COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Like other courses offered at UCA as part of the African/African-American Studies Program, this course seeks to provide you with the opportunity to expand your awareness of our global society by focusing on the history and experiences of persons of African descent. In this course, we will focus specifically on the religious experiences and theology of African-Americans. While the course should be of particular interest to students completing a minor in African/African-American Studies or a minor or major in Religious Studies, students in all fields of study should find the readings and discussions both interesting and relevant to their academic, professional and personal lives.

As the study of African-American religion and religious thought is admittedly a broad area of inquiry and we are limited to a fourteen week semester, this course will consist of an exploration and critical analysis of the development of African-American religious thought and practice from the 1960s to the present. Through readings, video, film, music, presentations, discussion and a visit to a religious service, we will map the history and contours of African-American religion and the emergence and growth of Black Theology during this period. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which the experience of oppression and the interaction of race, class, gender and sexuality in American culture have each impacted African-American religious practices and theologies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

*Down by the Riverside: Readings in African-American Religion*, edited by Larry G. Murphy
*Strength to Love*, Martin Luther King, Jr.
*Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*, edited by Bruce Perry
*A Black Theology of Liberation, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, James H. Cone
*Sexuality and the Black Church*, Kelly Brown Douglas

Also: on-line and e-reserve readings as assigned

*This text is on reserve in Torreyson Library.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Attendance at and participation in all class meetings, including field trips and films, is required. As this is an upper-level seminar, your preparation for and participation in each class is vital to the success of the course as well as to your final grade. More than two absences may be grounds for lowering of your final grade by a letter grade or more at my discretion. Four or more absences may result in my dropping you from the course for non-attendance.
**Discussion Questions:** Several questions on assigned readings will be posted on the course WebCT site each week. You should write out a response to these questions and *bring them to class each day*. Be sure to keep your responses in a folder or notebook as they will be collected periodically throughout the semester.

**Exams:** You will be expected to complete a mid-term exam and a final exam as scheduled.

**Essay and Presentation:** As part of the course assignments, you will be required to write a paper (8-10 pages) that summarizes the results of research you have done throughout the semester on a topic relevant to the course. Possible topics will be suggested in class. You will then present your research to the class during the last two weeks of the course. A *statement of topic and working bibliography* will be due to me no later than **Monday, February 2**. I would also like to meet with you in March to discuss your progress on the paper. The final paper is due at our last class meeting on **Wednesday, April 21**.

**Religious/Cultural Site Visits:** A visit to a religious service and another cultural event will be scheduled as part of the course. Attendance is expected. If you are unable to attend, you will need to see me to make arrangements for an alternate assignment.

**GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Essay</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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**Academic honesty:** Students are expected to abide by standards of academic honesty. Plagiarized work, whether copied from textual sources, electronic sources, or another student may result in failure of the assignment or of the course, at my discretion. (For a more detailed description of academic dishonesty and misconduct, consult the *UCA Student Handbook 2003-2004*, p. 38.)

**Statement on Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, contact the UCA Office of Disability Services at 450-3135.

**Student Handbook:** It is the student’s responsibility to familiarize him/herself with the policies listed in the 2003-2004 Student Handbook. Special attention should be given to the Sexual Harassment Policy and Academic Policies.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

*Note: This schedule is subject to change. Please consult the WebCT course site for the most recent schedule of assigned readings and events.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
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</table>
| 14     | *What is “African-American Religion?”*  
<p>|        | Read: DuBois (<em>hand-out</em>), Murphy 9-19; register for WebCT |
| 19     | <strong>MLK, Jr. Day; no class</strong>   |
| 21     | Read: Murphy 20-48           |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>History and Development of African-American Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Murphy 59-67, 133-138, 189-199</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Read: Murphy 175-187</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Social Advocacy and Protest: Black Churches and MLK, Jr.</td>
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<td>Read: Murphy 293-302, King 5-25</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Read: King 138-155, King \textit{(e-reserve)}</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Read: Murphy 97-104, 303-314</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Black Muslims in the U.S.: Malcolm X and Beyond</td>
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<td>Read: Murphy 69-78, 203-207</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Read: Malcolm X (Perry) 7-57</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Read: Malcolm X (Perry) 81-89, 151-181</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Black Theology of Liberation</td>
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<td>Read: Cone v-vi, 1-20</td>
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<td>Read: Cone 21-39, 55-81</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Read: Cone 110-142</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Read: Cone vii-xx, 145-163, 185-188</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Womanist Theology</td>
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<td>Read: Murphy 367-380, Grant \textit{(e-reserve)}</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read: Williams \textit{(hand-out)}, Walker \textit{(hand-out)}</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Research day; no class</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break; no class</strong></td>
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<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break; no class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break; no class</strong></td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Sexuality in the Black Church</td>
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<td>Read: Douglas 1-6, 31-59</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Read: Douglas 63-108</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Read: Douglas 11-132</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Diversity of African-American Religious Experience and Thought</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Due in Class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong> \textit{(11:00am-1:00pm)}</td>
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**Suggested Paper Topics**

Please be prepared to select a topic from among the following suggestions at our next class meeting or, if you have another topic in mind, please submit it to me via email prior to the next class.

African-Methodist Episcopal (AME) or African-Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ)

Black Pentecostals

Black Catholics

Black Jews

Santeria

Vodou

Rastafarianism

Marcus Garvey and Black Nationalism

Father Divine

Slave Religion

Louis Farrakahn and the Nation of Islam

Spirituals and Blues

African-American Women and the ministry

African-American Buddhists