

Black Religion and Black Political Thought
Spring 2013

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Anna Julia Cooper Project on Gender, Race and Politics in the South

OBJECTIVES

Scholars of the African American experience have located the black church as the cultural, social, and political womb of the black community. This research tends to think of the church as a structure that brings actors into contact with one another; it has paid less attention to the church as a place that brings actors into contact with ideas. This course will use a variety of classic and contemporary texts about black political thought as an entry into investigating the connections between black religious ideas and political activism. The class links the work on religion to an intensive introduction to black political thought. This course focuses on the various 20th century ideologies and strategies, which have informed the African American quest for human fulfillment, self-actualization, and equity in the United States of America.

Assessment

Annotated Bibliography for class (20%)

You will develop an annotated bibliography of 10-12 sources that will be shared with your classmates. It can be related to any of the ideas presented in class.

Short paper (6-8 pages) in response to readings (35%)

You must write one short paper focusing on the readings from one week. This can be turned in anytime between week 4 and 8.

Final Exam (35%)

This course has a final exam. The exam is in an essay format, is cumulative, and will include some choice.

Class participation (10%)

****NOTE:** You will lose points if your papers are late. 1/3 letter grade will be deducted for every 24 hours the assignment is late. No assignment will be accepted after 72 hours late without prior agreement.**

Honor Code

You are bound by the Tulane University Honor Code in all the work that you do for this course at this university. See <http://tulane.edu/college/code.cfm>

Students needing accommodations

Tulane University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students who need accommodations must be registered with the Office of Disability Services and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance. See <http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/disability/index.cfm>

Required Texts

- Adiele, Faith. *Meeting Faith: The Forest Journals of a Black Buddhist Nun*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc, 2004.
- Grant, Carl and Shelby Grant. *The Moment: Barack Obama, Jeremiah Wright and the Firestorm at Trinity United Church of Christ*. Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2012.
- Harris, Fred. *Something Within: Religion in African American Political Activism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999
- Harrison, Milmon. *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Hayes, Diane L and Cyprian Davis, eds. *Taking Down Our Harps: Black Catholics in the United States*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Hopkins, Dwight. *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Jackson, Sherman. *Islam and the Black American: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Kelley, Robin. D.G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- McRoberts, Omar. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Pinn, Anthony. *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Readings marked with a * are available as links from the course website

Introduction

Week 1, Wednesday 1/16

What is the relationship between religious ideas and political thought and action among African Americans?

*Dawson, Michael. *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
Chapters 1 and 2

The Church

Week 2, Wednesday 1/23

How should we think about the black church?

Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*
Chapters 1 and 5

*Savage, Barbara D. "W. E. B. Du Bois and "The Negro Church.""
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 568, The Study of African American Problems: W. E. B. Du Bois's Agenda, Then and Now. (Mar., 2000): 235-249.

*Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamyia. "The Religious Dimension: Toward a Sociology of Black Churches." In *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1-19. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990.

*Price, Frederick. *Race, Religion and Racism: Volume 1*. Los Angeles: Faith One Publishing, 1999.
Pages 1-40

Week 3, Wednesday 1/30

The black church as a psychological/cultural resource for politics

Harris, Fred. *Something Within: Religion in African American Political Activism*.
Chapters 1-6

*Harris-Lacewell, Melissa. "Ideology in Action: The Promise of Orange Grove." Chapter 2 in *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought*, 35-78. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

*Taylor, Robert J., Michael C. Thornton, and Linda M. Chatters. "Black Americans' Perceptions of the Sociohistorical Role of the Church." *Journal of Black Studies* 18.2 (Dec., 1987): 123-138.

*Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. "Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community." *American Sociological Review* 63 (1998): 767-784.

Week 4, Wednesday February 6

The black church as an organizational resource for politics

*McKenzie, Brian D. "Religious Social Networks, Indirect Mobilization, and African-American Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly* 57.4 (Dec., 2004): 621-632.

*Calhoun-Brown, Allison. "While Marching to Zion: Otherworldliness and Racial Empowerment in the Black Community." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37.3 (Sep., 1998): 427-439.

From: Smith, R. Drew, ed. *A New Day Begun: African American Churches and Civic Culture in Post-Civil Rights America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

*Calhoun-Brown, Allison. "What a Fellowship: Civil Society, African American Churches, and Public Life." Pages 39-57

*Daniels, David D. "Doing all the Good We Can": The Political Witness of African American Holiness and Pentecostal Churches in the Post-Civil Rights Era." Pages 164-182.

*Owens, Michael Leo. "Doing Something in Jesus' Name: Black Churches and Community Development Corporations." Pages 215-247.

*Roberts, Samuel. "On Seducing the Samaritan: The Problematic of Government Aid to Faith-Based Groups." Pages 278-292.

Week 5, Wednesday February 13

The day after MARDI GRAS, see you next week!

Week 6, Wednesday February 20

Black Church and Urban Politics, PART I

McRoberts, *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*.

RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Week 7, Wednesday February 27

Black Islamic tradition and black politics

Jackson, Sherman. *Islam and the Black American: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*.

Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*.

Chapter 3, "The Great Mahdi Has Come! Islam, Nation of Islam, and the Minneapolis Study Group," pages 104-153.

*Lincoln, C. Eric. "The Verdict is 'Guilty' – The Sentence is 'Death.'" Chapter one in *Black Muslims in America: Third Edition*, 1-31. Grand Rapids: Eedermans Publishing Company, 1994.

*Smith, Christopher E. "Black Muslims and the Development of Prisoners' Rights." *Journal of Black Studies* 24.2 (Dec., 1993): 131-146.

*Davis, Darren and Christian Davenport. "The Political and Social Relevancy of Malcolm X: The Stability of African American Political Attitudes." *The Journal of Politics* 59.2 (May, 1997): 550-564.

Week 8, Wednesday, March 6

Black Theology and black politics

Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*.
Introduction and Chapters 1-3. Pages 1-121.

From: Thomas, Linda, ed. *Living Stones in the Household of God: the Legacy and Future of Black Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

*Cone, James. "Calling the Oppressors to Account: God and Black Suffering." Pages 3-13

*Wright, Jeremiah. "Doing Black Theology in the Black Church." Pages 13-23.

*Butler, Lee. "Testimony as Hope and Care African American Pastoral Care as Black Theology at Work." Pages 24-32.

Week 9, Wednesday, March 13

Black Church and Urban Politics, Part II: Trinity United Church of Christ

Grant and Grant, *The Moment: Barack Obama, Jeremiah Wright and the Firestorm at Trinity United Church of Christ*.

Week 10, Wednesday, March 20

Womanism and black feminist politics

*Cannon, Katie G. "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness." In *Katie's Cannon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*, 38-46. New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 2002.

*Cannon, Katie G. "Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick: The Womanist Dilemma in the Development of a Black Liberation Ethic." In *Katie's Cannon*, 122-128.

*Campbell, A. Elaine Brown. "Hope in the Holler." Chapter 4 in *Hope in the Holler: A Womanist Theology*, 67-89. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

*Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, ed. *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.
Selections TBA

*Wilcox, Clyde. "Race, Gender Role Attitudes, and Support for Feminism." *The Western Political Quarterly* 43.1 (Mar., 1990): 113-121.

*Rosalee A. Clawson and John A. Clark. "The Attitudinal Structure of African American Women Party Activists: The Impact of Race, Gender, and Religion" *Political Research Quarterly* 56.2 (Jun., 2003): 211-221.

*Harris-Perry, Melissa. "God." Chapter 6 in *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

SPRING BREAK*

Week 11, Wednesday, April 3

Varieties of Black Religious Thought I: Christian traditions

Hayes and Davis, *Taking Down Our Harps: Black Catholics in the United States*.

*Sherkat, Darren E and Christopher G. Ellison. "The Politics of Black Religious Change: Disaffiliation from Black Mainline Denominations." *Social Forces* 70.2 (Dec., 1991): 431-454.

*Gilkes, Cheryl T. "Together and in Harness: Women's Tradition in the Sanctified Church." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 10.4 (1985): 678-699.

Week 12, Wednesday, April 10

Varieties of Black Religious Thought II: Eastern thought

Adiele, *Meeting Faith: The Forest Journals of a Black Buddhist Nun*

Week 13, Wednesday April 17

Varieties of Black Religious Thought III: Humanism/Secularism

Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*.

Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*.

Chapter 4: "What if God Were One of Us? Humanism and African Americans for Humanism," pages 154-185.

*Holmes, Barbara. "At the Crossroads: Secular Reclamations of the Contemplative Life." Chapter 7 in *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, 169-183. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Week 14, Wednesday April 24

Prosperity

Harrison, Milman. *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion*

*Jakes, T. D. *The Great Investment: Balancing Faith, Family and Finance to Build a Rich Spiritual Life*. New York: Berkley Books, 2000.

Chapters 1-3.

* Harris-Lacewell, Melissa. "Liberation to Mutual Fund: The Politics of Differing Conceptions of Christ in the African American Church." In *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*, edited by J. Matthew Wilson. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007.

Conclusion and Wrap

Final Exam