

The Prophetic Ministry of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner
Memphis Theological Seminary
Fall 2017

Professor: Andre E. Johnson, PhD

Time: Thursdays-6:00pm-9:00pm

E-Mail: ajohnson@memphisseminary.edu

Office Hours: By Appt.

Course Description: This class will introduce students to the life, career, and prophetic ministry of AME Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (1834-1915). By engaging in a careful reading of Turner's writings and speeches, students in this class will examine the theoretical, methodical, and practical applications that made up Turner's discourses.

Course Objectives: After this class, students will be able to:

1. Understand Turner's prophetic ministry by analyzing his rhetoric.
2. Do digital archival work
3. Write a rhetorical analysis
4. Discuss Turner's rhetoric, theology, and overall church work
5. Theorize rhetoric's place within theology
6. Evaluate prophetic rhetoric within the African American rhetorical tradition

Required Texts:

Angell, Stephen. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African American Religion in the South. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1992)

Johnson, Andre E. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition (Lexington Books, 2012)

Texts on Reserve:

Johnson, Andre E. African American Pastor Before and During the American Civil War. (Edwin Mellen Press, Vols. 1-5)

Assignments:

Students will submit all assignments to turnitin.com. The class ID is: 16233370. The Enrollment key is: HMTClass

Speech Review and Reflection: Each week I will assign students a work on Turner. I will give further instructions but each presentation should be at least 800-1000 words.

Article/Chapter Reviews: Students will write a 1200-1400-word essay on the assigned article/chapter for the day.

Final Paper: Students will write a 15-page paper on any aspect of Turner's ministry. This could include but not limited to

- Turner and the Role of the Church
- Turner and Theology
- Turner and Preaching
- Turner as Public Theologian
- Turner's role as Bishop

Students should aim at producing a publishable paper or one that the student can present at a conference.

Blog Comments: I expect students every week to make at least ten (10) comments on any blog post on the [Rhetoric Race and Religion](#) blog starting the second full week of class. If the student completes the assignment, the student will receive 20 points added to the total points of her or his final grade.

**I encourage students to submit blog posts to R3. If we accept the post, the student will receive 5 points added to her or his final grade.*

Grading

Speech Review and Reflections: 25%

Article/Chapter Reviews: 25%

Final Paper: 50%

Schedule Topics and Readings

Note: Students are to complete all assignments in bold type before class on the day I assigned in the schedule. Please bring your books or readings to class for reference during discussions.

Readings before class:

Batten: [Henry M. Turner, Negro Bishop Extraordinary](#); Cummings: [The Rhetoric of Henry McNeal Turner](#)

August 31st

Introduction, Purpose of Class, Digital Archiving

Readings: Dorrien: [Chapter 2](#); Johnson: [HMT Church Planter](#)

September 7th

Week One:

Writings: 1859-1865 (1-28)

Readings: Angell: Introduction, Chapter 1

HMTProject: [Diary](#); [“Sacred Terms Vainly Used”](#); [“Church Sleeping.”](#); [“The Colored Men and the Draft”](#); [Letter from Washington: September 6, 1862](#)

September 14th

Week 2: Group 1&2

Writings: 1859-1865 (29-56)

Readings: Johnson: Introduction; [“To Wake Up Latent Powers”](#);

HMTProject: [Washington Correspondence: January 10, 1863](#); [Washington Correspondence: April 18, 1863](#); [Washington Correspondence: December 6, 1862](#); [The Episcopal Mould](#); [Obituary](#);

September 21st

Week 3: Group 3

The Writings: 1864-1865 (Chaplain Letters)

Readings: Angell: Chapter 2; Redkey: Masur: [The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal](#)

HMTProject: [For the Christian Recorder](#); [Everybody Read This](#); [A Letter to the Bishops](#); [Army Correspondence: October 8, 1864](#);

Class Exercise: Divide into your groups. Discuss the following questions from the writings 1859-1865 (including the Chaplain Letters):

- 1) From the film and your readings in Turner's life from 1859-1865, how does he argue for the role of education in the life of the minister. Does it speak to the minister being a public theologian on issues of social justice today? Please draw from the texts of film in providing your answer
- 2) For Turner, what is the role of the church? Does he see it as a mediating institution for social change? Why or why not?
- 3) In Turner's earlier writings, how are women portrayed?
- 4) Reading Turner's war correspondence, how did he argue for the agency of African Americans? What are some examples (not necessarily from war) that one may use today in helping to construct agency to marginalized groups?

September 28th

Week 4: Group 4

The Writings: 1866-1880 (1-42)

Readings: Angell: 3; Johnson: 1; Johnson: [Fighting the Devil with Fire](#); Leeman: [Speaking as Jeremiah: Henry McNeal Turner's "I Claim the Rights of a Man."](#);-

HMTProject: [For the Christian Recorder: July 7, 1866](#); [Highly Interesting Letter: September 29, 1866](#); [Georgia Annual Conference: December 15, 1866](#); [Letter from Rev. H. M. Turner: August 31, 1867](#); [From Georgia: February 20, 1873](#);

October 5th

Week 5: Group 1

The Writings: 1866-1880 (43-83)

Readings: Angell: 4; Johnson: 2; Angell: [A Black Minister Befriends the "Unquestioned Father of Civil Rights": Henry McNeal Turner, Charles Sumner, and the African-American Quest for Freedom](#)Johnson: [I Have Had to Pass through Blood and Fire](#)

HMTProject: [The New Manager's Inaugural: June 29, 1876](#)
[Letter to His Son \(March 5, 1880\)](#); [The Sabbath](#) (March 6, 1873); [How the Stewardesses System Operates: May 15, 1873](#); [Objectionable Customs: May 21, 1874](#); [Forty Things: March 25, 1880](#);

October 12th

Week 6: Group 2

1880-1892 (1-38)

Class will meet at Church Health Center for Theology Live Podcast

Readings: Angell: 5; Johnson: 3; Johnson: [Further Silence Would be an Outrage](#)

#HMTProject: [Bishop Turner's Review: December 8, 1881](#); [The African Question Again: June 21, 1883](#); [Comments Upon Bishop Payne's African Letter: December 6, 1883](#); [Reply to Rev. A.J. Kershaw's Review: September 25, 1884](#); [Contemplations: June 11, 1885](#);

October 19th

Week 7: Group 3

The Writings: 1880-1892 (39-76)

Readings: Angell: 6;

#HMTProject: [Bishop Turner on a Chaplain for Convicts: October 1, 1885](#); [Contemplations: June 25, 1886](#); [Bishop Turner's Plain Talk: September 23, 1886](#); [The Bishops' Support: August 25, 1887](#); [Throes of Death: February 7, 1889](#); [Bishop Turner's Views: March 27, 1890](#);

October 26th

Week 8: Group 4

The Writings: 1880-1892 (77-112)

Readings: Angell: 7;

#HMTProject: [Go to Africa Yourself: May 15, 1890](#); [Bishop Turner's Trip East: August 21, 1890](#); [Bishop Turner's Second Trip East: September 4, 1890](#); [The Lion at Bay: March 26, 1892](#); [Bishop Turner: April 2, 1892](#)

November 2nd

Week 9: Group 1

The Writings: 1883-1900 (1-20)

Readings: Angell: 8; Johnson: 4; Redkey: [Bishop Turner's African Dream](#)

#HMTProject: [Ministers A. M. E. Church Take Notice: November 16, 1893](#); [An Address to the Ninth Episcopal District: January 4, 1894](#); [To Colored People: January 13, 1895](#); [Home of the Blacks: February 2, 1895](#);

November 9th

Week 10: Group 2

The Writings: 1883-1900 (21-39)

Readings: Readings: Angell: 9; Johnson: [God is a Negro](#); Mixon: [HMT and the Tuskegee Machine](#);

#HMTProject: [Colored National Convention Called: October 19, 1893](#); [Introduction From: African and African Methodism: March 20, 1896](#); [Turner Scores His Critics: September 11, 1897](#); [Henry McNeal Turner to Hallie Q. Brown: May 5, 1889](#);

November 16th

Week 11: Group 3

The Writings: 1901-1915

No Class

Readings: Angell, 10; Johnson

#HMTProject: [Bishop Turner Defends His Position \(April 22, 1901\)](#); [Will it be Possible for the Negro: 1902](#); [Only for the Bishop's Eye \(July 25, 1907\)](#); [Reminiscences of the Proclamation of Emancipation \(January, 1913\)](#)

November 23rd

Happy Thanksgiving

No Class: Fall Break

November 30th

Week 12

No Class

Group 4

Reading Week

Readings: Angell: 11-Epilogue; Johnson (Forgotten Prophet): Conclusion

December 8th
Final Paper Due