

**Ethnic Studies 188/Urban Studies 132**  
**African Americans, Religion, and The City**  
**Spring 2009**  
**Solis 110, MWF 2:00-2:50pm**

**Prof. Gabriel N. Mendes**

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\*Please write "188/132" in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder.

**Office Phone:** 858-822-5118

**Office Hours:** Monday, 3:30-5pm & Friday, 3:30-5:00pm and by appointment

**Course Description**

"The history of African Americans is in large part a religious history."

Wallace D. Best

This course examines the development of an urban African American religious tradition emerging from the Great Migration of the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet we begin with the history of African chattel slavery's impact on the religion of black people in America and end with a fictional rendering of the future of urban America and the emergence of a new religion. Structured thematically and historically, this class explores the impact of migration and urbanization upon African American culture and the religious identity of black people. Through reading both primary and secondary sources students will learn to analyze and interpret religious texts, beliefs, and practices using standard scholarly methods and tools. Each student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understandings and practices of African American religious traditions in America.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the intersections between black urban religion(s) and selected contemporary issues, including race, gender, sexuality, and economic inequality.

**Logistics**

You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during the quarter. I respond to students' emails by 10am every weekday; I do not answer students' emails on weekends.

I do not accept late assignments or assignments submitted electronically.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class or by email.

I would prefer that you do not use computers during class sessions, even to take notes. If this is a problem for you, please let me know and we can discuss accommodations.

Please refer to the UCSD Principles of Community ([www.ucsd.edu/principles](http://www.ucsd.edu/principles)) for guidelines on standards of conduct and respect in the classroom. I reserve the right to excuse anyone from my classroom at any time for violating these principles.

**Required Texts** (Available at Groundwork Bookstore: 858.452.9625)

- 1) Albert Raboteau, Slave Religion (ISBN 0195174127)
- 2) W.E. B. Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk (Pocket Books, 2005) (ISBN 1416500413)
- 3) Eric Arnesen, Black Protest and the Great Migration (ISBN 0312391293)
- 4) Wallace Best, Passionately Human, No Less Divine (ISBN 0691133751)
- 5) James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time (ISBN 067974472X)
- 6) Samuel Freedman, Upon This Rock (ISBN 0060924594)
- 7) Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (Aspect, 1995) (ISBN 0446601977)

Selected chapters and journal articles placed on electronic reserve (<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/reserves.html>)

**Course Requirements**

*Attendance, Participation, Reading:* I expect each student to attend all class sessions. Since each regular class session will consist of a lecture and discussion it is vital that you keep up with the reading so that you can contribute to the class. You should expect to spend at least five hours per week on the assigned readings, as the average number of pages per week is over 100. Please also begin reading the Freedman and Butler books in early in the course so you'll be finished by weeks 8 and 10. Please feel free see me to discuss strategies for productive reading for the course.

*Weekly Quizzes:* At the end of each week I will administer a short quiz consisting of five short identification/definition questions. Your response only needs to be one or two sentences.

*Midterm:* This will be a pretty standard exam consisting of several identifications and an essay question, for which you'll have a choice between two prompts.

*Final Paper:* The final paper will be a 6-8 page analytical essay. You will identify a major theme from the course and select one secondary source from the assigned reading that addresses the theme. Then you will locate 3-5 primary sources and one other secondary source that addresses that theme. The result will be an analytical paper that uses primary source evidence in conversation with the already existing scholarly literature on your theme. I know this sounds complicated now, but I'll provide detailed guidelines for the assignment.

**Grade Distribution**

Attendance and Participation:	15% (more than 2 absences will result in a failing grade)
Weekly Quizzes	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Paper	40%

**\*\*\*If you are taking this course P/NP, you must take the quizzes, take the midterm, and submit a final paper, attend class and participate in order to get a passing grade\*\*\***

Obviously the same goes for those enrolled for a letter grade.

### **Schedule**

*\*All readings for the date listed must be completed prior to that class session. Schedule of reading is subject to change.*

#### **Week 1—Origins of African American Religion(s)**

March 30—Course Introduction and Overview

April 1—Raboteau, “Death of the Gods,” pp. 43-92

April 3—Raboteau, “Religious Life in the Slave Community,” pp.212-288

#### **Week 2—Of Our Spiritual Strivings: The Black Church and the Meaning of Freedom**

April 6—Raboteau, “Religion, Rebellion, and Docility,” pp. 289-321

April 8—Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapters I-IV

April 10—Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapters VII-X, XIV

#### **Week 3—Bound for the Promised Land: The Great Migration**

April 13-Arnesen, ed., *Black Protest and the Great Migration*, pp. 1-43, 64-67

April 15-Arnesen, ed. *Black Protest and the Great Migration*, pp. 106-23, 147-51, 166-71, 193-98

April 17- Beryl Satter, “Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality,” pp.43-76 (e-reserve)

#### **Week 4—In the Streets of the Black Metropolis: The Case of Chicago**

April 20-Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine*, pp. 1-12; Drake and Cayton, “The Power of Press and Pulpit,” in *Black Metropolis*, pp.412-429 (e-reserve)

April 22-Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine*, pp. 71-93

April 24-Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine*, pp. 147-90

#### **Week 5—The Black Church and the Civil Rights Movement I**

April 27—\*\*\*\*\*Midterm Exam\*\*\*\*\*

April 29— King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and Lincoln, “Reaching for the Masses,” pp. 98-134 (e-reserve)

May 1—Eyes on the Prize-Video

#### **Week 6—The Black Church and the Civil Rights Movement II**

May 4-May 8

Read Entirety of Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* prior to Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>

**Week 7—Black Power/Black Theology**

May 11—Wilmore, *Black Theology: a Documentary History*, pp.15-28, 43-47, 62-64

May 13—Wilmore, *Black Theology: a Documentary History*, pp. 67-79, 100-102, 377-88

May 15—West, “Prophetic Afro-American Christian Thought and Progressive Marxism,” pp.94-127

All on e-reserve

**Week 8—The Black Church and the Urban Challenge: A Case Study**

May 18-May 22

Read Entirety of Freedman, *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church* (very readable journalistic account of Rev. Johnny Ray Youngblood’s St. Paul Community Baptist Church in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn.)

**Week 9—Gender, Sexuality, and the Contemporary Black Church**

May 25-May 29

Lincoln, “The Pulpit and the Pew: the Black Church and Women,” pp.274-308 (e-reserve)

Further Reading to Be Announced

\*No Class Meeting Monday, May 25th

**Week 10—Race, Religion and Urban Dystopia**

June 1-June 5

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*, Entirety

**\*FINAL PAPER SUBMISSION: FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 3:00pm—6:00pm, Location TBA**

**Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of “interest” yet have no information about the major or minor and don’t realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at

UCSD, please contact Yolanda Escamilla, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at

858-534-3277 or [yescamilla@ucsd.edu](mailto:yescamilla@ucsd.edu).