

Religion 694-1: SLAVE RELIGIONS
Slave Narratives as Religious Sources

Temple University
 1998 Spring Semester
 Katie G. Cannon, Ph.D.
 Office: Anderson 646
 kgcannon@vm.temple.edu

Anderson Hall
 Monday
 12 noon - 2:30 p.m.
 Tel: 204 - 1752

Course Description:

This seminar focuses on autobiographical narratives written or dictated by ex-slaves of African descent from 1750 to the twentieth century. The lectures, readings and discussions analyze hermeneutical models for evaluating the impact of divergent trajectories, claims and memories that constitute the religious landscape of enslaved people.

Seminar Requirements:

- Everyone is expected to
- (1) complete the assigned reading as scheduled (minimum 200 pages per week);
 - (2) participate in the weekly seminar discussions;
 - (3) prepare a brief (no more than two typewritten pages in duplicates) "**anatomy of the idea**" notebook entry on required reading (**A**) each class session, according to the designated format; (The first notebook entry is due **January 26, 1998** and every seminar session thereafter. The compilation of the entries with comments must be submitted on **April 27, 1998**.)
 - (4) share in the dialogical-collegial process (a) what I liked; (b) what I would like to know more about; (c) bibliographical suggestions;
 - (5) volunteer to rotate in the facilitation of cognitive maps; (The facilitator will distribute to the class a one-page diagram of the hermeneutical framework of a thinker represented in assigned reading (**C**) and interface the interpretative tool with assigned reading (**B**).

In addition, everyone must submit a **feasibility study** of a future research project (in duplicates) on **May 4, 1998**. This **feasibility study** should be analytical, constructive and in accordance with the guidelines.

Seminar Procedures:

During the first part of the seminar, the professor will lecture on the emancipatory historiography of racial justice.

During the second hour of class each participant will share a paragraph of free-style writing from her/his notebook entry based on the required reading (**A**).

The last part of the seminar will be spent in making connections between the theoretical issues raised by and between the lecture and the hermeneutical interpretations of the narratives.

Additional reading will be selected by students from sources chosen to meet the purpose of the course and the required final project.

SYLLABUS and ASSIGNMENTS

January 26: Introduction to Content and Process of Seminar

Background Reading:

Black Womanist Ethics by Katie G. Cannon

Written By Herself: Literary Production by African American

Smith Foster

God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Pre-emancipation

Gordon

Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave

The Slave Trade by Hugh Thomas

Women, 1746 -1892 by Frances

Jamaica by Shirley C.

South by Brenda E. Stevenson

Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism: The Hidden Costs of Being
David Armour

Black in America by Jody

February 2:

Lecture - **The Power of White Supremist Theology**

Required Reading:

- (A) Of Water and Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman by
Patrice Maladomi Some
(B) Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America by Wilma King, pp. xvii -
65.
(C) Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View ed. by Vera Lawrence
Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, pp.1-102 (Wynter, Mudimbe, Van Sertima)

February 9:

Lecture - **The Structured Subtleties of Racial Enslavement**

Required Reading:

- (A) Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South by Albert J. Raboteau,
pp.3- 92.
(B) Stolen Childhood, pp.67 - 167.
(C) Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas,
pp.103-168. (Kelly, Obenga, Russell-Wood)

February 16:

Lecture - **Symbols of Social Class vs. Facades of Respectability**

Required Reading:

- (A) Slave Religion, pp.95-210.
(B) More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas ed. by David Barry Gaspar
& Darlene Clark Hine, pp.3-110.
(C) Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas,
pp.169-240. (J. Thornton, Carew, R. Thornton, Bazin)

February 23:

Lecture - **The Mind Set of Internalized Hatred**

Required Reading:

- (A) Slave Religion, pp.211-321.
(B) More Than Chattel, pp.111-190.
(C) Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas,
pp.241-290 (Long, Benitez-Rojo, Glissant, Nettleford)

March 2:

Lecture - **Patriarchal Daughters as Surrogate Oppressors**

Required Reading:

- (A) Read any book listed on the course bibliography
(B) More Than Chattel, pp. 193 - 273.
(C) A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering, ed. by Emilie
M. Townes, pp. 1 -77 (Martin, Wood, Phelps, Riggs)

March 9 SPRING RECESS

March 16:

Lecture - **Mediums and Mechanisms for Gender Justice**

Required Reading:

- (A) The Spirituality of African Peoples: The Search for a Common Moral Discourse by Peter
J. Paris, pp. vi - 75.

- ix - 90. (B) Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness by Robert E. Hood, pp. Copeland, Williams, Kirk-Duggan)
- (C) A Troubling in My Soul, pp. 78 - 171 (Townes, Mathews,

March 23:

Lecture - **Cultural Anchors: The Counterdiscourse Within Black**

Religion

Required Reading:

(A) The Spirituality of African Peoples, pp. 77 - 163.

(B) Begrimed and Black, pp. 91 - 189.

(C) A Troubling in My Soul, pp. 172 - 218 (Baker-Fletcher,

Hunter, Grant).

DUE: Feasibility Study Step I - **Problem, Hypothesis, or Question**

March 30:

Lecture - **Disaporic Dimensions of Justice**

Required Reading:

(A) Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora,

ed. by Joseph M. Murphy, pp. 1 -

80.

(B) The Slave's Narrative ed. by C. T. Davis and H. L. Gates,

pp. xi - 111.

(C) A Troubling in My Soul, pp. 219 - 249 (Cannon and Gilkes)

DUE: Feasibility Study Step II - **Rationale for the Study**

April 6:

Lecture - **Negotiating Chaos: The Status Quo of the Body**

Politic

Required Reading:

(A) Working the Spirit, pp. 81 - 144.

(B) The Slave's Narrative, pp. 112 - 175.

(C) Critical Race Feminism: A Reader, ed. Adrien Katherine

Wing, pp. xiii -57.

DUE: Feasibility Study Step III - **Significant Prior Research**

April 13:

Lecture - **The Word as Deed: Perceptions in the Construction of Public Truth**

Required Reading:

(A) Working the Spirit, pp. 145 - 200.

(B) The Slave's Narrative, pp. 175 - 315.

(C) Critical Race Feminism, pp.69 - 162.

DUE: Feasibility Study Step IV - **Limitations and Key Assumptions**

April 20:

Lecture - **The Eradication of Systemic Oppression: Icons, Discourse Complexes**

and Symbolic

Required Reading: (one of the following)

Jubilee by Margaret Walker

Beloved, by Toni Morrison

The Price of the Child, by Lorene Cary.

Cambridge, by Caryl Phillips

Dessa Rose by Sherley A. Williams

Black Thunder by Arna Bontemps

Shadrach Minkins - From Fugitive Slave to Citizen by Gary

Collison

and

Critical Race Feminism, pp.165 - 220.

April 27:

Lecture - **Processes of Legitimacy: Hearing the Yeses In Our Own**

Heartbeats

Required Reading:

Critical Race Feminism, pp.223 - 395.

DUE: Feasibility Study Step V - **Methodology**

May 4:

Closure and Evaluation

Format for **ANATOMY OF THE IDEA Notebook Entry**

Step One

Generate a chaos of ideas by writing down at least 20 words at random in response to the required reading.

Step Two

Order the chaos by choosing three of your generative words and clustering the other words in your list around them.

Step Three

Name your three cluster-groups.

Step Four

In free-style, write for 3 - 5 minutes about each cluster.

Step Five

Construct a comprehensive statement about each cluster in terms of what/how/why.

Step Six

Compose a thesis paragraph, wherein you articulate the relationship of one cluster of ideas to another in order to focus your essay.

Step Seven

Write a "why crisis" (so what?)

Step Eight

Give the essay a title.

Feasibility Study Guideline

1. Problem, Hypothesis, or Question - Write an abstract that clearly states the focus of your research investigation.
2. Rationale for the Study - Why is this topic worthy of responsible, scholarly research?
3. Significant Prior Research - Mention the relationship of the scholarship of three others to your research topic; include at least three annotated sources and three reviews of books.
4. Limitations and Key Assumptions - This section is useful in defining how much will be undertaken. It will also govern the scope and perimeters of the research project.
5. Methodology - Outline step by steps the tools you will use for data gathering and your process of analysis.

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