

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

2019 Winter Intersession

Newhall Doctoral Teaching Fellow:

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IDS/CE 4212: A TheoEthics of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

COURSE DESCRIPTION: “Black Lives Matter” is a theological statement. Just as “blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves calls us to look within ourselves, beyond ourselves and unflinchingly ask, “What is God saying to the world today?” The Black Lives Matter Movement like the Black Power Movement which preceded it and the Civil Rights Movement before that, the resistance during reconstruction before that, the acts of insurrection during enslavement before that, all stem out of the inhumane treatment of Black people and the fight for Black people to be treated as fully human.

The American struggle for Black humanity is not disconnected from the global disdain of Blackness. Many historians root this phenomenon in the philosophical racism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Enlightenment writers such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Jefferson, Georg Hegel, etc. This course will engage the anti-black racism unifying their work to examine how it continues to inform the negative stamp¹ that has been signified² upon Blackness today. Thus, tasking Black people from one generation to the next to engage in efforts to recover Black materiality from racial opacity.

Utilizing various mediums of Black aesthetics from enslavement to the Black Lives Matter movement, slave narratives, Ida B. Wells Red Record, neo-slave narratives and contemporary accounts of mistreatment of Black people at the hands of the police. This course will engage Black rage: moral, ethical and theological. Furthermore, this course will interrogate passive and active Black social resistance, white male domestic terrorism in contrast to black on black crime and the yoke of the birthing paradigm on the Black woman. Through these conversations the student will develop models of resistance and agency with the ultimate goal of establishing a theoethic of #BlackLivesMatter.

¹ Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. New York: Nation Books, 2016.

² "significations [ify/ifid/ing]" defined as the "verbal art . . . which obscures and obfuscates a discourse without taking responsibility for doing so" (Long, 1). This art is a power game, a game of setting up power relationships in which language is the instrument of subordination of people.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Active participation and satisfactory completion of all assignments are required to secure a passing grade in this course. The following are required of all participants in the course:

- ❖ Attendance and Participation. The course has been structured to facilitate face-to-face teaching and learning and therefore assumes that we will all be present and punctual at each class. Further, to enable the course experience to be beneficial, **we are all expected to engage in discussions, pose questions, and make comments in the class.** Since these are such critical aspects of the course, attendance and participation will be graded.
- ❖ Papers & Book Reviews. These will focus on a selected books, articles and visual material explored in the course.
- ❖ Read visual material as narrative and effectively connect this to text, theory and/or biblical text.
- ❖ Define and apply womanist theoethic methodology.
- ❖ Identify and apply theoretical resistance to philosophical racism.
- ❖ Final Paper. The course project provides a look at the operations of a facet of a selected Africana biblical practice. The project will build off of an existing practice to reflect original engagement with the biblical text(s)/narrative and a selected Africana context. While an aspect of the project may be descriptive, its constructive focus should reflect interpretive engagements that focus on more contemporary and recent issues. The project can take various forms from a written paper, video documentary, short movie, sermon series, poetry/song, or other artistic rendering.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1. It is expected the student will attend each class for the full time scheduled. On the occasion that it becomes necessary for one reason or another to be absent, please be in touch with the Instructor.
2. In order to ensure that we all successfully complete the course, prior conversations with the Instructor in preparation for the course assignments are necessary. These brief consultation meetings enable us to set clear expectations for the written assignment, clarify the scope to be worked on, negotiate the form of the paper/assignment, as well as work through initial outlines for the assignment. Participants can begin to arrange for these conversations as early as necessary up to one week before the due date on an assignment. These conversations will occur via Skype.
3. We will use **inclusive language** for our instruction and interaction in the class with the hope that we will model this practice both in class and in our ongoing conversations. Inclusive language allows us to honor the contribution and participations of all persons. Therefore, we shall not use male pronouns or nouns when the persons being referred to can be of either sex. For example, “human beings” is preferred to “man” or “mankind.” Plural pronouns also help to avoid clumsy sentences, so “they” is

better than “he or she.” **The principle of inclusive language holds good both in our speech and writing in the class.**

4. **Plagiarism** is a serious offense at this institution. It will not be tolerated in any written work submitted in this course. Plagiarism is using another's words or ideas without acknowledging the source. It is a form of cheating, is unscholarly and unethical. Penalties for plagiarism include reduction of one's grade and possibly a failing grade for the course, depending on the extent of the violation. If you have any questions, please consult with the instructor or the teaching assistant, or acknowledge the source.

5.* **Written work should be submitted on the date indicated in the syllabus.** For each written assignment, participants can negotiate adjustments to submission dates up to three days prior to or after the due date of the assignment. Participants are not required to state the reasons for their inability to meet the required date. However, everyone taking advantage of this facility will be required to meet with the Instructor to clarify the scope of the written assignment and new expectations. ***REVIEW Appendix 1: Writing Rubrics.**

6. All participants, especially those with documented learning disabilities, should communicate any limitations and challenges they face in class participation and completion of assignments to the Instructor, should the need arise. Failure to communicate these situations in a timely manner may prevent accommodations being made available to ensure successful completion of the course.

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS POLICY

The GTU is committed to helping students realize their academic potential and eliminate physical, programmatic and attitudinal; barriers for students with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities in employment, education, public accommodations, transportation, state and government services, and telecommunications. According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States [. . .] shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” This policy and its procedures and resources relate to not just physical disabilities but also learning and other types of disabilities as well. All accommodations related to physical, psychological, learning etc. disabilities must be determined by the institution to not incur an undue institutional burden and should not substantively alter academic standards and learning outcomes of the programs. To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must be registered with Disabilities Resources at the GTU. Please talk to professor for further details if you need to register for academic accommodations.

PEDAGOGICAL GOALS

Our classroom is collaborative learning community, so it is important that you, as co-learners and co-teachers, are engaged in the shaping of the course as we move along the semester. You are invited to think critically as we learn how to analyze writings, artists’ oeuvre, photo documentation, videos, statements and interviews according to historical and religious methodologies. Remember that your intellectual and sensorial experience with the works of art, faith, and imagination matter, so please do not check your bodies, senses, and critical thinking at the door, they must enter into our classroom.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) AND EVALUATION

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Competently and concisely provide a formal analysis of texts, articles and visual material.

- 2) Competently conduct historical and contemporary analysis of philosophical racism on Black people in general, women and girls in particular by engaging primary and secondary sources— e.g. artwork, articles, etc.

- 3) Analyze course material utilizing a womanist theoethics as a locus for critical inquiry and how this methodology can be incorporated into ministry and your faith tradition.

- 4) Competently interrogate visual narratives by employing theoretical resistance specific to Black Theology, considering your experience as well as the social, historical, political, cultural contexts in which the work was composed.

- 5) Position yourself as a collaborator in the teaching learning process by participating in Moodle, class discussions/activities. Evaluation: all requirements.

ASSESSMENT - GRADING

The following indicates the weight of the assignments expected over the course:

- Pre-Assignments **25 %**
- Attendance and Participation **45 %**
- Final **30 %**

Grades will be awarded based on the following system:

A = 93% and above, A- = 90– 92.9%, B+ = 87-89.9%, B = 84–86.9%, B- = 80–83.9%, C+ = 77–79.9%, C = 74–76.9%, C- = 70–73.9%, D = 65–69.9%. Further, a grade of “Pass” requires at least 75%, while a student would receive a grade of “Fail” for less than 74.9%. In order to receive a grade of “Pass” participants will have to submit all assignments and receive a passing grade on each assignment.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Brown Douglass, Kelly. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*.
Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015.
- Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1975.
- Copeland, M. Shawn. *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being*.
Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*.
New York, NY: Nation Books, 2016.
- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamhata. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*.
Chicago, Ill: Haymarket Books, 2016.

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED PURCHASE

- Sims, Angela D. *Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror*.
Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016.
- Smith, Mitzi J. *Womanist Sass and Talk Back: Social (in)Justice, Intersectionality, and Biblical*

Interpretation. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018.

REQUIRED VIEWING

12 Years A Slave: The True Story of Solomon Northrup (Dir. Steve McQueen, 2013)

Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement (Dir. Lauren Grant, 2016)

https://youtu.be/-QukU6_VWk8

2 Fists Up: We Gon' Be Airight (Dir., Spike Lee, 2016)

<https://youtu.be/mU5rfn0mz-8>

Concerned Students 1950 (Dir., Adam Dietrich, Varun Bajaj, 2016)

<https://youtu.be/qXLhJHCWRa8>

PRE-ASSIGNMENTS

Prior to first class meeting students are expected to complete THREE pre-assignments. All written work needs to be done according to Turabian, no exceptions and must be submitted via email by 7:30p PST to adarenew@gmail.com.

Assignment 1:

Watch: *12 Years A Slave: The True Story of Solomon Northrup* (Steve, McQueen 2013)

Write: A film review with a critique of Mistress Epps and Patsey or Solomon and Bass, not exceeding 800 words. Formatted according to Turabian.

Watch: *Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement* (Dir. Lauren Grant, 2016)

https://youtu.be/-QukU6_VWk8

Watch: *2 Fists Up: We Gon' Be Airight* (Dir., Spike Lee, 2016)

<https://youtu.be/mU5rfn0mz-8>

Watch: Concerned Students 1950 (Dir., Adam Dietrich, Varun Bajaj, 2016)

<https://youtu.be/qXLhJHCWRa8>

Assignment 2:

READ: *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being* by M. Shawn Copeland

Write: A Book review, not to exceed 800 words.

Assignment 3:

Read: *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* by Keeanga-Yamhatta Taylor

Write: Submit two questions you have from the reading.