

Race Religion and Rebellion

REL: 3179 – Section 6763

AFA: 3354 – Section 1229

Spring 2014

Mondays, 8th & 9th Periods (3:00 - 4:55 pm)

Wednesdays 9th Period (4:05 -4:55) Period

Flint Hall 105

Syllabus

General Description:

This course is an interdisciplinary examination of the interplay of religion, race and rebellion in the organization and execution of the various revolts, insurrections and social movements of black people in the U.S. from the slavery period through the Civil Rights and Black Power Eras of the 60s, 70s and 80s. We will utilize the writings of historians, sociologists and theologians in our examination of the role of religion in these revolts, insurrections and rebellions. The class will study biographical material, written as well as documented on film, video and audiotapes, on the lives of prominent activists in these struggles. Those lives we will examine most closely include: Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, and Gabriel Prosser, three men who planned and executed daring North American slave revolts; David Walker and his audacious *Appeal* and its call for armed revolt if need be to end slavery. Also examined will be the life and times of Rev. Henry McNeil Turner who was a minister and politician and a fierce critic of white supremacy and racial oppression. He chided blacks for worshipping a white image of Jesus saying they should see Jesus as a black person like themselves. Also considered will be the influence of religion on John Brown, the radical white abolitionist who led a heroic military raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859 to end slavery.

We will also learn about religious and secular 20th century blacks who rebelled against the racist status quo: For example, Marcus Garvey and his movement – *The Negro Improvement Association* - a religiously influenced international back to Africa Movement – which was the largest mass movement of blacks ever to be organized in the world. We will also investigate the religious as well as political dimensions of the great Muslim leader Malcolm X whose life – second only to Garvey - most clearly demonstrates the road to freedom via racial separation and nation building – one of the two recurrent themes in the long African American freedom struggle. To understand Malcolm X and his legacy, we must understand the Nation of Islam (NOI), built by his mentor and father figure, Mr. Elijah Muhammad, and his ideology. During Malcolm X's tenure in the organization, he catapulted it into a formidable international religious and social uplift black organization. Also examined will be the role and work of the Deacons for Defense, The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Black Panther Party (BPP), the three most militant movements of the Civil Rights and Black Power periods. While these groups were not religious ones, most of the members of SNCC and the Deacons were deeply ingrained in the culture and religious ethos of the African American community, which they consistently used in their efforts to rally the troops.

In summary our main goal throughout this semester is to investigate the role that religions—Christianity, Islam & Traditional African Religion - have played in the long African American

struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. These struggles have influenced all the other peoples of color as well as women in each group's struggle for justice here in the U.S. and many other parts of the world.

Course Requirements:

- 1.) **Reading the Assigned Selections Each Week:** This is a reading intensive course. Therefore reading the assigned texts thoroughly is the first and primary requirement for this course. A reading of the assigned material that is complete, careful and on schedule is essential for this course since our seminar format will be based on comprehension and discussion of what we have read, seen or heard. Each student is required to write out three important points (or questions) they learned from each of the assigned readings scheduled for that class date. You will be asked to share those verbally with the class during our discussion periods as your points/questions will provide the basis for much of our discussion of the assigned readings. I will take note of those persons who have their three points for each of the readings and those who do not. Having (or not having) these points to share during our class discussion will negatively affect the class participation portion of your grade.
- 2.) **Regular Attendance Is Required:** Role will be taken at each class session. Each person gets **three unexcused absences without penalty**. Unexcused absences after that will negatively impact your final grade. A number of unexcused absences (above the three that you get without penalty) can hurt your final grade (***each unexcused absence will take 2 pts off of your final grade.***) Being chronically late for class (without alerting me beforehand) or coming to class, signing in and then leaving before the class ends, without giving me a valid reason and getting prior approval, will be marked as an absent for that class.
- 3.) **Four Reaction Papers:** We do not have quizzes or exams in this class. Your grade is based on written assignments and class participation. Each student is to write four (**6 page minimum**) reaction papers during the term on the assigned readings. In these reaction papers you are to briefly summarize the content of the assigned readings, listing at least **three** new things you learned in **each** of the chapters of the assigned readings. Additionally, you will address several questions about the readings that will be found in the Guidelines for Reaction Papers which will be posted on Sakai and sent to you via e-mail). (Guidelines for reaction Papers will be sent via e-mail and posted on Sakai early in the semester.) These papers will be graded and make up **30%** of your grade. I will ask you to select your four dates for each of your reaction papers early in the term (generally by the third class) from the list of class readings which will be distributed in the second meeting of the class and sent to you via e-mail also.
- 4.) **Student In-Class Presentation of Class Readings:** By the third class, a sheet will be circulated for students to sign up for the class reading(s) they want to present to the class. (Dependent on the number of students in the class more than one such presentation may be required). These class presentations will be on the same date as one (or two) of your

Reaction Papers. Each student in preparation for his or her presentation is to develop an outline or synopsis of their assigned reading, photocopy it and distribute it to the class at the time of their presentation or send to me 24 hours ahead of class to send out via our class e-mail list. Or you may select to develop a Power Point Presentation to be shown in class on the day of your Oral Presentation of the assigned reading that you are leading the class discussion on. During this oral presentation, each student is expected to present the main themes and arguments in the readings assigned for that class. Also any questions that arose in your mind while reading the assignment should be shared with the class for discussion. You may also develop questions for your classmates. You are the teacher for this class and you can chose to present the material as you like. Powerpoint presentations are encouraged but not required. These presentations should be 15 to 20 minutes, followed by classroom discussion. These presentations plus the student handouts (or Power Point Presentation) make up **10%** of the student's grade for the term.

- 4.) **End of Term Research Paper:** A **minimum 12 page research paper** is due at the end of the semester on a topic agreed on by both the instructor and the student. I hope that you will find interesting topics to write about. You might want to write a biographical paper on one of the leaders we will meet via writings and documentaries and discuss in this class. They include men mentioned in the Course Description: Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, John Brown, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X as well as others like, Stokely Carmichael, Hughey P. Newton and others.) There are also heroic women who have played important roles in the freedom struggle who could be selected as a person to write about in your research paper. (They include, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ida Wells Barnett and others. In more contemporary times, we have had Miss Fannie Lou Hammer, Miss Ella Baker, Diane Nash Bevel and numerous others who you will learn more about during this class. You might choose to focus on an organization or a particular revolt .) Of course you can select the topic that interests you the most.

The deadline for Topic Approval and the 4 or more sources that you plan to use in preparing the research paper will be listed in the **Course Outline**. The sources for your Research Papers can be books, journal articles and academic or professional web articles. (At least three of your sources **should not** be materials we have read and discussed in this class but can be from our list of Recommended Texts I share with you below if applicable to your project) **The topic and the sources must be approved before you write your paper.** Deadlines for **Topics and research sources are to be typewritten and turned in to me by the date listed on the Course Outline. During the term, each student will update the class on their research. These dates will be found on the Course Outline also.** Toward the end of the term, each student will present a 5 to 8 minute oral synopsis of his or her research paper to the class. The oral presentation is to be accompanied by a brief class handout that is either an outline of the student's research or a synopsis of that research with a bibliography of the sources you are using in your paper. The Research Paper accounts for **30%** of the grade for the term. Your oral presentation and handout on your Research Paper will count for **10%** of your grade. You can see the importance of this Research Project because it represents **40%** of the grade in this class.

I urge you to utilize the excellent library resources we have at the University of Florida. We have **two expert librarians for both the African American Program and the Religion Department** who can help you with sources for your Research Projects. They are: For African American Studies –**Dr. Jana Ronan**, jronan@ufl.edu . Her direct phone number is 273-2629. The library specialist for the Religion Department is: **Dr. Blake Landor**, blaland@uflib.ufl . His phone number is 273-2644. I will be sending this syllabus to them and alerting them that you will be in touch for help with your Research Projects.

- 5.) **Attendance and participation in one class outing** to an African American Church service or some other important event here on campus or in the African American community during the semester will be required. Attendance and participation in this event will count for **10%** of your grade.

Grades will be based on six things:

Reaction Papers (Four) -	30%
Student Class Presentation of one	
Assigned Reading w/Handout	10%
Research Paper -	30%
Research Paper Presentation w/ Handout -	10%
Attendance & Participation in an event	10%
<u>Overall Classroom Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

GRADING SCALE for this Class

A = 100 -94	B- = 82-80	D+ = 69-67
A- = 93-90	C+ = 79-77	D = 66-64
B+ = 89-87	C = 76-73	D - = 63-60
B = 86-83	C- = 72-70	E = 59 & Below

This is intended to be a lively, student friendly course, as we will work together to understand the role of religion in the insurrections, revolts, rebellions and social movements of African Americans in their resistance to slavery, racism and oppression. All opinions will be valued and respected. We will be reading and viewing controversial and sensitive material about classism, racism, and sexism. I expect everyone to discuss these materials in a mature way.

EXTENSIONS ON WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be allowed an extension of a due date if they provide documentation of a reasonable problem including illness, death in family, university related activities and others deemed appropriate by the teacher. **Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines.** While there will be penalties for unexcused late submissions, it is better to submit written assignments late rather than not at all.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

An implied honor code is observed in all academic work at the University. Every student must operate according to an implied pledge that “any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor been given unauthorized aid.” In other words, cheating and plagiarism are breaches of academic honesty subject to disciplinary action, which may include a failing grade for the course. For more details, consult the website:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php#studenthonorcode>

ACCOMMODATIONS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students needing classroom accommodation should register with the Dean of Students Office, where the necessary documentation will be issued. Students must submit that documentation to the professor when requesting accommodation.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- 1). Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle For Freedom in America*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981.
- 2). David Walker, *David Walker’s Appeal To The Coloured Citizens of the World*, Black Classic Press, 1997.
- 3). Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed. with an Introduction, *Southern Horrors & Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, Bedford/St. Martin Press, 1997.
- 4). Simon Wendt, *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights*, University Press of Fl., 2010.

There will be required viewing of several film documentaries in this class. In some cases, you will view these films on your own time (Links will be sent or the film will be on reserve. In those cases, each person will need to write a minimum two page synopsis of the documentary. There will be additional required readings for the class listed in the Class Outline that will be posted on Sakai and sent as a pdf via our e-mail List for this course. They include among others, chapters from some of the texts listed below:

THE BOOKS BELOW ARE NOT REQUIRED

**TEXTBOOKS that may be of INTEREST for Your RESEARCH PAPERS
and from which we will read selected passages during the class**

These texts may be of interest because they are classics on the topic we are covering in this class. Additionally, we may read a chapter or more from some of them. When we do, these will be in the Sakai site for this class or sent to you as a pdf file. Also, these are sources that will provide more in depth coverage of some of the topics that we will cover this semester. They are also excellent resources for the research papers you will be writing for this class. Please Note: All

of these books, except for the Joanne Grant book can be used as sources in your Research Papers if applicable. **You are not required to purchase these books and some may be found in UF's Library if you plan to use in your Research Projects.**

Joseph Cephas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the U.S. 1800-1865*, Dover Publications, 2004.
James H. Cone, *The Cross And The Lynching Tree*, Orbis Press, 2011.

James H. Cone, *Black Theology & Black Power*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.

Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 3rd edition (revised & enlarged), Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998, ISBN 9781570751820.

Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 2nd edition, Indiana U.P. 2003, ISBN 9780253216304.

Juan Williams & Quinton Dixon, *This Far by Faith: Stories from the African American Religious Experience*, Harper-Collins Publ. 2003, ISBN 9780060934248..

Joanne Grant, ed., *Black Protest: History, Documents and Analyses, 1619 to the Present*, Fawcett World Library, 1968.

Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* with forward by Attallah Shabazz, Ballantine Ed, 1964.

Lance Hill, *The Deacons For Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*, University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan & The Nation of Islam*, Duke UP, 1999.

Martha F. Lee, *The Nation of Islam- An American Millenarian Movement*, Syracuse University Press, 1996.

Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle – SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Harvard U.P., 1981

Barbara Diane Savage, *Your Spirits Walk Beside Us: The Politics of Black Religion*, Harvard U.P., 2008.

William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture*, 1965-1975, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey*, (Revised & Updated Edition, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004

Russell J. Rickford, *Betty Shabazz: A Remarkable Story of Survival and Faith Before and After Malcolm X*, Naperville, Ill., Sourcebooks, Inc. 2003.

Stokely Carmichael with Kwame Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael*, Scribner Book, Co. 2003.

Rod Bush, *We are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*, New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. ed., *Is It Nation Time? Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, New York: Dell Publishers, 1999 [reprint, originally published in 1968].

James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, Illustrated Edition, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997.

Charles Payne, *I've Got The Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America, 3rd Edition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing & Trenton, Third World Press, 1994.

Hugh Pearson, *The Shadow of the Panther: Huey Newton and the Price of Black Power in America*, New York: Addison-Wesley, 1994.

Malcolm X, *February 1965 – The Final Speeches*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1992.

Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power- A Black Woman's Story*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1992.

Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism 1850-1925*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Assata Shakur, *An Autobiography*, Westport Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Co. 1987.

Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion – The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*, Oxford U.P., 1978.

Angela Davis, *Freedom on My Mind – An Autobiography*, New York: Random House, 1974.

George Jackson, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*, New York: Coward McCann, 1972.

Archie Epps, ed., *The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*, New York, William Morrow & Company: 1968.

Stokely Carmichael & Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, New York, Vintage Press, 1967.

Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, ed., by Marc Schleifer, New York: Marzani & Munsell, Inc, 1962.

Instructor:

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Office Hours: **Mondays: 10:30 – 12:30**
Wednesdays: **11:30 – 12:30** & by Appointment
January 5, 2014