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Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00 – 6:00 PM and by appointment

Course Description
The Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) has been hailed as the most effective social and spiritual movement in the history of the United States. Grounded within the Black Christian Experience and sustained by the Black Church, the Civil Rights Movement continued generations of fighting against social injustice, economic despair and political oppression. This course will examine the Civil Rights Movement through the contributions of ten prophets who were committed to the pursuit of “liberty and justice for all” by speaking “truth to power.” Using theological reflection, the prophetic voices of Martin Luther King, Jr., Septima Poinsette Clark, Cordy Tindell “C.T.” Vivian, Ella Josephine Baker, James Arthur Baldwin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Gardner Calvin Taylor, Dorothy Irene Height, Bayard Rustin and Anna Pauline Murray, will be revealed, analyzed and interpreted through their leadership in the fight against segregation, jim & jane crow and the sins of racism, prejudice and discrimination. Further, we will explore the impact and influence of these prophets beyond the United States and beyond the 20th century movements such as #BringBackOurGirls, #BLM and others.

Course Textbooks


Lischer, R. The Preacher King: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Word that Moved America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997

**Course Objectives**
The student who successfully completes this course should be able:
1. To understand the vital importance of theological reflection of historical and cultural moments of the past.
2. To develop a working knowledge of the lasting importance of the Civil Rights Movement as a social and spiritual movement.
3. To effectively read, understand, learn from and engage texts involving the Black Christian Experience and the Black Church in particular.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the context of the local church, the global church, and the broader contemporary culture.
5. To understand the importance of engaging culture with a theological lens.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance/ Class Participation** – a course of this nature relies heavily on student participation. In fact, the course relies on the student’s “presence,” (physical presence as well as emotional, theological and spiritual “presence”). Our classroom is a safe space for introverts as well as extroverts.

**Assigned Readings** – assigned readings are prerequisite for each lecture. Although not all of the reading will be covered in the lecture, the lecture will be based on the fact that students have already accomplished the assigned reading.

**Book Reflection Assignments** – rather than using a traditional reading log, students will respond to each of the four (4) required texts. All papers will be submitted on time using 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred but not mandatory) with 1-inch margins, double-space and free of any glaring grammatical or spelling errors.

1) Reflection on James Baldwin’s **The Fire Next Time** (due in class 9/21)
   In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin offers two letters that give rise to a particular perspective and feeling during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on Baldwin and his writing. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

2) Reflection on Carolyn Dupont’s **Mississippi Praying** (due in class 10/19)
   In 239 pages, Dupont engages the convergence of white supremacy, religion and politics during the time of the Civil Rights Movement via in-depth chronicle and analysis of Mississippi. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on the effectiveness of Dupont’s data, analysis and commentary. Indicate whether you find the book and its premise effective or not. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.
3) Reflection on Richard Lisher’s The Preacher King (due in class 11/16)
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is perhaps the one person mentioned in this course that is most noted and most likely previously studied. Yet, Lisher offers a unique perspective of King as a homilitician who used the sacred pulpit to spread the “Gospel of Freedom.” In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) how might you best articulate King’s “Gospel of Freedom?” In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

4) Reflection on Lynne Olson’s Freedom’s Daughters (due in class 12/7)
Olson accomplishes a tremendous task in producing a volume that spotlights the valuable and revolutionary contributions of a host of forgotten women. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your reflection on why these women and their courageous acts have been written out of history. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

Personal Reflection Paper (due in class 11/23) – assessing your state of awareness and/ or engagement of issues related to the content/ context of this course, how have you grown, changed or matured in your thoughts, personal theology and/ or active engagement of Jesus’ Great Commandments (Matthew 22:36-40) throughout the semester? Has anything shifted, intensified or diminished? Compose a 5 page (minimum, not maximum) essay/ personal log on your personal growth as a result of assigned readings, lectures, conversations and fellowship throughout your engagement with this course.

Final Research Paper (due in class 12/14) – each student will compose a 10-page (more is fine, less is not) research paper. Based on your academic or ministerial interest, select a topic of inquiry that you will research for the duration of the course. Your research should be based on the general themes presented in the course as well as be connected to the overall subject matter. During the first couple of weeks of class we will discuss possible topics and/ or areas of engagement. More information will be provided during the course.

Warning on Plagiarism: Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found here:
http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hamilton/current/documents/hamreg_plagiarism.pdf. This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare for your assignments. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student will receive the consequences of this act according to the process established by the seminary.
Grading Policy

Student grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance/Class Participation: 7%
- Book Reflection Assignments (4): 48%
- Personal Reflection Paper: 15%
- Final Paper: 30%

The following letter grades and their achievement equivalents are used by the instructor to reflect a student’s performance in the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-96 Work of exceptional quality</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>95-93</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-86 Work of commendable quality</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>85-83</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-76 Work of acceptable but minimal quality</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>75-73</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-66 Substandard and barely passing work</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>65-63</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>62-below Failure</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</tbody>
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After all the requirements of the course have been completed, the instructor will use the following rubric for the assignment of grades, based on the overall performance of the class. The grades assigned will represent the instructor’s interpretation of the following standard:

A = Outstanding mastery of the subject – excellence is evident in preparation and participation in class sessions; unusual ability to retain, analyze and synthesize the material; a positive attitude; consistent productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

B = Superior mastery of the subject – sincere effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; mastery of the essential aspects of the material; a positive attitude; mostly consistent in making productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

C = Basic mastery of the subject – inconsistent effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; engagement with the material but difficulty in grasping some of its aspects; positive attitude; occasional contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

D = Inadequate mastery of the subject.

F = Failure – course must be repeated.
Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (September 14, 2017)
Assigned Reading:
Baldwin – The Fire Next Time
Carson, 1-34

Topics for Discussion:
Introduction to the Class
A Rubric for Theological Reflection
The Role & Function of the Prophet
Predecessors of the Civil Rights Movement
The Black Church – a glimpse

WEEK 2 (September 21, 2017)
Reflection on James Baldwin’s The Fire Next Time due in class
Assigned Reading:
Dupont – Mississippi Praying
Carson, 35-60

Topic for Discussion:
The Need for a Movement
segregation, jim & jane Crow
The sins of racism, prejudice and discrimination

WEEK 3 (September 28, 2017)
Assigned Reading:
Dupont – Mississippi Praying
Carson, 61-106

Topic for Discussion:
Organizing the Organizers (SCLC, SNCC, NAACP, the Black Church)

WEEK 4 (October 5, 2017)
Assigned Reading:
Dupont – Mississippi Praying
Carson, 107-132

Topic for Discussion:
Montgomery Bus Boycott
Southern White Evangelicals
WEEK 5 (October 12, 2017) – READING WEEK
Take a breath and spend time catching up and getting ahead on assigned reading. Work on your forthcoming reflection assignment due next week. Begin reading the Lischer book on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

WEEK 6 (October 19, 2017)
Reflection on Carolyn Dupont’s Mississippi Praying due in class
Assigned Reading:
Lischer – The Preacher King
Carson, 133-165

Topic for Discussion:
Generational Tensions
Hidden Figures (the voices and the presence of the Women)

WEEK 7 (October 26, 2017)
Assigned Reading:
Lischer – The Preacher King
Carson, 166-203

Topic for Discussion:
Bombingham!
16th Street
The Birmingham Movement

WEEK 8 (November 2, 2017)
Assigned Reading:
Lischer – The Preacher King
Carson, 204-243

Topic for Discussion:
Freedom Riders

WEEK 9 (November 9, 2017) – READING WEEK
Take a breath and spend time catching up and getting ahead on assigned reading and writing assignment!
WEEK 10 (November 16, 2017)
Reflection on Richard Lischer’s *The Preacher King* due in class
Assigned Reading:
Olson – *Freedom’s Daughters*
Carson, 244-287

*Topic for Discussion:*
Freedom Riders
The Challenges of Integration

WEEK 11 (November 23, 2017)
Personal Reflection Paper due in class
Assigned Reading:
Olson – *Freedom’s Daughters*
Carson, 288-332

*Topic for Discussion:*
The March on Washington
The White House

WEEK 12 (November 30, 2017)
*Assigned Reading:*
Olson – *Freedom’s Daughters*
Carson, 333-382

*Topic for Discussion:*
Selma

WEEK 13 (December 7, 2017)
Reflection on Lynne Olson’s *Freedom’s Daughters* due in class
*Assigned Reading:*
Carson, 383-438

*Topic for Discussion:*
Making Connections to Movements around the Globe
Liberation Movements across the African Diaspora

WEEK 14 (December 14, 2017)
Final Research Paper Due

*Topic for Discussion:*
Making Connections to the late 20th & 21st centuries
#BringBackOurGirls
#BLM
**Highly Recommended Additional Reading:**


**Highly Recommended Additional Viewing:**
*Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years 1954-1965*, Henry Hampton, Director, DVD, 2010

*I Am Not Your Negro*, Raoul Peck, Director, DVD, 2016

*Selma*, Ava DuVernay, Director, DVD, 2014

*4 Little Girls*, Spike Lee, Director, DVD, 1997

*13th: From Slave to Criminal With One Amendment*, Ava DuVernay, Director, DVD, 2016

**Highly Recommended Additional Listening:**
*Sing For Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through its Songs,* Smithsonian Folkways, 1992