American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

Philosophy and Religion Department
REL 321
Black Religion in America
3 Credit Hours
8 Week Course
Prerequisite(s): None

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Instructor Information

Course Description (Catalog)

This course is a survey of black religious movements, including the black church, black Jews, and the nation of Islam. In this course, we will trace the history of black religious movements in America by starting with African-American religion as it was originally practiced in Africa. We will then examine the religion of the slaves, the beginning of the black church movement, and the de-Christianization of the black church by black Jews and by members of the nation of Islam. You will read a variety of authors in this course many of who will share their own personal religious journeys with you.

(Note to Students: The course materials, assignments, learning outcomes, and expectations in this upper level undergraduate course assume that the student has completed all lower level general education and career planning coursework necessary to develop research, writing, and critical thinking skills. Students who have not fulfilled all general education requirements through courses or awarded transfer credit should strongly consider completing these requirements prior to registering for this course.)

Course Scope
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This course is divided into 8 weeks and is organized to give students a broad context in which to black religion in America. In this course, students will read about the black church, the nation of Islam, and black religious movements. Instruction is primarily textbook driven with accompanied online lectures and online classroom weekly forum discussion.

Because this is a survey course of a broad subject, it will out of necessity, cover each topic with a broad brush. However, the reference area and online conference room will allow a deeper look into any subject area that particularly attracts the student. The student will learn how to use the World Wide Web to research topics related to the material discussed and covered in the textbook.

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Course Objectives

After you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- Explain what is meant by “The Black Church,” in your own words, through classroom discussions
- Detail and summarize, in essay format, the roots of African-American religion by discussing its African origins, the religious practices of African-American slaves in slavery’s earliest stages, and the major slave revolts, the principal actors in these uprisings, and how these slave uprisings relate to the early formation of the Black Church
- Summarize the key issues in and the results of the Black Church freedom movement by identifying key players in and their goals for the black nationalism movement using essay responses to questions
- Explain what is meant by the “de-radicalization” and the “de-Christianization” of the Black Church and how it affected race relations and the mainstream churches using essay responses to questions
- Discuss how early African-American encounters with Judaism shaped African-American religion and detail the unique religious tradition of Black Jews in America either through writing a short paper on this topic or “orally” in classroom discussions
- Explain what is meant by “black radicalism” and summarize the importance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X in this history of African American religion either through writing a short paper on this topic or “orally” in classroom discussions
- Articulate the “black power movement,” the “black manifesto,” and the “black consciousness movement” and the role of the Black Church in relation to politics and militancy through writing a short paper on one of these topics
- Discuss the importance of the Nation of Islam in connection with African-American religion through writing a short paper on this topic
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Course Delivery Method

This elective course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by the last day of each week and include Forum questions (accomplished in groups through threaded forums), tests and quizzes (graded electronically), and individual assignments (submitted for review by the Faculty Member). Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this eight-week course.

Course Materials


Evaluation Procedures

The nature of an online course dictates a significant degree of independent work. I will provide you with the resources, experience, and guidance; you assume the responsibility for managing your time, learning the material, and completing assignments on time.

It is imperative that you read your email every time you log onto the Internet and the classroom. Important updates to your assignments, due dates, etc. will be sent to you via email.

For the purposes of this course, a “week” is defined as the time period between Monday–Sunday. The first week begins on the first day of the semester and ends on midnight the following Sunday.

I have designed this course so that weekly readings include:

- Several chapters of a text book(s)
- My weekly lectures which are located in “lessons.”
Grades in this course are based on the following:

- **Class Participation in Forums**: Participation will be evaluated based on the degree of interaction you have with your instructor and with your fellow students. This component is worth 20% of your final grade.

You are required to participate in classroom discussions referred to as Forums. Respecting your busy schedules, Forum work is asynchronous, meaning you are **not** required to be on-line at a specific time or place with the professor and other members of your course. Instead, you post your comments in the Forum. (You certainly may choose to interact synchronously with your classmates or me, via a chat room, however).

Forum work must, however, be posted in the classroom on the week assigned. Forums will **not** be accepted via email, snail mail, or phone calls. All posted forums must be relevant to the week’s reading. That is: week 2 requires a forum posting on the readings and assignments for week 2. Postings unrelated to the week’s forum will not be counted as participation.

Full credit for a Forum post is given for signing in weekly and contributing to the forum, each week, with meaningful and valid comments. Please see procedure below.

**The Forum Procedures are:**

1) Submit your initial posting(s) in the Forum section of the classroom, making sure that it is at least 200 words long and demonstrates:
   a) a recall of concepts and theories in the book and/or lectures,
   b) critical thinking and evaluation through examples that assess the validity of the concept,
   c) application of outside information to illustrate both the concepts being discussed and your opinion on this topic.

2) You must use APA formatting when citing your textbooks, lectures, and other outside sources. Please see either:

   [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/) OR

   [http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citapa.htm](http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citapa.htm)

   in addition to your online library for details concerning APA formatting, if needed.

3) Respond to the initial forum posting of at least TWO of your classmates, making sure that these are substantial responses of at least 100 words to each classmate.
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Helpful Hint: In order to complete your Forum assignments, click on the weekly topic and create a new post by clicking on the "Post New Thread" link at the top of this page. When you are done typing in the textbook, click “post message,” at the bottom of the text box. When responding to one of your classmates, you simply need to click on the "Reply" button to the right of their name. Again, when you are done typing in the textbook, click “post message,” at the bottom of the text box.

- Two, thoughtful reaction papers: The week before each paper is due, you will be given a choice of topics in which you are to react and respond in a 3-5 page paper. 3-5 full pages of text is roughly 750-1200 words. These thoughtful reactions papers are designed to provide me with a means for me evaluating your reading, understanding, assimilation, and synthesis of the course readings while providing you with a chance to draw on outside sources to enhance your learning and understanding of the course topics. This component is worth 20% of your final grade.

The due dates for these reaction papers are listed in your course outline, below, and will be listed in the “Assignments” section of the classroom, as well.

Please see the “Writing Expectations” and the “Citations and Reference Style” sections of this syllabus for guidelines on constructing these papers.

- Open Book/Open Note, UNTIMED, Midcourse Assessment: This component is worth 20% of your final grade. The due date for this assessment is listed in your course outline, below. Assessments are opened one week before they are due.

Assessments are located in the “Tests and Quizzes” section of the classroom.

- Open Book/Open Note, UNTIMED, End of Course Assessment: This component is worth 20% of your final grade. The due date for this assessment is listed in your course outline, below. Assessments are opened one week before they are due.

Assessments are located in the “Tests and Quizzes” section of the classroom.

- Four, Open Book/Open Note, Multiple Choice Quizzes: This component is worth 20% of your final grade. These multiple choice quizzes with cover the lectures and readings of the week in which your quiz is due. Each quiz will be 17 questions long. There is no time limit for completing your quizzes.

Quizzes are located in the “Tests and Quizzes” section of the classroom.

Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADED EVENTS</th>
<th>POSSIBLE POINTS</th>
<th>% OF FINAL GRADE</th>
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Forums 12.5 each week (for 8 weeks) 20%
Two Short Papers 50 each 20%
Midcourse Assessment 100 20%
End of Course Assessment 100 20%
Four Quizzes 25 each 20%

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**Grading Scale**

Please see the student handbook to reference the University’s grading scale.

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**Course Online**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s)</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Introduction to Black Religion in America, Slave Uprisings, the Black Church, and Black Baptists | * Explain what is meant by “The Black Church”  
* Summarize the origins of African-American religion from its beginnings in Africa  
* Describe the variety of religious practices of African-American slaves in slavery’s earliest stages | Wilmore (W) – “Introduction” pps. vii – x;  
“Introduction” pps. xi – xv;  
Chapters 1-4 | * Become familiar with your on line classroom  
* Participate in Forum classroom discussions  
* 1st Quiz Due |
| 2    | Black Church Freedom Movement, Black Nationalism, and Black Methodists, De-radicalization of the Black Church, Black Pentecostals, and Introduction to Black Jews in America | * Summarize key issues in and the result of the Black Church freedom movement  
* Identify key players in the black nationalism movement  
* Describe the | Chireau and Deutsch (C/D) – Introduction, Chapter 1  
W – Chapters 5-7  
L/M – Chapters 3-4 | * Participate in Forum classroom discussions  
* 1st Paper Assigned  
* 2nd Quiz Due |
<p>| 3 | De-Christianization of Hebrew Israelites, Rural Black Churches, African-American Jews, Black Power and Urban Black Churches, Future of the Black Church, Black Consciousness, and Hebrew Israelites | * Describe the process of the De-Christianization of the Black Church | W – Chapters 8-10 | * Participate in Forum classroom discussions * Midcourse Assessment Opened * 1st Paper Due |
| <strong>Synthesize and Assimilate the First Half of This Course</strong> | * Explain what is meant by “The Black Church,” discuss the history of its formation, and describe the various religious congregations within the Black Church | L/M – Chapters 5-7 | * Midcourse Assessment Due * Participate in Forum classroom discussions |
| 4 | * Discuss the formation of black religion in America by summarizing the origins of African-American religion as practiced in Africa and through describing the religious practices of slaves in slavery’s earliest stages | C/D – Chapter 2-4 | Lectures (In Lessons) |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>The Black Church and Militancy, Introduction to African-American Muslims, Black Churches and the American Dream, Jewish Teachings of an African American Muslim Community</th>
<th>contributed to the formation of the Black Church</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Discuss, in detail, the Black Church in relation to politics and militancy</td>
<td>L/M – Chapters 8-9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Discuss the relationship of the Nation of Islam to Jews and Judaism</td>
<td>C/D Chapters 5-6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Summarize the economic relationship between the Black Church and the “American Dream”</td>
<td>Lectures (In Lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Participate in Forum classroom discussions</td>
<td>* 2nd Paper Assigned</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* 3rd Quiz Due</td>
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<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Women in the Black Church, African American Christianity and Judaism, Youth in the Black Church, Affinities Between Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Discuss the role of women in the Black Church focusing on their membership and ordination</td>
<td>L/M – Chapters 10-11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Discuss the book of Nehemiah in relation to black theology</td>
<td>C/D Chapters 7-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Relate the participation of young people in the Black Church to family, identity, and economic dynamics</td>
<td>Lectures (In Lessons)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Participate in Forum classroom discussions</td>
<td>* 2nd Paper Due</td>
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<th>7</th>
<th>Music in the Black Church, Synagogues and African-American churches, Wrapping up Black Religion in America, Challenges facing the Black Church, and Judaism in the Caribbean?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Summarize the various roles and functions of music in the Black Church</td>
<td>L/M – Chapters 12-13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Describe the reasons for the establishment of African-American</td>
<td>C/D Chapters 9-10</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>* Participate in Forum classroom discussions</td>
<td>Lectures (In Lessons)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* End of Course Assessment Opened</td>
<td>* 4th Quiz Due</td>
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### Conclusion to Black Religion in America, Making Sense of it All

- Describe and discuss Lincoln and Mamiya’s presentation of the challenges facing the Black Church
- Discuss, in detail, the Black Church in relation to politics and militancy
- Summarize the economic relationship between the Black Church and the “American Dream”
- Describe and discuss the roles of women, young people, and music in the Black Church

**Lectures (In Lessons)**

- **End of Course Assessment Due**
- Participate in Forum classroom discussions

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### Policies

Please see the student handbook to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked about policies are listed below.

- [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Extension Process and Policy](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)
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WRITING EXPECTATIONS
All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- Typewritten in double-spaced format with a readable style and font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor).
- Arial 11 or 12-point font or Times New Roman styles.
- Page margins Top, Bottom, Left Side and Right Side = 1 inch, with reasonable accommodation being made for special situations and online submission variances.

CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE
Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow a widely accepted citation style, such as APA, Turabian or MLA. Please refer to the Online Library for further examples, or contact the instructor with questions.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Please note that APUS is in West Virginia which follows the Eastern Time Zone (http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/city.html?n=62). Therefore, all due dates and times are based on the Eastern Time Zone.

A serious risk of taking an online course is that, without face-to-face weekly sessions to keep you on-track, it may seem very tempting to procrastinate with assignments. (On the other hand, many of you are no doubt taking courses online because you are busy people who are good at time management). The course schedule is carefully put together so as to pace the readings and assignments fairly evenly over the semester.

Unlike traditional face-to-face classes, this course does not require students all to be in the classroom at a particular time, but this is not the same as setting one’s own assignment deadlines. This is one way that academically rigorous APUS coursework is distinct from self-paced, correspondence-type assignments, although many traditional correspondence courses also have deadlines. Students are expected to submit all assignments by the posted due dates and to complete the course according to the published class schedule.

It is important that you stay on top of your assignments, as they require significant reflection, integration, writing, and virtual interaction with your professor and classmates. Also, your ability to post meaningful comments to the Discussion Board will plummet if you are not up-to-date with your work.

Because of this, there are strict deadlines for handing in assignments, and there are penalties for Lateness – LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
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Having said this, I am well aware that we are all human and that from time to time we may experience life events that can derail our best efforts. For this reason, I include the “For Heaven’s Sake, Please Give Me One More Day!” grace period.

Here is how it works: each student gets ONE grace period. You must invoke the grace period BEFORE (not after) the due date, at which point you may have another TWO days to hand in your assignment without penalty. (If you are in the emergency room at the time when you should be invoking your grace period, I will waive the prior notice requirement with medical documentation. But, please try not to end up in the E.R.)

PLEASE NOTE: The quizzes and assessments are not eligible for the grace period, and there are NO make up assessments or quizzes

If it is five minutes before the deadline for an assignment, and you experience a failure of technology and cannot submit it, then you have two options:

(1) invoke your grace period;

(2) save your grace period for later and accept the late penalty consequences (a zero for that assignment) of leaving things until the last minute.

The best policy is, of course, to not wait until five minutes before the deadline before trying to submit your assignment.

Beyond the one-time grace period, should a student need to request additional time to complete an assignment due to deployment, extended emergency family and/or health conditions that are otherwise unavoidable, he or she must contact the professor before the assignment due date so the situation can be discussed and an acceptable resolution determined. Such situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
This institution complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) Universal Access Guidelines. Students with special needs should inform their individual instructors and the University’s student services staff.

NETIQUETTE
Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate—both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting—basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of
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learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Educator classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.

- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :), 😊

**DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**
Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

**Academic Services**

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES
The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to orc@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors’ publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.

- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.

- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

- **Turnitin.com:** [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.
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- **Tutor.com**: Students have access to 10 free hours of tutoring service per year through Tutor.com <http://www.tutor.com/>. Tutoring is available in the following subjects: math (basic math through advanced calculus), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), statistics, English, Social Studies, Career Services, and more. Additional information is located via the Online Library in the Tutorial Center (http://www.apus.edu/Online-Library/tutorials/index.htm).

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