

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Course Profile

Course: H 436: African American Religious History

Instructor: Monica A. Coleman

Semester: Spring 2008

Statement of Goals

- To survey the historical trajectory of African-American religious practices
- To examine the various influences upon African-American religious development
- To offer students a communal experience of an African American religion in the Chicago area
- To situate primary sources (experience and narrative) in African American religions to secondary sources and theories
- To develop students' analysis of contemporary conversations on race and religion in relation to particular aspects of African American religious history

Outline and content of course:

- I. Slave Religion
- II. African American Christianity
- III. Non-Christian African American Religions
- IV. African American Religious Experiences

Required work for course:

Reflection Questions. Students will write down and turn in a question raised from the class readings, lectures and videos.

Quizzes. These will cover the material from the lectures and required readings.

Worship Experience. Attendance at a contemporary communal gathering (worship/ prayer etc.) of one of the specified dimensions of African American religion. Students will write a short paper evaluating the worship.

Final Presentation and Paper. Students will work in groups and choose a religion from the given selection. The presentation will cover the history of the religion, the history of African American experience in the religion (if applicable), the belief structure and the experience of an individual practitioner in the African American expression of the religion. Each student will write a final paper that covers one aspect of the presentation.

Bibliography:

Books

Erskine, Noel C. From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology. Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 2005.

Fauset, Arthur. Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults of the Urban North. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. The Black Church in the African American Experience. Durham: Duke UP, 1990.

Martin, Darnise C. Beyond Christianity: African Americans in a New Thought Church. New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Raboteau, Albert J. Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South. New York, Oxford UP, 1978.

Articles

Cuthrell-Curry, Mary. "African-Derived Religion in the African-American Community in the United States," in African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings and Symbols, ed. Jacob K. Olupona. New York: Crossroads, 2000.

Hucks, Tracey E. "Burning with a Flame in America: African American Women in African-derived Traditions," Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 17.2 (2001).

Pinn, Anthony B. "Ashe!: Santeria, Orisha-Voodoo, and Oyotunji African Village." Varieties of African American Religious Experience. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998. 56-99.

Rowe, Maureen. "Gender and Family Relations in Rastafari: A Personal Perspective" and Tafari-Ama, Imani M. "Rastawoman as Rebel: Case Studies in Jamaica," in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader. Ed. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer and Adrian Anthony McFarlane. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1998. 72-88 and 89-106.