

**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**Semester: Fall 2001**  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT  
**Philosophy 209.101 Philosophy and Theory of Black Religion**

INSTRUCTOR : Dr. R. P. Davis, Sr., ext.3612  
Office Hours: MWF 8am-9am 1pm-3pm

OFFICE Location MLK 0218  
E-mail: rpdavis@bowiestae.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the genesis of the African American religious tradition in North America and the philosophical worldview that informs and sustains it.

REQUIRED TEXT

Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*. New York: Orbis Books, 1992.

DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Dover Publications, Inc. New York: 1994.

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL READING

West, Cornell. *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Students will:

1. acquire a general understanding of the religious philosophy of Africans in American society from the period of North American slavery to present.
2. utilize some of the major techniques and methods historians employ in their craft;
3. become more proficient in exercising and refining their analytical skills;
4. develop critical reading and writing skills in the writing of a term paper;
5. increase their skills in the basic techniques of research;
6. develop public-speaking skills through class participation and oral presentations;
7. learn how to study and appreciate African-American philosophy as a response to oppression

Competency in the above areas will be demonstrated by attaining a grade of "C" or above according to the grading system described below.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students are expected to demonstrate competency in Philosophy of African American Religion by:

1. identifying historical factors in American society which led to an independent religious tradition among blacks in short answer, essays;
2. understanding the implications of blacks living in a society where it was acceptable to both a "slaveholder" and a "practicing Christian" as demonstrated in short answer essays;
3. identifying the historical manifestations of black radicalism in an essay assignment
4. comparing and contrasting the theologies of Malcom X and Martin Luther King, Jr. in an essay assignment

5. understanding the central ideas of readings from W.E.DuBois, Martin Luther King, Jr. Malcolm X, James Cone, and Cornell West as demonstrated on a mid-term exam consisting of multiple choice, true and false selections and responses to essay questions.
6. understanding the basic tenets of liberation theology as articulated from a Latin American, African American, Feminist and Womanist perspective as demonstrated in response to cumulative final exam and responses to essay questions.
7. applying theological concepts to contemporary issues (racism, sexism, and general issues of social justice) in essay assignments.

<u>CURRICULUM THEMES:</u>	<u>Corresponding Outcome or Objective</u>
Academic Scholar	outcome 1,5,6 all objectives
Multicultural and Global Perspectives	outcome 6; objectives 1,6.
Personal and Interpersonal Perspective	outcome 7;objectives 6,7.
Technological Applications	outcome 7

### TEACHING MODES

Teaching modes include student participation in group discussions, lectures, audio-visual materials and the submission and retrieval of class assignments via E-mail.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Quizzes.** Students will take 2 quizzes each of which will consist of 4 weeks course content 1 prior to the Mid-Term Exam and 1 prior to the Final exam.
2. **Homework Essay assignments** are mandatory and will be graded. They are intended to measure comprehension of class lectures, and other assigned readings. These essays are also preparation for the Mid-Term and Final exams.
3. **Mid-term Exam.** There will be a Mid-Term exam administered on the date specified by the institution. This exam will be cumulative from the beginning of the semester to the date of the Mid-Term and is intended to measure student achievement of course objectives to that point.
4. **Final Exam.** There will be a Final exam administered on the date specified by the institution. This exam will be cumulative from the material covered after the Mid-term exam only and is intended to measure student achievement of course objectives to that point.
5. Students will be expected to attend class regularly and demonstrate that they have read the assigned materials by participating in class discussions.

### THE GRADING SYSTEM

Average score of essay and quizzes	50%
Average scores from Mid-Term and Final exams:	50%

Total: 100%

A = 90-100, B= 80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60

ATTENDANCE POLICY: ATTENDANCE IS TAKEN ONLY DURING THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS. STUDENTS WHO MISS MORE ARE ABSENT.

**MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM POLICY:**  
MUST BE TAKEN ON THE DATES AND TIMES LISTED FOR EACH CLASS IN THE PUBLISHED SEMESTER SCHEDULE.

**PLAGIARISM POLICY:**

Plagiarism will result in a Zero (F) grade for the essay. Please give appropriate credit to your sources by using references with author, date of publication, and page number for direct quotations.

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

There is no extra credit awarded in this course.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The instructor will not communicate about grades by phone or E-mail.

**English Proficiency Requirement:**

After completing ENGL 101 and 102, Composition and Literature I and II, students must take and successfully pass Bowie State University English Proficiency Examination. Transfer students who completed their English composition requirements at another university should take the English Proficiency Examination during their first semester of enrollment at the University.

**CONTENT OUTLINE**

**WEEK 1**

Introduction to the Course

Building Community” Who are we and why are we here?

Reading Assignment from: I Am Because We Are. “An Introduction To Black Philosophy.”

Reading Assignment Handout from: Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South. “The African Diaspora”.

**WEEK 2**

Religious Conversion as a Mechanism of Control among the Slaves

Religion, Rebellion, and Docility

Reading Assignment from The Souls of Black Folk. **Chapter I** Of Our Spiritual Strivings.

Reading Assignment from W.E.B. Dubois Reader: “The Gift of the Spirit”

**WEEK 3**

Black Religion as a Response to White Oppression.

READING ASSIGNMENT: From The Souls of Black Folk, Chapter II Of the Dawn of Freedom

Read Chapter I Wilmore. Black Religion and Black Radicalism Chapter I “The Religion of The Slave”.

Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States. “Response to Protestant Paternalism: Negro Fraternalism”

#### **WEEK 4**

The Radical Nature of the Black Church

Read Chapter II & III Wilmore, “Not Peace But a Sword”

“Three Generals in the Lord’s Army”

READING ASSIGNMENT: From The Souls of Black Folk, “Of Booker Washington and Others”

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Quiz**

#### **WEEK 5**

The Black Freedom Movement

Handout from C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya. The Black Church in the African-American Experience. “The New Black Revolution: The Black Consciousness Movement and the Black Church”

Read Wilmore. Chapter IV

#### **WEEK 6**

African American Philosophical Thought

Read Cornel West. Prophecy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity. Preface and Introduction “The Sources and Tasks of Afro-American Critical Thought”.

#### **WEEK 7**

American Africans in Conflict: Alienation in An Insecure Culture.

(mid-term Examination)

#### **WEEK 8**

A Genealogy of Modern Racism.

The Tie That Binds. “The Image of Africa and the Afro Americans”.

#### **WEEK 9**

Racism and the Afro –American self-image

#### **WEEK 10**

Afrocentrism As a Response to Ethnocentrism

Molefi Kete Asante, Afrocentricity

#### **WEEK 11**

Black Theology and the failure of White Theology.

Read Handout. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”.

Read, Wilmore, Chapter VIII. “Black Power, Black People, and Theological Renewal”.

James Cone, God of the Oppressed.

Black Power and Black Theology.

**WEEK 12**

Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or A Nightmare.

READING ASSIGNMENT: Chapter 9. "Survival and Liberation in Black Faith".  
Quiz

**WEEK 13**

The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual.

READING ASSIGNMENT: Cornel West. Prophesy Deliverance! Chapter III "The Four Traditional Responses".

**WEEK 14**

Womanist Reflections on "The Black Church"

READING ASSIGNMENT: Handout from Deloris Williams. Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk.

**WEEK 15**

Cornel West. Prophetic Fragments. "Martin Luther King ,Jr.: Prophetic Christian as Organic Intellectual".

Review for Final Exam.

FINAL EXAM: Will be given on date scheduled by BSU.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Asante, Molefi K. Afrocentricity. Trenton: African World Press, Inc.,1988.
- Cone, James H. A Black Liberation Theology: Twentieth Anniversary Edition. New York:Orbis Books, 1992.
- Cone, James H. God of The Oppressed. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975.
- DuBois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1994.
- Kwamie, Anthony A. In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture. New York: Oxford University press, 1992.
- Lee, Fred and Jonathan Scott. eds. I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.
- Lincoln, Eric C. and Lawrence H. Mamiya. The Black Church in the African American Experience. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990.
- Magubane, Bernard M. The Tie That Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa. Trenton: African World Press, Inc.,1987.
- Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. Anchor Books, 1969.
- Raboteau, Albert J. Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Washington, James. Ed. A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.
- Washington, Joseph R. Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States. New York: University Press of America, 1984.
- West, Cornel. Prophecy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982.

West, Cornel. Philosophical Fragments. Trenton: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.

Williams, Delores S. Sisters in The Wilderness; The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk. New York: Orbis Books, 1993.

Wilmore, Gayraud S. Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People. New York: Orbis Books, 1992





**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**ANDREWS AFB EXTENTION CENTER**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**SEMESTER: Fall 2001**  
**Department of History and Government**  
**Philosophy 204. Introduction to the Old Testament**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Ronald P. Davis, Sr.  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF 9am-10am 1:00pm -3:00pm  
**OFFICE LOCATION** MLK 0203  
**OFFICE EXTENSION** 3612  
**E-mail** rpdavis@bowiestate.edu.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The primary objective of this course is to provide the student with a working knowledge of ancient, and contemporary understanding of the documents of the Old Testament. Particular attention will be paid to foundational elements. The student will survey, the various scientific methodologies implored by biblical scholars to interpret, analyze and reconstruct the content as well as the context that surrounds the composition of the Old Testament. The use of these methodologies include textual/literary, historical, form and redaction criticisms.

Students will learn to distinguish between reading the Old Testament as a faith document and reading it as an objective observer. Representative writings from various theological perspectives such as liberation, black, and feminist theologies will be examined to demonstrate how diverse segments of society have interpreted the Old Testament in light of their own existential realities. The intent of the course is not to offend the student of any particular perspective, but rather to enrich their understanding by exposing them to these other perspectives found both in the classroom and the community at large..

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Anderson, Bernhard W. Understanding the Old Testament. Fourth Edition. Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1986.

**Secondary reading material**

Cain Hope Felder. Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family. Orbis Books: Maryknoll, N.Y., 1989.

Cone, James H. God of the Oppressed. The Seabury Press: New York, 1975.

Oxford Annotated, Revised Standard Version, NRSV, New English or The Jerusalem Bible.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES:**

Students Will:

1. develop critical writing and essay skills;
2. acquire a general understanding of the Old Testament as a historical document;
3. develop effective public speaking skills through class participation in group discussions/debate
4. attain an understanding of how Biblical Scholars interpret scriptures using redaction, form, source, and textual criticism,
5. develop the analytical ability to distinguish between statements of fact and faith statements contained in the Old Testament writings.
6. attain an understanding of the role of theology in the formulation and interpretation of the Old Testament,
7. attain an understanding of how liberation, feminist, and black theology proponents interpret these ancient documents when addressing contemporary concerns.

Competency in the above areas will be demonstrated by attaining a “C” or above according to the grading system outlined in this syllabus.

**SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Students are expected to demonstrate competency in Introduction to Old Testament by:

1. identifying the major parts of the Old Testament in short answer questions,
2. distinguishing between statements of fact and faith statements in the Old Testament documents in essay assignment,
3. identifying, what certain marginal social groups (women and African-Americans) have interpreted as, liberation/domination motifs in the Old Testament, and discussing their implications for the larger society in general and the Church in particular in an essay assignment,
4. interpreting the creation story by comparing readings from the Ancient Near East on the beginning of humankind in an essay assignment.
5. identifying the various genres of the Old Testament on quizzes and exams consisting of multiple choice questions and true or false statements.

<b><u>CURRICULUM THEMES:</u></b>	<b><u>Corresponding Outcome or Objective</u></b>
Academic Scholar	outcome 1,2,3 all objectives
Multicultural and Global Perspectives	outcome 4-7 objectives 3,4.
Personal and Interpersonal Perspective	outcome 3,7 objectives 2,3,
Technological Applications	outcome 7

**TEACHING MODES**

The teaching modes include lectures followed by class discussions.

This major teaching strategy will be supplemented by:

student participation in group discussions, in class debates, and audiovisual materials.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Homework Assignments** are graded and therefore mandatory. These are intended to demonstrate that the student has comprehended and retained the information from the required text and class lectures.
2. **Term Paper.** Students must review one book or one of the major divisions of the Old Testament providing the five elements of good journalism. Students must provide at least the following: who wrote it , why, when , where and what is the significance for an understanding of Israel’s history? Students must make use of at least (2) authoritative sources (commentaries devoted specifically to the book chosen) other than the Bible. This paper should consist of at least 5 typed double spaced pages with a bibliography which does not count as a page.
3. **Final Exam.** The Final exam will be comprehensive from the mid-semester period to the time of the final exam. It is an assessment of the student’s achievement of the learning objectives. This exam must be taken on the date and time indicated in the class schedule.
4. No make up or late work will be accepted without prior permission from the instructor.
5. Instructor reserves the right to modify the organization and grading of this course to adjust for any unforeseen circumstances.

The Grading System:

Homework Assignments	15%
Class Discussions	10%
Term Paper	20%
Quizzes(3)	30%
Final Exam	<u>25 %</u>
 TOTAL	 100%

A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F= below 60.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is part of your grade calculated as follows: 0-1 absence: A=90-100, 2 absences B=80-89, 3 absences C=70-79.

FINAL EXAM POLICY:

This exam must be taken on the date and times listed for class in the published semester schedule.

PLEGIARISM POLICY:

Plagiarism will result in a Zero(F) grade for essay or term paper assignments. Please give appropriate credit to your sources by using references with author, date of publication, and page numbers for direct quotations

English Proficiency Requirement:

After completing ENGL 101 and 102, Composition and Literature I and II, students must take and successfully pass Bowie State University English Proficiency Examination. Transfer students who completed their English composition requirements at another university should take the English Proficiency Examination during their first semester of enrollment at the University.

## **Course Units and Reading Assignments**

### **Week One**

**There will be a study guide distributed for each chapter and students are expected to answer all questions and turn in upon completion.**

Introduction to the Course.

Discussion on the use of historical critical, redaction criticism, and form critical methods in understanding the Old Testament

The formulation of the Canon of the Old Testament

### **Week Two**

The Beginnings of Israel

Introduction : The Old Testament as the Story of a People.

Chapter One: The Creation of a People

Chapter Two: Liberation from Bondage

### **Week Three**

Assignment: Read Genesis 1-3 & 12-50

Yaweh Liberates from Bondage

The Call of Moses

The Exodus as a Defining Event in the Life of Israel

How was the world created?

The Origin of life.

Chapter Three: Covenant in the Wilderness

Chapter Four: The Promised Land

Chapter Five: The Formulation of An All Israelite Epic

### **Week Four**

Chapters Six: The Struggle Between Faith and Culture

Chapter Seven: The Throne of David

Chapter Eight: Prophetic Troublers of Israel

### **Week Five**

Chapter Nine: Fallen Is Virgin Israel

Chapter Ten: Judah's Covenant with Death.

Chapter Eleven: The Rediscovery of Mosaic Torah

### **Week Six**

Chapters Twelve: The Doom of the Nation

Chapter Thirteen: By the Waters of Babylon

Chapter Fourteen: The Dawn of the New Age

### **Week Seven**

Chapter Fifteen: A Kingdom of Priests

Chapter Sixteen: The Praises of Israel

Term Papers Due.

## **Week Eight**

Chapter Seventeen: The Beginning of Wisdom

Chapter Eighteen: The Unfulfilled Drama

Final Exam .

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, G.W. The History and Religion of Israel

Felder, Cain Hope. Troubling Biblical Waters.

Hayes, John H. An Introduction to Old Testament Study.

Fackenheim, Emil L. God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections

Russell, Letty M. Feminist Interpretation of the Bible.

Soulen, Richard N. Handbook of Biblical Criticism.