo in the United States

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 1, 34-55

9/16 Yoruba Religion in Africa and Cuba (Santeria)

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 2, 56-76

Week Six

9/21 Orisha Worship in the United States

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 2, 76-103

9/23 Examination Two

Week Seven

9/28 Islam: The Black Man's True Religion: Alternative One

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 3, 104-113

9/30 Allah Has Arrived In Person; The Rise of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam

Reading: Pinn, Chapter 3, 113-153; Video: A Time for Separation

Week Eight

10/5 Examination Three

10/7 Fall Break (No Classes)

Week Nine

10/12 The Transcendent Becomes Immanent; Black Freedom and Humanism

Reading: Pinn, 154-160

10/14 The African Appropriation of Humanism: Alternative Two

Reading: Pinn, 160-185

Week Ten

10/19 Theism Challenged on "Hermeneutical" Grounds

Pinn, Why Lord? Suffering and Evil in Black Theology, Chapter 5

10/21 The Quest for a Legitimate Black Humanism: Nitty-Gritty Hermeneutics

Week Eleven

10/26 Section Wrap-up/Recap

10/28 Examination Four

Week Twelve

11/2 Return Exam Four; Back to Basics: The Historic Solution for Black Freedom

11/4 Love: The Greatest Commandment, David Walker

Reading: David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured (sic) Citizens of the World, Article III (Our Wretchedness In Consequence of the Preachers of the Religion of Jesus Christ)

Week Thirteen

11/9 Love: The Greatest Commandment, Frederick Douglass

Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Chapter 12 (Slaveholding Religion and the Christianity of Christ)

11/11 Love and Redemptive Suffering: Martin Luther King, Jr., and Civil Disobedience

Video: Children of Birmingham

Week Fourteen

11/16 Black Faith's Challenge to Racial Injustice

Reading: A Letter from a Birmingham Jail

11/18 Black Faith's Challenge to White and Black Churches

Reading: A Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Week Fifteen

11/23 AAR, San Antonio (No Class)

11/25 Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes)

Week Sixteen

11/30 Course Wrap Up: Different Branches, Same Root

12/2 Examination Five

Last Day of Classes ***Friday, December 3***

Reading Day ***Saturday, December 4***

Final Examinations ***Monday, December 6 – Monday, December 13***

Commencement Exercises ***Monday, December 13***

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