

DRAFT
IDS 4215

God & Neo Slave Narratives

Winter 2017

Ada Renée Williams
Newhall Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Starr King School for the Ministry
2441 Le Conte Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709
awilliams@ses.gtu.edu

Course Description:

This course will explore the representation of God, gender and sexuality within the African American literary genre of Neo Slave Narrative. The Neo Slave Narrative emerged in the wake of the African American Freedom Movement in the early 1970's as a mode to consider and represent the implications and reverberations of American chattel slavery on the modern African American experience. This historical fictive approach sought to provoke imaginings that account for the empirical nature of traditional history is limited, if not salient, in its ability to provide a vision of particular aspects of the enslaved experience. Key elements of this genre are the ways gender, race and sexuality are constituted to define "blackness" and destabilize "whiteness." In this course we will read canonical works of this genre, interrogate Hegel's master slave dialectic as problematized by Fanon and key secondary texts from womanist, feminist, queer theory and racialized sexuality.

Course Objectives:

- Critique and analyze neo slave narratives, employing various methods of literary critical theory and womanist theological ethics.
- Identify the typical tropes and components of traditional neo slave narratives.
- Identify, critique, and analyze gender roles as they are presented in slave narratives, paying close attention to the ways God, gender and sexuality are changed by captivity.
- Assess the influence of literature on society and the influence of society on literature, understanding the ways in which the narratives both create and comment on their cultural moments.
- Write responses to literature that analyze, interpret, evaluate and create.

Grading Rubric:

20% Pre-Assignment & Daily Journal
40% Attendance & Class Participation
20% Student Led Conversations
20% Final Project - **This is built on from 1st Session. Students have one week to turn it in.**

Required Texts:

Bible: New Revised Standard Version
Butler, Octavia *Kindred*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.
Cannon, Katie Geneva *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.
Hayes, Diana L. *Hagar's Daughters: Womanist Ways of Being in the World*. Notre Dame: Paulist Press, 1995

Northup, Solomon *12 Years A Slave*. New York: SoHo, 2013.

Williams, Sherley Anne *Dessa Rose: A Novel*. New York: HarperCollins, 1986.

Pre-Assignment: Northup, Butler, Hayes and Williams

Session One:

A Woman Shall Lead Us

Film: 12 Years A Slave

Reading: Hayes and Northrup

Session Two:

What Is Patsy Saying

Reading: Cannon, Hayes and Northrup

Wednesday Class Prep: Slave Narratives

Session Three:

Unpacking Slave Narratives

Reading: Cannon, Slave Narratives, Williams

Thursday Class Prep: Selection from the Book of Judges

Session Four:

Unpacking Slave Narratives...About God

Reading: Book of Judges, Cannon, Williams, Butler

Session Five:

The Women Guide Us: Patsy, Dessa, Dana