

RELS 298 090
Special Topics: African-American Religions
TR 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm
Fall 2004
ECTR 111

Professor Eric L. Thomas
206 4B Glebe St.
3-3911
thomase@cofc.edu

Office hours: TR 9:00 am to 10:30 am

This course will explore the diversity of African American religions, from African roots to the Civil Rights movement, from Rastafari to Buddhism. How have religions provided tools involved the African American encounter of, and response to, racial oppression; as well as strategies and means for taking creative advantage of opportunities within American culture? How have religions helped African Americans create a distinct culture within a multi-cultural and constantly changing American society?

Exams: Combination of multiple-choice and short- and long-answer essay. Each quiz is worth 15%; mid-term and final are each worth 25%; pop-quizzes (4 in total) are collectively worth 20%.

Policies: Two un-excused absences and three incidents of tardiness allowed without five-point grade degradation.

Texts:

1. Du Bois, W. E. B. *Du Bois on Religion*. Edited by Phil Zuckerman. Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press, 2000.
2. *The Kebra Nagast*. Edited by Gerald Hausman. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
3. Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
4. Smith, Kenneth L. and Ira G. Zepp, Jr. *Search for the Beloved Community: The Thinking of Martin Luther King Jr.* Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1998.
5. Weisenfeld, Judith and Richard Newman. *This Far by Faith: Readings in African-American Women's Religious Biography*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
6. Willis, Jan. *Dreaming Me: From Baptist to Buddhist, One Woman's Spiritual Journey*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2001.
7. X, Malcolm. *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*. Edited by George Breitman. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1965.

Calendar:

Aug. 24: Introduction
Aug. 26: *Slave Religion*, Chp 1

Aug. 31: *Slave Religion*, Chp 2
Sep. 2: *Slave Religion*, Chp 3

Sep. 7: *Slave Religion*, Chp 4
Sep. 9: *Slave Religion*, Chp 5

Sep. 14: *Slave Religion*, Chp 6 and
Conclusion

Sep. 16: *DuBois*, “The Philadelphia
Negro” and “Credo”

Sep. 21: **Quiz**; *DuBois*, “Of the Faith”
and “Litany”

Sep. 23: *DuBois*, “Jesus Christ in
Georgia” and “The Church and the
Negro”

Sep. 28: *DuBois*, “Mary Brown,” “The
Second Coming,” “The Prayers of God,”
and “A Hymn”

Sep. 30: *DuBois*, “Pontius Pilate,” “The
Gift,” “The Color Line and the Church,”
“The Son of God,” and “Jacob and
Esau”

Oct. 5: *This Far*, Introduction and
“Praying in the Shadows”

Oct. 7: *This Far*, “Warrior Mother” and
“Amy Robbins”

Oct. 12: *This Far*, “Mary McLeod
Bethune,” “Emma B. Delaney,” and
Septima Clark”

Oct. 14: **Midterm**

Oct. 19: **Fall Break**

Oct. 21: *King*, Chps 1 – 6

Oct. 26: *King*, Chps 7 – 9

Oct. 28: *King*, Chps 12, 13, 18 – 20

Nov. 2: *King*, 24, 25, 29, 32

Nov. 4: *Malcolm*, “Grass Roots” to “The
Ballot or the Bullet”

Nov. 9: *Malcolm*, “The Black
Revolution” to “Appeal”

Nov. 11: *Malcolm*, “Audubon” to
“Mississippi”

Nov. 16: *Malcolm*, “Confrontation” to
“Last Answers”

Nov. 18: **Quiz**; *Dreaming*, Birth and
Odyssey

Nov. 23: *Dreaming*, Choices, Becoming,
and Return

Nov. 25: **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Nov. 30: *Kebra*, “Historic Implications”
and “Earth” to “Wisdom”

Dec. 2: *Kebra*, “Angel” to “Prophet”

Dec. 7: Reading Day

Dec. 8 – 15: **Final Exams**