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CS 625 Black History, Theology and Mission

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CS625 BLACK HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND MISSION

Dr. Richard L. Gray

DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to examine the African-American religious experience and expression in America. To this end, facts and insights will be explored to assist the general community in gaining a better understanding of the place and role of the African American and his Church in the greater American society.

Objectives of the course are as follows:

1. To explore the historical growth and development of the African-American Church and community within the United States.
2. To enhance the skill level of the student in identifying, understanding and evaluating the religious contributions of African Americans to American society.
3. To increase the level of understanding on the part of student as to historical and current routes which African American leadership have used in order to advance the African American people.
4. To introduce the student to those key issues which continue to effect the African American people living in the United States.

COURSE FORMAT:

This course is being offered in an intensive format over a two-week period during January Term. A Lecture and discussion format will be utilized as the primary means of instruction.

REQUIRED READING:

Bennett, Lerone., *Before the Mayflower*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

Moses, Wilson Jeremiah., *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Wilmore, Gayraud S., *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986.

Robinson, Randall., *The Debt*. New York: Dutton Books, 2000.

RECOMMENED READING:

(See the selected bibliography at the end of this syllabus)

ASSIGNMENTS:

Each student is required to produce a research paper, not to exceed 10 pages in length. Additionally, unless serving in a ministry capacity which would be prohibitive, each student must attend a Black Church for a Sunday morning worship experience and discuss that experience in a small group setting. Each student must produce a biographical study of a significant Black Christian Leader chosen from a listing provided in class. This study should not be less than 10 pages and should not exceed 15 pages. Finally, each student will write a one - page reflection paper on the various videos as described in the syllabus.

FINAL EXAMINATION:

Yes.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

The following papers are due during the semester.

1. Research Project that addresses the historical relationship between the American Black community and your denomination. If you don't embrace a particular faith walk, then your study should focus on the Methodist Church.
2. A biographical study of a significant Black Christian leader (to be chosen from a listing provided in class).
3. Unannounced objective quizzes on assigned reading
4. Reflection Papers on class videos

GRADING:

50% Quizzes and biographical study

25% Research Project

25% Final Exam

BLACK HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND MISSION
COURSE OUTLINE

(Section I) Black History

Week One February 7
Focus Introduction: (The Beginnings)
Reading: Class Video (Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of Africa* “Black Kingdoms”)

Week Two February 14
Focus Class Video (Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of Africa* “Swahili Coast”)
Reading: Begin readings in Bennett and Wilmore

Turn in reflection on Gates’s Black Kingdoms

Week Three February 21
Focus Class Video (Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of Africa* “Timbuktu”)
Reading: Bennett and Wilmore

Turn in reflection on Gates’s Swahili Coast

Week Four February 28
Focus Africans in America – A question of Leadership
Reading: Class Video (Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of Africa* “The Slave Trade”)

Turn in reflection on Gates’s Timbuktu

Week Five March 7
Focus The Black Church and the Age of Jim Crow
Reading: You should have completed Wilmore by this time
Class Video (Birth of a Nation)

Turn in reflection on Gates’s The Slave Trade

Week Six March 14
Focus The Black experience in America (Strange Fruit)
Reading: Class Video (James Cameron)

Turn in reflection on Birth of a Nation

Week Seven March 21
Focus The Golden Age of Black Nationalism
Reading: You should have completed Moses by this time

Turn in reflection on James Cameron

(Section II) Black Theology

Week Eight

March 28

Focus A view on the theology of blacks
Reading: Class Video (Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of Africa* “The Holy Land”)
Our Voices “African Hebrew Israelites”

Turn in reflection on Birth of a Nation

Week Nine

April 4

Reading Week, let's all enjoy ourselves

Week Ten

April 11

Focus The Black Response to American Oppression
Reading: Class Video (Farrakhan press conference)

*Turn in reflection on Gates' The Holy Land and Our Voices
Turn in your Research Paper*

Week Eleven

April 18

Focus Black Christian Leaders and a Divine Redemptive Mission
Reading: Dr. Gray class lecture

Turn in reflection on Farrakhan

(Section III) The Mission

Week Twelve

April 25

Focus Exploring this Divine Redemptive Mission (part two)
Reading: Gray, class lecture

Turn in your study of a Black Christian Leader

Week Thirteen

May 2

Focus Let's Review and see where we're at

Turn in reading log

Week Fourteen

May 9

Final Exam

Black Leaders for Biographical Study

Edward Wilmot Blyden
Henry McNeal Turner
Martin Delany
Henry Highland Garnett
Alexander Crummell
Simeon of Cyrene
Nathaniel Paul
Richard Allen
David Walker
Nat Turner
Daniel Alexander Payne
James W. C. Pennington
Samuel Ringgold Ward
Marcus Garvey

W. E. B. DuBois
Mordecai Wyatt Johnson
Benjamin Elijah Mays
Howard Thurman
Adam Clayton Powell
Elijah Muhammad
Malcolm X
Albert B. Cleage, Jr.
C. Eric Lincoln
Charles Shelby Rooks
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Jesse Louis Jackson
James H. Cone
J. Deotis Roberts, Sr.

Possible research paper topics:

Early Methodism (1758 – 1843) and the American Black Community
Middle Methodism (1844 – 1938) and the American Black Community
Late Methodism (1939 – current) and the American Black Community
The Central Jurisdiction
(Black Sons of Thunder) The Black Circuit Riders
The “Seven Sister” (the seven major Black denominations): their history and development
Exploring John Wesley, his “Holy Nameless Two”, and Slavery
Francis Asbury, American Blacks and Slavery
The Methodist Church and Slavery
The Wesleyan Church and Slavery
The Wesleyan Church: its history, development and relationship to Black America

A Selected Bibliography

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- Berry, Mary Frances and John W. Blassingame
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1970 Black Nationalism in America. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill.
- Brotz, Howard ed.,
1966 Negro Social and Political Thought, 1850 - 1920: Representative Texts. New York: Basic Books.
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1969 Black Theology and Black Power. New York: Seabury.
1984 For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church. MaryKnoll, NY: Orbis.
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1966 "The Relations and Duties of Free Colored Men in America to Africa." Negro Social and Political Thought. Edited by Howard Brotz. New York:

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- 1992 "Civilization, The Primal Need of the Race." Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840 - 1898. Edited by Wilson Jeremiah Moses. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Cruse, Harold
1967 The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual. New York: William Morrow & Co.
- Davis, Allison
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1991 "Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narratives." Stony The Road We Trod. Edited by Cain Hope Felder. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
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1980 From Slavery to Freedom. New York: Knopf.
- Franklin, John Hope and Alfred A. Moss, Jr.
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