Term Information

Effective Term	Autumn 2026

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	African American & African Std
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	African-Amer & African Studies - D0502
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	4343
Course Title	African American Religions
Transcript Abbreviation	AfricAmerReligions
Course Description	This course examines history & variety of religious expressions, behaviors, & worldviews created by descendants of Africans brought to America as chattel slaves. From slavery to the present, the role of religion to respond to racialization & the hierarchies it involves—to contest or accept, reimaging or reframe “race” & “blackness”—will be the concern of this class.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites	None
Exclusions	Unavailable to students who have taken REGSTDS 4343
Electronically Enforced	Yes

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings	Religious Studies

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code	05.0201
Subsidy Level	Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank	Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors
Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations
The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Understand some of the ways that African American religious traditions have responded to the historical catastrophe of slavery and the ongoing presence of antiblack racism.
- Engage in critical analysis of religion as a human phenomenon that responds to contingent social circumstances.
- Learn to analyze “religion” as both intellectual and affective, as a matter of embodied practice as well as intellectual reflection.
- Reflect on the history of the academic study of religion and the way that biases (from a desire to justify colonialism to a desire to represent slavery as a catastrophic break from history) have shaped academic approaches.
- Be able to compare—and use comparison to highlight essential dynamics of—religious movements and traditions, with attention to how these religions have been innovated and altered over the course of their history.
- Engage in individual research—both on contemporary religious digital media and its larger mediasphere and through a prolonged research project pursuing a thesis related to the wider work of the class.

Content Topic List

- African American Theology
- African American Spirituality
- African American Religions

Sought Concurrence

No

Attachments

- CurriculumMap&ProgramLearningGoals_AAAS.docx: AAAS Curriculum Map
  (Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)
- GE+Themes+Submission+Dew+African+American+Religion.docx: GE Theme Form
  (Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)
- December Revisions for GE Proposal for AFAMAST 4343 African American Religions.docx: Revised Syllabus 12.19.25
  (Syllabus. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)
- AFAMAST 4343 GE Cover Letter 12 19 25.docx: Cover Letter 12.19.25
  (Syllabus. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)

Comments

- Please see feedback email sent to the unit 11-11-2025 RLS
  Please see feedback email sent to the unit 12-16-2025 RLS *(by Steele,Rachel Lea on 12/16/2025 12:26 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Beckham,Jerrell	09/18/2025 02:53 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Dew,Spencer L	09/18/2025 04:42 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	10/14/2025 10:10 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele,Rachel Lea	11/11/2025 03:23 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Beckham,Jerrell	11/20/2025 01:16 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Dew,Spencer L	11/20/2025 01:17 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	12/01/2025 02:02 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele,Rachel Lea	12/16/2025 12:26 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Beckham,Jerrell	12/19/2025 02:00 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Dew,Spencer L	12/19/2025 02:01 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	01/12/2026 05:11 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	01/12/2026 05:11 PM	ASCCAO Approval

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and ciences
Department of African American and African Studies
486 University Hall 230 North Oval Mall Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 292-3700 | http://www.aaas.osu.edu

December 19, 2025

Dear Members of the Themes I Subcommittee of the ASC Curriculum Committee:

I write in response to the letter from December 16, requesting more response to the earlier unanimous approval of African American and African Studies/Religious Studies 4343 with one contingency.

The Subcommitte asked "that the unit provide additional detail in the syllabus and the GEN form regarding how the Theme is the central focus of the course. Specifically, they would like to see that tradition, culture, and transformation are an intrinsic part of the descriptions of major course assignments (syllabus pp. 1-2)."

In addition to the earlier changes, including prompts for the journal assignment, I have now added, upon reflection, more ample signposting throughout. In particular, I significantly revised paragraph 1, 2, and 4 under "Requirements" along with expanding the description of four of the "Course Learning Objectives." Under the "Class Schedule" I added detailed engagement with the specific concerns of the GE, in order to frame our work together for students, for meetings 1 through 19. All of these additions/revisions are marked in the proposal syllabus in green highlighting. I stopped at week 19 because I do still want the course's specific focus to shift in response to the contributions of students and our collective conversations together. The class, after all, is "living" the way cultures and traditions are in the view I offer here.

I found doing these revisions to be useful, and I believe the current syllabus is, indeed, a stronger version, more legible to and useful for students.

Many thanks for your help with this. I am happy to provide more revisions as requested.

Yours,

Spencer Dew
Associate Teaching Professor, Comparative Studies and African American and African Studies
Director of Undergraduate Studies, African American and African Studies
Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies, Comparative Studies
The Ohio State University
Dew.50@osu.edu / 7732909401

AFAMAST / RLSTD: "African American Religions"
4343
15-week class
Dr. Spencer Dew
GE Theme course in "Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations"
Office: Hagerty 424
Office Hours: TBA
Format: Lecture

Course Description:

This course examines the history and variety of religious expressions, behaviors, and worldviews created by the descendants of Africans brought to America as chattel slaves. From slavery times to the present, the role of religion to respond to racialization and the hierarchies it involves—to contest or accept, reimaging or reframe "race" and "blackness"—will be the central concern of this class. Proceeding comparatively, analyzing a wide range of religious traditions as responses to this unique set of circumstances, this course will show how the circumstances of being racialized as black in the USA have pushed invention and adaptation, innovation and change, extremes of creativity and depth of contemplation.

Requirements / Grade Distribution:

1) Our work together will involve intensive reading (involving notetaking and preparation for class discussion), serious analysis and discussion of texts in class, and active "ethnographic" engagement in media of and from specific movements. While robust engagement with texts and conversation—always reading and thinking "with pen in hand"—is understood here as an intellectual default, the focus on "ethnographic" engagement represents part of this class's focus on traditions and cultures as living, always changing elements of human culture. The innovations and transformations that religious people—whether thought "leaders" or media "influencers" or everyday community members—create, as responses to and ways of negotiating (also shifting) social circumstances, are a primary area of focus for this class. "Religion," as I will say repeatedly, is never an eternal or ahistorical "thing," but a human creation, fluid, adapted by and adapted for human needs. Attendance and participation in discussion are expected and required. Participation and in-class writing/quizzes will be worth a total of 10% of your final grade.

2) Another 10% of your grade linked to the day-to-day work of the class is the keeping of a course journal. This journal will contain entries that track your responses to and questions about the readings and the class discussions. Ideally at least one entry per week will be written in advance of one of our meetings, and at least one entry per week will be written in the wake of—and wrestling with the work done during—these meetings. The journal will be read by the instructor on a weekly basis, via Carmen, and feedback will be given. Grades will be given for cumulative work at four points during the semester (2%, 2%, 2%, and 4% for these four moments). The grade will be based on thoroughness, on evidence of sustained engagement with class themes and ideas, and on how each student responds to the individual feedback provided. While journal prompts will emerge organically from the conversation of our class, and be determined largely by the exchanges we have, as a community of learning, I have included some sample prompts in the syllabus below. Attention, throughout your journal entries, should be made to the specific questions of tradition and culture and transformations of and by such traditions and cultures. Religion as an engine of human creativity, a means of negotiating and reshaping circumstances—political, economic, social, even metaphysical—will be the central concern of this class and should be engaged, with theoretical finesse and a real sense of questioning, in this journal assignment.

3) 10% of your grade will be determined by the submission of three *primary* sources of digital media related to African American Religion. Each source will be accompanied by a two or three sentence analysis contextualizing the source in relation to our class. This assignment is due on the deadline marked below.
4) A research paper on an aspect of contemporary African American religion will both worth, in total, 50% of your final grade. *The purpose of this paper will be to focus on aspects of African American religious traditions and cultures as they are transformed in response to social circumstances.* Your paper is expected to directly respond to the GE Theme for this class, and I will provide detailed guidance throughout the process as to how to match your work to the intellectual questions framed by the Theme. The cumulative 50% of your grade constituted by this assignment will be distributed as follows:
    a. 10% for approval of a topic in consultation with the professor by the deadline marked on the schedule below.
    b. 10% for an annotated bibliography—in Chicago style, with at least one sentence summary *and* one sentence explaining the relation of the source to your project constituting the annotation—due as per the schedule below.
    c. 10% for the approval of a thesis statement, due as per the schedule below.
    d. 20% for the final paper (I will read any student's full or partial draft one time during the semester, providing feedback in the margins using Word's "track changes" function. I urge you to take advantage of this, and I also urge all students to schedule office hours to talk about their paper at least once during the semester).
5) A final exam, requiring original essays synthesizing your analyses of the readings, lectures, and discussions and framing responses to major themes raised in the class, will each be worth 20% toward your final grade.

Grading Scale:
93 - 100 (A)
90 - 92 (A-)
88 - 89 (B+)
83 - 87 (B)
80 - 82 (B-)
78 - 79 (C+)
73 - 77 (C)
70 - 72 (C-)
68 - 69 (D+)
60 - 67 (D)
Below 60 (E)

Required Texts:

- **Anthony Pinn, *What is African American Religion?***
- **Albert Raboteau, *Canaan Land***

All other texts will be provided as PDFs on the course's Carmen page.

Course Learning Objectives
At the completion of this course students should be able to successfully do the following:

- **Understand some of the ways that African American religious traditions have been transformed by practitioners to responded to the historical catastrophe of slavery and the ongoing presence of antiblack racism.**

- **Engage in critical analysis of religion as a human phenomenon that responds to contingent social circumstances. How do religious movements and traditions help to negotiate and react to broader social contexts?**
- **Learn to analyze "religion" as both intellectual and affective, as a matter of embodied practice as well as intellectual reflection and to understand how "religion" is constantly changing—being changed and innovated by its practitioners—in response to contingent historical locations.**
- **Reflect on the history of the academic study of religion and the way that biases (from a desire to justify colonialism to a desire to represent slavery as a catastrophic break from history) have shaped academic approaches.**
- **Be able to compare—and use comparison to highlight essential dynamics of—religious movements and traditions, with attention to how these religions have been innovated and altered over the course of their history, the means of such innovation and change, and the rationale and consequences of such.**
- **Engage in individual research—both on contemporary religious digital media and its larger mediasphere and through a prolonged research project pursuing a thesis related to the wider work of the class.**

Statement of Teaching Philosophy: In keeping with best practices in Black Studies, this course approaches the classroom as a space for dialogue and exchange, expecting of you—the students—a significant role in shaping the conversation and foci of our work together. It is important to emphasize that this class is seen as a process, one of working *together*, wrestling with the topics, texts, themes, and ideas presented in the syllabus and drawing connections and conclusions. This approach is particularly notable in relation to the GE theme of this course: that our intellectual inquiry and research production this semester will be tied to "Traditions, Cultures and Transformations" is predicated both on your own engagement and thinking, as students, and my role, as professor, in providing curation, guidance, and feedback. Our class's connection to this theme is predicated on your own engagement in that, rather than spell out of "signpost" the specific connections of each week's reading to this theme, I expect you all, as thinkers, to work through these connections. This responsibility I take to be central to your role as active participants in a learning community. Likewise, my responsibility is, repeatedly (whether in structuring discussions, in offering context to readings in class, in written feedback to assignments, and in one-on-one meetings in office hours) to guide and push you through and deeper into these connections. For this reason, I have tried to keep this syllabus as brief as possible, without extraneous summaries of explanations of the readings. The connections between these readings and the GE themes will emerge through our discussions together, and while I will guide those conversations, I do not want to hand you "answers" to questions of the relation of a given text to questions of cultural change, the mutual influence and even co-creation of cultures and sub-cultures, and the way such cultural traditions inspire, respond to, and are shaped as a consequence of broader ideological, technological, and environmental innovation and change. To be clear, my operating assumption regarding this class is that we are working together to unearth, through analysis and exchange of ideas, arguments for and observations about the centrality of these terms to our reading and thinking together. By the end of this semester, we will all have a much deeper, more nuanced, and comparatively informed understanding of "Traditions, Cultures and Transformations."

Relation of final research project to the GE theme "Traditions, Cultures and Transformations": Following the above comments on pedagogical approach, I want to make explicit one aspect of this course that will relate directly to the GE theme, the final research paper. Again, this relation will be both your

responsibility, as student, and mine, as your guide through the process of selecting a topic, pursuing independent research, and drafting and revising a final product. When you submit your topic I will provide some feedback—and perhaps initiate and individual conversation—on how to best frame this topic in relation to the course theme. The intention of the assignment is both to allow me to judge the viability of the topic as the basis of a project and to serve as a necessary checkpoint along the way toward the final paper, a point at which there will be exchange between the professor and the student about the viability of the project and its relation, specifically, to the GE theme of the course. So, too, the annotated bibliography assignment and, following that, the submission of a thesis statement. At all of these points the link between your final paper and the GE theme will be structured by a series of exchanges, with my responsibility as professor being to help direct your thinking and research in ways that would most robustly and generatively engage the phenomenon of cultures and traditions transforming and transformed by broader historical and social shifts. It is important to make clear my assumption that your final research paper is a dynamic, iterative project, pursued *through conversation*—with the professor, amongst the class, between the student as thinker and reader and the texts of the semester. Such an approach to research is, again, in keeping with Black Studies methodology and best practices, emerging from a view of the classroom as a space of exchange and mutual inquiry, conversation and collaboration as well as independent research and thought.

Due dates for assignments are listed on the syllabus and course Canvas site. However, if you miss an assignment, you will be provided two 24-hour assignment make-up days that will allow you to turn up to two late or missing assignments without excuse or justification. One date will be prior to midterm and the other following midterm. Those dates are noted in the syllabus and on Canvas.

Instructor Feedback and Response Time:

- **Grading and feedback:** For large weekly assignments you can expect to receive feedback within **7 days**.
- **Email:** Emails will be replied to within **24 hours Monday through Friday**.

The above list should give students an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember a student can call **614-688-4357(HELP)** at any time or if he, she, or they have a technical problem.)

Course Guidelines:

Discussion and communication guidelines: Please remember to be respectful and thoughtful whether students agree or disagree with each other's remarks.

Writing style: You should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine when responding or commenting on response papers, but you should still aim to use good grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Tone: At all times the goal is to maintain a supportive learning community where individuals are safe and where people can express themselves as well as disagree or agree amicably.

Citing your sources: When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.

Backing up all your work: Compose all academic work to be posted in a word processor first, and save your work judiciously, and then copy to the Carmen discussion.

Student Services and Advising:
University Student Services can be accessed through Buckeye Link. More information is available here: https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/

Advising resources for students are available here: http://advising.osu.edu

Copyright for instructional materials:
The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Course Policies and Resources

Land Acknowledgement
Whether in person or online, we acknowledge that the land The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that have and continue to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Academic Misconduct
It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/.

The use of AI cannot be a substitute for critical thinking or engagement, and it is unacceptable to have generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools write assignments for you. Such use, without acknowledgement, constitutes plagiarism. If you choose to use a GAI tool such as ChatGPT, OpenAI Playground, Bard, Pilot, or any similar platform, to help you find sources for your paper, you will need to cite the platform as a source. If the source of your work is unclear, I may require you to meet with me to explain the ideas and your writing process. (language adapted from brandeis.edu)

Disability Services
The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Whether in person or online, if you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site for resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious Accommodations:
Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance. A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Office of Institutional Equity.
Policy: Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances

Mental Health
Whether in person or online, as a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766.

CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766- and 24-hour emergency help is also

available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Sexual Misconduct/Relationship Violence
Whether in person or online, Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu

Diversity
The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. Whether in person or online, we are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Class Schedule

Meeting 1: Introduction to Class: Pilgrimage to Elmina Castle and to Oyotunji African Village

- **Readings: Omari, "Completing the Circle" and Lefever, "Leaving the United States"**
    - **How is "Africa" imagined by those who never lived there, and how might the "African" as a creation of the African American imagination function in response to the catastrophe of slavery and the ongoing dynamics of anti-black racism? This opening course considers the ways religious "tradition" is both a historical process and a rhetoric for adding authenticity to innovations. Two specific case studies, a twentieth-century American invention of "African" religion, unique in some ways yet related to historical African traditions in other ways; and the "religious pilgrimage" that emerges from visits, by those of African descent, to historical slave fort sites in Africa.**

Meeting 2: Slavery: Religion of the Enslaved versus "Slave Religion"

- **Readings: Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America" and Cobb, "*Black Panther* and the Invention of Africa" and the Willie Lynch Letter**
    - **Continuing our exploration of imagining Africa, this session examines, in particular, the way engagement in a shared tradition can be used as a critique (as Wheatley's response to white racism within Christianity) and as an re-engagement with the past via speculation about the future (as in the popular culture instance of Wakanda, not unlike the Oyotunji we looked at least week). Finally, we'll see how fabricated artifacts of historical tradition—the fake "Willie Lynch Letter"—nonetheless speak to real historical and present circumstances, serving to orient and articulate the problem of history brought about by chattel slavery.**

Meeting 3: "African Retentions?"

- **Readings: Raboteau, "Death of the Gods" and Ida C. Ward, "Review of *The Myth of the Negro Past* by Melville J. Herskovitz"**

- **On the one hand, "historical retentions" indicate a direct continuation of traditional practices and beliefs from Africa to the New World. Yet how do we make sense of the radical changing contexts, both social but also theological? Do Southern Baptists worship water spirits? And what, too, of the work of scholars invested in the potential political ramifications of their work? Herskovitz could be categorized as "anti-racist," but is such a lens useful for the study of historical traditions and cultures? Do we learn more about Herskovitz's context (or that of his "foil" Frazier) than we do of the case studies in his work?**

Meeting 4: Islam in Enslavement (and Signifying Prayers): The Case of Omar Ibn Said

- **Readings: Ernst and Lo, *I Cannot Write My Life*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4**
  - **Today's topic is cypto-tradition, culture undercover: why, and how, might an enslaved Muslim misrepresent his religious commitments? To what degree can we, today, read the record left behind as a kind of double-speak of "signifying," a subversion? Or it is even fair to think of Christianity and Islam, in such circumstances, as distinct "traditions"?**

Meeting 5: Hush Harbors and Uprisings

- **Readings: Dwight Hopkins, "Slave Theology in the 'Invisible Institution'" and "The Confessions of Nat Turner" and selection from Fredrick Douglass, *Life of an American Slave***
  - **More attention to covert religiosity here, including covert social organizing—whether for political or economic or romantic or entertainment purposes. Where does religion end and culture begin? Or, to complicate that question, how does religious metaphysics equate with widespread cultural "folk belief"? These are both historical and—urgent—contemporary questions, as reference to contemporary epistemology, social forms, and art will make clear in lecture. The issue of isolating "tradition" and "culture" will be called into question.**

Meeting 6: Spirituals

- **Readings: Thurman, "The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death" and Cone, "Black Spirituals"**
  - **In a culmination to our previous discussions, here we will consider both art forms as religious expressions and as covert or "crypto" communications (political, theological, and otherwise). We will listen to analyze some musical texts (and some visuals) together in class.**

First Journal Grades Assigned this week (while journal prompts will emerge organically from our conversations as a class, and will thus be determined via the particulars of our exchanges as a community, I am including some sample prompts in this syllabus to give you all a sense of the assignment. For instance, for the section of the class graded at this point, I might ask something like "Reflect on the role of tradition and the transformation of tradition in Omar Ibn Said's case. How does the act of concealing his religious commitments, and—separately?—framing these commitments as legible to and ripe for appreciation from a [white] Christian audience represent an instance of the sorts of sub-cultural relations to hegemonic culture and/or the sort of innovative transformation of a sub-culture or reshaping of a sub-culture by a dominant culture that we've been discussing this far in relation to the specific Theme of this course?")

Meeting 7: The Question of "Religion" and Its Study

Readings: Pinn, *What is African American Religion*

- **Some questions to consider here: How does "religion" relate to subjectivity? Is subjectivity always embedded in tradition? In culture? And how does attention, as Pinn argues, to archaeology and art history and fashion useful for understanding what "religion" actually looks like and *does* on the ground, in social context? Why might church hats me important data for the study of how human cultures interact? What do Warhol's Brillo boxes tell us about "culture," and how might they relate, as Pinn has it, to methodologies for the study of, in particular, African American lived experience?**

Meeting 8: From the Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square

- **Readings: Dewulf, "Sangamentos on Congo Square?" and Heywood and Thornton, "Central African States…" and watch, "All In a Mardi Gras's Day," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b7Gg_A3_XQ**
  - **The line between religion and political organizing or even forms of governance will be explored here, as will the line between religion and cultural/aesthetic forms. Mardi Gras Indians are claimed by the New Orleans Tourism Commission as a patrimony of the city, but Dewulf points to an alternative genealogy and, through that, a set of alternative functions. In class we'll also consider the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, and the idea of an impossible sovereign, the King that never was and never could be.**

Meeting 9: Hoodoo, Conjure, and Voodoo

- **Readings: selections from Zora Neale Hurston and Chireau, "Africa Was a Land a Magic Power" and Roberts, "Green Money Means Success"**
  - **Central to this GE is attention to how cultures interact. Chireau's work makes a case for radical (and widely ignored) interchange between enslaved Africans and poor whites, leading to the creation of a common American occult culture as well as distinctive, separate traditions. We'll also consider Great Depression-era New Orleans and the way that religious traditions respond to and help people negotiate economic structures, logics, and realities.**

Meeting 10: Double Consciousness, Conversion, and Spiritual Nostalgia

- **Readings: Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" and Perez, "Spiritist Mediumship…"**
  - **What traditions exist for the imagination of and engagement with ancestors? Is "whiteness" as ideology, and, as such, a religion? We'll build on the previous past weeks' work to complicate claims about religion's entanglements with politics and with the ways that a range of embodied practices—from songs to foodways—can be read as doing both religious and political cultural "work."**

Approval of Research Topic due this week

Meeting 11: Whiteness: Theorizing Race and Citizenship

- **Readings: DuBois, "The Souls of White Folk" and selection from J. Cameron Karter and Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?"**
  - **We'll continue the last session's discussion, with explicit attention today to "American exceptionalism" as not one but a series of traditions. The liberal state as a subject of religious tradition, democratic culture as sacralized—to get at these concerns, we'll engage two historic and one contemporary texts that both describe and theorize facets of the American cultural situation in general and for African Americans in particular.**

Meeting 12: Civil War as Sacred; Reconstruction and Lost Cause; Black Metropolises

- **Readings: Raboteau, *Canaan Land* and Smith, "Exodus" and selections from Ida B. Wells**
    - **Explicit tropes of tradition—like the symbol of Egypt, the narrative of escaping slavery via the Mighty Hand of God—are here considered as they are used and reused in shifting historical and cultural contexts. The development of diverse urban social realities—the metropolis, especially the American metropolis, as a unique event in history and a rich petri dish for cultural innovation—will also be examined.**

Submission of Digital Sources due this week.

Meeting 13: The Great Migration

- **Readings: Sylvester Johnson, "The Rise of the Black Ethnics" and Dew, "E Pluribus Unum: Black Ethnic Religions and American Citizenship" and selection from Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis***
    - **What does it mean to see American citizenship as "salvation"? Our examination of the dynamics of cultural innovation in cities—and in relation to American political subjectivity and participatory possibilities—is continued this week with attention to, among other groups, the Moorish Science Temple of America. The role of other facets of society, like body weight and eating styles, will also be considered for the ways that select traditions have invested them with specific political (and metaphysical) valences.**

Second Journal Grade assigned this week(while journal prompts will emerge organically from our conversations as a class, and will thus be determined via the particulars of our exchanges as a community, I am including some sample prompts in this syllabus to give you all a sense of the assignment. For instance, for the section of the class graded at this point, I might ask something like "How is the traditional story of the Exodus, as recorded in the Hebrew Bible, expanded and reimagined for application in African American history? As you consider such a transformation of a tradition in reaction to societal structures, please be specific about—and cite specific instances of—the way this narrative becomes a meaningful symbol, an embodied reality, and a way to conceive of and discuss historical change more broadly")

Meeting 14: Week 14: From Marcus Garvey to Daddy Grace

- **Readings: Hodges "Charles Manuel 'Sweet Daddy' Grace" and Sigler, "Grace Has Given God a Vacation," Burkett "Religious Ethos of the UNIA"**
    - **We will continue our exploration of the "Black Gods of the metropolis" with detailed engagement in the ecstatic religiosity of Sweet Daddy Grace and the entrepreneurial capitalism of that movement, as well as issues of gender and sexuality within this movement and in response to the wider culture.**

Meeting 15: Father Divine

- **Readings: Griffith, "Bodily Salvation" and Primiano, "The Consciousness of God's Presence Will Keep You Well"**
    - **Another in-depth engagement with specific instances of religious traditions, here re-imagining democracy and the body. Questions of utopia as related to tradition and culture—in tension, as possibility—will also be explored.**

Meeting 16: Pentecostalism and Socialism

- **Readings: MacRoberts, "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism" and Foner, "Reverend George Washington Woodbey"**
    - **Economic utopia? How does American Marxism relate to racial history and, more broadly, African American religious traditions? How does Rev. Woodbey use his mother as a rhetorical device, writing to her in order to explain his view of history and politics? Similarly, how does Pentecostal embrace of and engagement with the body add to our previous thinking on physicality and ecstasy?**

Annotated Bibliography due this week

Meeting 17: MLK

- **Readings: Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and Carson, "Martin Luther King…" and Cone, "Integrationism and Nationalism…"**
    - **Tension between progressive and assimilationist visions of American society versus claims to a distinctive and necessarily separatist culture will be considered, with attention to the frame of "nation" on both ends. We will consider our examination of sacralized readings of the American political project, too.**

Meeting 18: Black Power

- **Readings: Harding, "The Religion of Black Power" and selections from Stokely Carmichael**
    - **The major focus today will be global connections—and tensions—between movements and cultures.**

Third Journal Grade assigned this week (while journal prompts will emerge organically from our conversations as a class, and will thus be determined via the particulars of our exchanges as a community, I am including some sample prompts in this syllabus to give you all a sense of the assignment. For instance, for the section of the class graded at this point, I might ask something like "Discuss 'blackness' as a global concept, a rhetorical means of uniting subaltern subcultures in a call for radical social transformation." I might also as, after the readings of the 16th, 17th, and 18th meetings, for you to compare the role of "blackness" as a subcultural frame across various thinkers we've studied together. This question might be something like "While 'blackness' is central to some subcultural imaginings of community and the potential for transformation, various traditions highlight other aspects of identity and argue for a shared consciousness via those aspect—such as class, or Christianity, the human, the worker. Reflect on the rhetorical and practical function of organizing attempts at cultural transformation via such diverse terms, drawing on specific examples of at least three distinct terms.")

Meeting 19: Black Theology

- **Readings: James Cone, selection from *Black Theology and Black Power***
    - **With Herskovitz we asked about the role of the scholar's political intentions; here we ask about the location of a theological reimagination of Christian tradition—as "black," even "black culture." At this point in the semester we'll also launch into our final set of—explicitly modern—religious case studies, both within and beyond traditions, exploring interventions into a common culture (from Cone's "ontological Blackness of Christ" to Sun Ra's insistence on an otherworldly origin and end point for humanity).**

Meeting 20: Black Churches

- **Readings: Eddie Glaude, "The Black Church is Dead" and Washington, "The Making of a Church…" and Shayne Lee, "Prosperity Theology"**

Thesis Statements approved by this week

- **Readings: Selections from Emilie Townes and selections from Alice Walker**

Meeting 22: Nation of Islam

- **Readings: Curtis, *Islam in Black America,* Chapter 4 and 5 and Elijah Muhammad, selections from *Message to the Blackman in America* and selection from *The True History of Jesus* and selections from Gibson and Karim, *Women of the Nation***

Meeting 23: Nation of Islam and the Human

- **Readings: Louis Farrakhan, "The Wheel" and selections from Finley, *In & Out of This World: Material and Extraterrestrial Bodies in the Nation of Islam***

Meeting 24: Thinking "The Human"

- **Wynter, "Unsettling…" and selection from Jackson, *Becoming Human***

Meeting 25: Otherwise, 1

- **Screen Sun Ra, *Space is the Place* and readings on Sun Ra TBA**

Meeting 26: Otherwise, 2

- **Readings: Crawley, "Introduction" to *Blackpentecostal Breath***

Meeting 27: Blackness

- **Readings: Anderson, "Ontological Blackness in Theology" and McKinnis, "Divine (Primordial) Blackness"**

Meeting 28: Toward the Future

- **Readings TBA**

Research Papers due this week

Fourth Journal Grade assigned this week (while journal prompts will emerge organically from our conversations as a class, and will thus be determined via the particulars of our exchanges as a community, I am including some sample prompts in this syllabus to give you all a sense of the assignment. For instance, for the section of the class graded at this point, I might ask something like "We encounter attempts at reimagining culture via reference to radically new frames of being—such as the notion of the alien—and experience—such as sound and breath. Reflect on the role of such moves, as aesthetic as well as political, in conceiving of both critiques of culture and tradition and gesturing toward new possibilities of cultures and traditions.")

Final Exam according to University schedule

Goals and ELOs

Goals (for all Theme classes)

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out ofclassroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.

As an upper-level course in religious studies, this class hinges upon critical inquiry into the human practices of "religion"—the work of imagining worlds, orienting oneself within such worlds, and using this imaginary to give meaning to the given realities of historical and social circumstance. Students will be asked to reflect critically on the religious logic and practice—both intellectual work and embodied experiences—at play in diverse religious movements, to think comparatively about radically disparate religious traditions as approaching similar social "problems," and to analyze the approaches used by scholars both historical and contemporary in examining religious claims and communities.

ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.

This class hinges upon extensive, comparative examination of the work of "African American religions" to make sense of the history and current social conditions of racialized individuals and communities in the United States—with reference to theology and metaphysics, rituals and ethical claims, historical narratives and notions of identity.

ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.

To study religion requires an ability to identify, describe, and analyze patterns of thought and behavior. A range, then, of human experiences will be examined—from Mardi Gras Indian street performances (with their vocal declarations of sovereignty and invisibility) to the moral critiques offered by African American Christian leaders of the Civil Rights movement. One task of this class is to consider the value of framing a given practice/experience as "religious," in part through evaluation of the merits of comparative readings—i.e., does the meditative beadwork of a Black Masker preparing his costume usefully align with the carrying of physical copies of scripture as part of a protest against segregation? What might it mean to call both of these experiences "religious," and what does that labeling, of each experience, do for our theorization of what religion is and how it functions?

ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

This course should be transformational in terms of expanding each student's familiarity with the range of religious creative expression in African American history, each student's awareness of the range of social functions engaged by religious belief and practice, and each student's analytical abilities in terms of thinking about the religious work of others and the ways scholars (such as themselves) approach such work. The heavy role of discussion and the use of a

journal for written reflection (and to chronicle changing attitudes and approaches) is essential for this ELO.

Goals unique to Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations courses

GOAL 3: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

This class offers a survey—albeit necessarily stuttering and incomplete—of the ways African Americans have engaged in religious imaginaries to respond to, first, the conditions of chattel slavery and, then, continuing discrimination, dehumanization, and marginalization within a society largely characterized by anti-black racism. Relation between African American sub-cultures (as racialized or identifying as more niche groups such as Jews or Kemetics or Moors) and larger structures such as the legal system, the economy, and the government will also be considered in detail.

GOAL 4: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals' experience within traditions and cultures.

Two major modes of difference will be explored in this class: first, the difference between those racialized as black and those outside that labeling, and, second, differences of religious identification both within major, named “traditions” and outside of them. The varieties of Christianities and Islams, for instance, will be given attention, as will the social difficulties of, say, being Kemetic in a world dominated by Christianity and Islam.

ELO 3.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.

The central aspect of culture influencing the work of this class is race: “African American religion” as a category, this class argues, is a spectrum of human attempts to make sense of and negotiate the social realities of race.

ELO 3.2 Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.

Again, race is the “big” idea that has led to the diversity of cultural creation that we call “African American religion.” We will consistently analyze the ways that humans have responded to this idea—rejecting it, revising it, incorporating it—from Hush Harbor gathering appropriating a Christian vocabulary to imagine earthly freedom to Moorish Science thinkers sacralizing USAmerican citizenship as “salvation” in the here-and-now to Nation of Islam thinkers offering a cosmology and anthropology that inverts the claims of white supremacy while keeping the hierarchical structure intact.

ELO 3.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.

The relations between a wide variety of African American religious traditions and the hegemonic society will be a central concern here, as will the relation of such religious cultures among themselves, with particular attention on extremes of critique (the Nation of Islam's early take on the mainstream Black Church) and hybridity or “religious recombination” (as in Chireau's work on the level of radical exchange between black and white folk magic practitioners in the colonial and early American eras).

ELO 3.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.

Structured in part as a historical survey, this class will examine a wide range of African American religious ideas and practices, with attention to change and continuity over time. The ways religious practitioners shift and innovate to respond to changing contingent contextual circumstances will also be a focus of analysis.

ELO 4.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.

Attention to differences between religious movements is central to the comparative methodology at the core of this course. We will also offer comparative analysis of individual thinkers whose legacy extends beyond specific “traditions” (like Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali) and we will apply a comparative analytic to scholars of religion, as well, attentive to biases and unexamined assumptions at the heart of academic work on religion.

ELO 4.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues

As a class on “African American religion,” the role of race, as a conceptual category and legal framework, plays a central role here, though this class will also examine “the ethnic turn” within 20th century African American religion (as a rejection of the category/logic of race) and give attention to ideologies of gender in a range of African American religious systems (from the rise of female thinkers in Nation of Islam, at the margins of institutional authority, to the invention of “Womanist Theology” as critique of and expansion upon earlier forms of thought).

GE Theme Course Submission Worksheet: Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

Overview

Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Traditions, Cultures & Transformations)

In a sentence or two, explain how this class "fits' within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

(enter text here)

This course offers a survey of and critical examination into the variety of religious expressions developed by the descendants of those who were brought to the US via slavery. As such, questions of theodicy (why does suffering happen) and reflections on racialization (the use of categories and hierarchies) are central to these religious traditions, which, moreover, are engaged with and innovated upon across history. The story of African American religion is a story of constant transformation of cultures and traditions, fueled both by changing historical circumstances (the end of enslavement, the Great Migration, the Great Depression, etc.) but also by intellectual reflection on issues such as the role of power in religious "conversion" and re-readings of history (prompting, for instance, critiques of Black Christianity and the adoption of Islamic or Lukumi traditions, albeit in distinctively American forms). Indeed, the centrality of the USA for thinking about religion is another major theme here, from sacralization of the promise of citizenship (as in the Moorish Science Temple of America) to readings of

Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing "readings" without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their "coverage" in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	This course involves critical examination of and analysis of the logics at the heart of a wide variety of religious expressions and movements. Framed under the rubric of "African American religion," the material covered in this class offers a spectrum of responses to and expressions of African American experience. By proceeding comparatively, one form of analysis in this class will be between religious forms and logics: for instance, contemporary evangelical Prosperity Gospel offers some answers to the question of how to make sense of a capitalist economy, but New Orleans Voodoo in the Great Depression (as framed by Kobe Roberts in his scholarship) offers a slightly different set of answers to these questions. Comparative consideration, with its attention to difference as well as resonance, will help students better understand the appeal of religious logics and better analyze the always-contingent social and cultural location of religious thought and practice. This comparative work will be evaluated via the student journals, class discussions, and the final exam. In this class, we will also look at the history of scholarship on African American religion, and the ways that approaches to religious history are shaped by political desires and fears. For instance, in Meeting 3 we look at the debate between sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and anthropologist Melville Herskovitz on the issue of "African retentions," a debate that had less to do with the ethnographic evidence and everything to do with the political ramifications of claims about black history—imagined in different ways by the two scholars. Meeting 4 will also consider issues of historical scholarship in relation to the Arabic archive left behind by enslaved religious thinker Omar Ibn Said. Specifically, mis-readings (intentional and otherwise) of Ibn Said's texts will be considered in terms of their historical context, and the shift of popular reception of this figure from a novelty (a literate Christian "slave") to a defiant thinker (a covert Muslim balancing his survival and his faith). Critical consideration of scholarship in context will also be assessed via student journals, class discussions, and the final exam

ELO 1.2 Engage in an advance, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	As a repeated engagement in basic questions—what does religion do, how does African American religion respond to the trauma of slavery and the ongoing situation of race and anti-black racism?—this class represents an in-depth intellectual investigation. This work becomes increasingly nuanced and complex as the semester proceeds, such that, by Meeting 27, the students are expected to engage in evaluation of the dependence on "blackness" in an array of African American religions examined over the course of the class. Reading Victor Anderson's critique of "ontological blackness" alongside Leonard McKinnis's work on the Black Coptic Church (which unpacked Black Coptic claims about a primordial, divine blackness, a blackness *before* race, *before* the human), the class will look back on previous traditions and critique the role of blackness in light of these two lines of thought. There will be a question, too, on the final exam about the dependence upon (and potential reification of) "blackness" in an assortment of the traditions we have studied.

ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.	Like any religious studies class, part of the work of this class will be attempting to identify--and perhaps even, tentatively, define--"religion." For the theme of traditions, cultures, and transformation, this means thinking about how "religion" relates to and extends from broader "culture," and to examine how various religious movements/traditions are transformed in relation to shifting social contexts and societal needs. I believe all religious studies courses must be reflective about methodology, so we in this class will be attentive not just to the data offered by scholars but also the bias and particular approaches taken by scholars (from differences
ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.	The role of the journal assignment is to both track (as a diagnostic tool for me, the instructor) and encourage (as a nudge, constantly reminding the students of the need to reflect and of thinking about each session as a step on a trajectory of intellectual development) development as a thinker in relation to the topics of this class. As someone with experience teaching this course at other schools, I know that students generally come to class with set ideas (and are often rooted in religious traditions and cultures themselves!). My job is to guide them into comparative analysis of and deeper, critical reflection on that location—helping them to see and think about what was

Example responses for proposals within "Citizenship" (from Sociology 3200, Comm 2850, French 2803):

***ELO 1.1** Engage in critical and logical thinking.*	*This course will build skills needed to engage in critical and logical thinking about immigration and immigration related policy through:* *Weekly reading response papers which require the students to synthesize and critically evaluate cutting-edge scholarship on immigration;* *Engagement in class-based discussion and debates on immigration-related topics using evidence-based logical reasoning to evaluate policy positions;* *Completion of an assignment which build skills in analyzing empirical data on immigration (Assignment #1)* *Completion 3 assignments which build skills in connecting individual experiences with broader population-based patterns (Assignments #1, #2, #3)* *Completion of 3 quizzes in which students demonstrate comprehension of the course readings and materials.*
***ELO 2.1** Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.*	*Students engage in advanced exploration of each module topic through a combination of lectures, readings, and discussions.* *<u>Lecture</u>* *Course materials come from a variety of sources to help students engage in the relationship between media and citizenship at an advanced level. Each of the 12 modules has 3-4 lectures that contain information from both peer-reviewed and popular sources. Additionally, each module has at least one guest lecture from an expert in that topic to increase students' access to people with expertise in a variety of areas.* *<u>Reading</u>*

	The textbook for this course provides background information on each topic and corresponds to the lectures. Students also take some control over their own learning by choosing at least one peer-reviewed article and at least one newspaper article from outside the class materials to read and include in their weekly discussion posts. *<u>Discussions</u>* *Students do weekly discussions and are given flexibility in their topic choices in order to allow them to take some control over their education. They are also asked to provide* *information from sources they've found outside the lecture materials. In this way, they are able to* *explore areas of particular interest to them and practice the skills they will need to gather information* *about current events, analyze this information, and communicate it with others.* *Activity Example: Civility impacts citizenship behaviors in many ways. Students are asked to choose a TED talk from a provided list (or choose another speech of their interest) and summarize and evaluate what it says about the relationship between civility and citizenship. Examples of Ted Talks on the list include Steven Petrow on the difference between being polite and being civil, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's talk on how a single story can perpetuate stereotypes, and Claire Wardle's talk on how diversity can enhance citizenship.*
ELO 2.2 *Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.*	*Students will conduct research on a specific event or site in Paris not already discussed in depth in class. Students will submit a 300-word abstract of their topic and a bibliography of at least five reputable academic and mainstream sources. At the end of the semester they will submit a 5-page research paper and present their findings in a 10-minute oral and visual presentation in a small-group setting in Zoom.* *Some examples of events and sites:* *The Paris Commune, an 1871 socialist uprising violently squelched by conservative forces* *Jazz-Age Montmartre, where a small community of African-Americans–including actress and singer Josephine Baker, who was just inducted into the French Pantheon–settled and worked after World War I.* *The Vélodrome d'hiver Roundup, 16-17 July 1942, when 13,000 Jews were rounded up by Paris police before being sent to concentration camps* *The Marais, a vibrant Paris neighborhood inhabited over the centuries by aristocrats, then Jews, then the LGBTQ+ community, among other groups.*

Goals and ELOs unique to Traditions, Cultures & Transformations

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their "coverage" in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

GOAL 3: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

GOAL 4: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals' experience within traditions and cultures.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 3.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (e.g., religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.	The central historical issue at play in the African American religious imagination is slavery. The way that religious thinkers, over time, have returned again and again to this problem and attempted to respond to it is, itself, the history of African American religion -- from enslaved Christians praying for divine guidance in escape to early 20th-century Muslims critiquing the role of Christianity in racialization and slavery to contemporary Kemetic communities rediscovering an ancient African culture and identity.
ELO 3.2 Analyze the impact of a "big" idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.	ELO 3.2: Religions deal in "big" ideas. For instance, the blackness of God is one big idea that has had a variety of interpretations and impacts in the history of African American religion, from Nation of Islam claims that the black man, as individual and collective here on earth, is divine (and thus has a divine potential that can be activated) to Black Coptic Church claims that the God of creation is synonymous with a "blackness" that existed before history but that is inherent in all humans later racialized as black. Weeks 22 through 25 tackle another "big" idea in African American religious history, the notion of the human: that the idea of the human has itself been contested as limiting (by such varied thinkers as Elijah Muhammad, who argues for a divinity to so-called black humans and a demonic, laboratory-based origin for "white devils" and musician Sun Ra, who insists that to think of ourselves as humans is to accept unjust limitations on our utopian potential). Discussions during these weeks, drawing also on such critical theorists as Sylvia Wynter, will involve rigorous debate on the value of these interventions and the base critiques involved... Is the human too small a frame for human culture and hopes? Is the term itself too rooted in a genealogy of colonialism and hierarchical categorization? How do we imagine "otherwise" than the human, and what sense can we make of the "sci-fi" forms of post-humanity imagined by the NOI and Sun Ra?

ELO 3.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.	ELO 3.3: The story of African American religion is a story of sub-cultures responding to the dominance of a hegemonic (white) culture, first during the period of chattel slavery and then through a history of continuing anti-black racism (de jure and de facto). One example of the kind of religious creativity in such cultural interaction is the Moorish Science Temple of America, founded in Chicago in 1925 and predicated on the related claims that 1) "race" is a legal fiction and "Negro" a pernicious "nick name" designed purely to oppress and exclude those so labeled, and 2) that by declaring and performing one's true identity (as "Moorish" and "Muslim") one will be guaranteed full citizenship in the United States of America, a country designed by Allah to provide freedom and equality to all peoples. This remarkable sacralization of citizenship (and American political ideals) coupled with a nuanced critique of race as enshrined in law makes MSTA a useful example for this ELO. Meeting 13 will wrestle with this material specifically, and both the class discussion and the post-class journal entry will require reflection on this reimagining of and negotiation of sub-culture to dominant culture.
ELO 3.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.	Religious change and continuity will be a central theme of this class. One way the course engages this ELO is in the "digital media" assignment, which requires students to 1) conduct individual research on-line to survey contemporary modes of religious expression, and 3) select three particularly useful examples and write up summary analyses of these sources as they relate to the broader work of our class. Thus, for instance, while we discuss modes of African American Islam in class, students may select contemporary Nation of Islam influencer 19 Keys, and his lectures on moving "from slave ship to ownership" via investment in cryptocurrency, and evaluate how this religious vision of economic independence first with other versions (such as 1930s New Orleans) studying in detail in this class. Likewise, how 19 Keys imagines the current trade war as a mode of "accelerationism" designed to destroy the state model as it current exists can be usefully compared to earlier version of Nation of Islam apocalypticism, and 19 Keys role within a legible "manosphere," wherein his Islamic content is in some ways interchangeable with seeming "secular" content, can be examined in relation not only the NOI's history of gender claims but also comparative examines of gendered claims and practices within African American religions.

ELO 4.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.	The comparative approach of this class necessarily involves a (radical) diversity of religious expression and thinking. This diversity of religion will be consistently evaluated, in part, through examination of how religious thinkers themselves are evaluating and critiquing other religions—for instance, Elijah Muhammad's critique of Christianity, or contemporary Kemetic evaluations of Islamic tradition. The goal—and my take on ELO 2.1—of attention to such critique, and such diversity—is to better appreciate the human creativity behind and the varied social functions of religion as a phenomenon. Comparative consideration of religion helps students to better *see* where religion is and how it functions. Those aspects of culture which would otherwise be invisible or taken-for-granted are highlighted when examined comparatively. Thus, practices that might look hyperbolic (or, in student parlance, "strange") like the use of musical instruments to "tune" the energy in a room by Kemetic spiritualists, are useful in part as a way to recognize more familiar but easily unnoticed modes of practices. By studying a wide range of diverse lived experiences, students will come to better understand their own lived experience and better appreciate how humans negotiate their circumstances—confronting pain and suffering but also expressing joy and fellowship. The final exam will feature an essay requiring detailed comparison of two religious movements and their understandings of race/blackness, their approach to the dominant society (integration, separatism, etc.), and the relation of their practices to that wider society (i.e., regimes of bodily discipline, practices of respectability, modes of protest and confrontation). This will be the single long essay question on this exam, and will serve as the main means of measuring success with this ELO.
ELO 4.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues.	The category of race is central to this class, as the history of African American religion is a history of religious thinkers wrestling with the social construct of race and its consequences. Race is imagined in radically different ways—ontologically real, oppressive legal fiction, primordial metaphysics, manipulative political lie—in different African American religious traditions. The comparative approach of this class will familiarize students with a range of theories of race and responses to race, all the while emphasizing the ways that race has

Example responses for proposals within "Citizenship" (Hist/Relig. Studies 3680, Music 3364; Soc 3200):

ELO 3.1 *Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship <u>and</u> how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.*	*Citizenship could not be more central to a topic such as immigration/migration. As such, the course content, goals, and expected learning outcomes are all, almost by definition, engaged with a range of perspectives on local, national, and global citizenship. Throughout the class students will be required to engage with questions about what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across contexts.* *The course content addresses citizenship questions at the global (see weeks #3 and #15 on refugees and open border debates), national (see weeks #5, 7-#14 on the U.S. case), and the local level (see week #6 on Columbus). Specific activities addressing different perspectives on citizenship include Assignment #1, where students produce a demographic profile of a U.S-based immigrant group, including a profile of their citizenship statuses using U.S.-based regulatory definitions. In addition, Assignment #3, which has students connect their family origins to broader population-level immigration patterns, necessitates a discussion of citizenship. Finally, the critical reading responses have the students engage the literature on different perspectives of citizenship and reflect on what constitutes citizenship and how it varies across communities.*
ELO 3.2 *Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.*	*This course supports the cultivation of "intercultural competence as a global citizen" through rigorous and sustained study of multiple forms of musical-political agency worldwide, from the grass-roots to the state-sponsored. Students identify varied cultural expressions of "musical citizenship" each week, through their reading and listening assignments, and reflect on them via online and in-class discussion. It*
	is common for us to ask probing and programmatic questions about the musical-political subjects and cultures we study. What are the possibilities and constraints of this particular version of musical citizenship? What might we carry forward in our own lives and labors as musical citizens Further, students are encouraged to apply their emergent intercultural competencies as global, musical citizens in their midterm report and final project, in which weekly course topics inform student-led research and creative projects.

ELO 2.1 *Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.*	*Through the historical and contemporary case studies students examine in HIST/RS 3680, they have numerous opportunities to examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as a variety of lived experiences. The cases highlight the challenges of living in religiously diverse societies, examining a range of issues and their implications. They also consider the intersections of religious difference with other categories of difference, including race and gender. For example, during the unit on US religious freedom, students consider how incarcerated Black Americans and Native Americans have experienced questions of freedom and equality in dramatically different ways than white Protestants. In a weekly reflection post, they address this question directly. In the unit on marriage and sexuality, they consider different ways that different social groups have experienced the regulation of marriage in Israel and Malaysia in ways that do not correspond simplistically to gender (e.g. different women's groups with very different perspectives on the issues).* *In their weekly reflection posts and other written assignments, students are invited to analyze the implications of different regulatory models for questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. They do so not in a simplistic sense of assessing which model is "right" or "best" but in considering how different possible outcomes might shape the concrete lived experience of different social groups in different ways. The goal is not to determine which way of doing things is best, but to understand why different societies manage these questions in different ways and how their various expressions might lead to different outcomes in terms of diversity and inclusion. They also consider how the different social and demographic conditions of different societies shape their approaches (e.g. a historic Catholic majority in France committed to laicite confronting a growing Muslim minority, or how pluralism *within* Israeli Judaism led to a fragile and contested status quo arrangement). Again, these goals are met most directly through weekly reflection posts and students' final projects, including one prompt that invites students to consider Israel's status quo arrangement from the perspective of different social groups, including liberal feminists, Orthodox and Reform religious leaders, LGBTQ communities, interfaith couples, and others.*
ELO 2.2 *Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.*	*As students analyze specific case studies in HIST/RS 3680, they assess law's role in and capacity for enacting justice, managing difference, and constructing citizenship. This goal is met through lectures, course readings, discussion, and written assignments. For example, the unit on indigenous sovereignty and sacred space invites students to consider why liberal systems of law have rarely accommodated*

	indigenous land claims and what this says about indigenous citizenship and justice. They also study examples of indigenous activism and resistance around these issues. At the conclusion of the unit, the neighborhood exploration assignment specifically asks students to take note of whether and how indigenous land claims are marked or acknowledged in the spaces they explore and what they learn from this about citizenship, difference, belonging, and power. In the unit on legal pluralism, marriage, and the law, students study the personal law systems in Israel and Malaysia. They consider the structures of power that privilege certain kinds of communities and identities and also encounter groups advocating for social change. In their final projects, students apply the insights they've gained to particular case studies. As they analyze their selected case studies, they are required to discuss how the cases reveal the different ways justice, difference, and citizenship intersect and how they are shaped by cultural traditions and structures of power in particular social contexts. They present their conclusions in an oral group presentation and in an individually written final paper. Finally, in their end of semester letter to professor, they reflect on how they issues might shape their own advocacy for social change in the future.

	Program Learning Goals		
	Goal A: Demonstrate an understanding of the cultural, socio-political, and historical formations, connections, conditions, and transformations evident throughout the African World and Black Diaspora.	**Goal B:** Identify, critique, and appreciate the intersections between race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality from the historical and existential perspectives of African and African-descended peoples.	**Goal C:** Implement interdisciplinary research methods and methodological perspectives applicable to advanced study, community development, and public service.
Core Courses			
2201	Beginning	Intermediate	
3310	Intermediate	Intermediate	
3440	Intermediate	Advanced	Beginning
4921	Intermediate	Advanced	Intermediate
Elective Courses			
2000-Level *(Max of 3 courses)*	Beginning	Beginning	Beginning
3000- Level *(Max of 3 courses)*	Beginning/Intermediate	Beginning/Intermediate	Beginning/Intermediate
4000-Level	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
5000-Level	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced