

**GOV 371F: The Black Church in the African American Political Experience**  
**Unique Number: 38795**  
**Spring 2021**  
**Meeting Time: 8:30-9:45**

**Instructor: Professor Eric L. McDaniel**  
[emcdaniel@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:emcdaniel@austin.utexas.edu)

**Office Hours**  
**Monday through Thursday 11-12**

### **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to examine the political role of the Black church in the African American experience. Through the examination of the historical and contemporary scholarship on the Black church, this course will critically analyze how the church, its leaders, and members have used it to achieve the political goals of African Americans.

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

### **Prerequisite**

The prerequisites for this course are upper division standing and six hours of lower division coursework in Government.

### **Required Texts**

1. Sernett, Milton C., ed. 1999. *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2. Thurman, Howard. 1976. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press.
3. McCaulley, Esau. 2020. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
4. Other readings and films can be found on Canvas or through the UT Library ([lib.utexas.edu](http://lib.utexas.edu))

### **Coursework**

*All course assignments are to be typed, with proper citations, bibliography, and page numbers. All assignments are to be submitted through Canvas by the designated deadline. Late papers will not be accepted.*

Discussion Papers: worth 35%

The purpose of this paper is to provide a forum to discuss some of the issues raised in the course. The discussion paper should be a response to a question based on a direct reflection of the course readings, lectures, films, and discussions. The discussion paper should be between 600-800 words. The discussion papers are due by 5 PM Central Daylight Savings Time of the date assigned. There will be five (5) discussion paper assignments and the four (4) highest scores will be counted. More detailed guidelines will be posted on Canvas

#### Take-Home Essays 65%

The take-home essays will provide the opportunity for students to provide a broader and deeper analysis of the course material. The essay questions will be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours before they are due. The take-home essay should be between 1,250-1,500 words. More detailed guidelines will be posted on Canvas

#### Citation

All papers require proper citation and a bibliography. All sources must be cited; not citing sources will result in a grade penalty. The complete lack of citation will result in a zero grade for the assignment. This course will use the American Political Science Association citation style. The use of other citations styles may result in a grade penalty.

Discussion Papers	35%
<u>Response Paper</u>	<u>65%</u>
Total	100%

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D	60-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	F	0-59
B+	87-89	C	73-76		
B	83-86	C-	70-72		

#### **Expectations**

##### Preparation

Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to when class meets. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect your preparation. Below are a set of questions you should be able to answer regarding each class reading.

##### *Questions you should be able to answer about each reading*

1. What is the author's central question or statement?
2. What is the author's argument?
  - a. Are there any specific hypotheses?
  - b. Is the author refuting someone else's findings?
3. Is the author's argument valid?
4. What evidence does the author use to support her argument?

5. Is the author's evidence valid?
6. Is the author's argument and data similar or different from other readings?
7. Is the author able to support her argument?
  - a. Does the author confirm her hypotheses?
8. What questions are left unanswered?

### Professionalism

Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and pagers. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

### Ground Rules

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.
2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English, minus the use of any profanity.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

### Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the

following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment.

Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours.

Submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Finally, after the student has filed the grade grievance, the student must make an appointment to meet with me, to discuss the grievance, within a week of the filing of the grievance.

#### Academic Dishonesty

The University defines scholastic dishonesty in the following way:

"According to the *Institutional Rules*, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records." For a detailed explanation of the University's honor code and definition of plagiarism please refer to the following website <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.

In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

#### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

#### Religious Holy Day Observance

By UT Austin policy, you must notify your instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## TITLE IX REPORTING

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered "Responsible Employees" or "Mandatory Reporters," which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. **We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email [advocate@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:advocate@austin.utexas.edu). For more information about reporting options and resources, visit [titleix.utexas.edu](http://titleix.utexas.edu) or contact the Title IX Office at [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu).

## E-mail

As stated above no assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Also I do regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Make sure to check the syllabus or Canvas first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question. Finally, I ask that you use proper etiquette when sending e-mail messages, failure to follow proper etiquette may delay my response. For tips on proper e-mail etiquette visit <http://www.101emailetiquettetips.com/>.

## Cancelled Classes

Periodically class may be canceled. The class will be informed of these dates and will be held accountable for the readings of that day.

## Canvas

The syllabus, course assignments, and class announcements are posted on Canvas for reference. In addition, a portion of the course reading will also be available on Canvas. In special cases, the lecture notes will be available on Canvas as well. Make sure to regularly check Canvas for announcements and assignments. Before you contact me with a question for the class, *make sure to check Canvas first*.

### Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness you will need to produce a note from the doctor stating that you could not attend class that day. In all other cases you will need to provide documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

### Pass/Fail Policy

If a student wishes to take the class pass/fail, the student must have a final grade above 73 in order to receive a pass.

### Changes to the Course

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus in order to better facilitate the needs of the course.

Date	Topic	Readings	Videos
01/20/21	What is Black Politics?	Baldwin, James. 1993. "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation." In <i>The Fire Next Time</i> , ed. James Baldwin. New York: Vintage Books. {Canvas}	Blaming President Donald Trump is Too Easy: This is Us. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKiB0APdxTo&amp;t=75s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKiB0APdxTo&amp;t=75s</a>
01/25/21	Why Study the Black Church?	Sernett Chapter 45	Streeter, Sabin. 2013. "The Black Atlantic." In <i>The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross</i> : PBS. 57. <a href="https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-black-atlantic-1500-1800">https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-black-atlantic-1500-1800</a>
01/27/21	Origins of the Black Church		Jubilee God <a href="https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/tony-brown-s-journal-the-jubilee-god">https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/tony-brown-s-journal-the-jubilee-god</a>
02/01/21	Origins of the Black Church	Sernett Chapters 3, 7, & 22	

02/03/21	Slavery	Sernet Chapters 18, 23	Many Rivers to Cross: The age of slavery <a href="https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-age-slavery-1800-1860">https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-age-slavery-1800-1860</a>
02/08/21	Slavery	Garnet, Henry Highland. 2001. "Address to the Slaves of the United States of America." In <i>Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African American Protest Literature, 1790-1860</i> , eds. Richard Newman, Patrick Rael and Phillip Lapansky. New York: Routledge. {Canvas}	Alfre Woodard reads Maria Stewart <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPZEHW71EnQ&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPZEHW71EnQ&amp;feature=emb_logo</a>
02/10/21	Slavery	Sernet Chapter 11	Christopher, Frank. 2002. "Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property." California Newsreel. 57:32. <a href="https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/nat-turner-a-troublesome-property?context=channel:american-history-in-video">https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/nat-turner-a-troublesome-property?context=channel:american-history-in-video</a> Denmark Vesey: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05sCUvzKQ0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j05sCUvzKQ0</a>
02/15/21	Slavery	Sidbury, James. 2003. "Reading, Revelation and Rebellion: The Textual Communities of Gabriel, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner." In <i>Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory</i> , ed. Kenneth S. Greenberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press. {Canvas}	

02/17/21	Reconstruction	Sernett Chapters 24, 25 & 36	Many Rivers to Cross: Into the Fire <a href="https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-fire-1861-1896">https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-fire-1861-1896</a>
02/22/21	Reconstruction	Sernett Chapters 30 & 31 Block, Ray. 2011. What About Disillusionment? Exploring the Pathways to Black Nationalism. Political Behavior 33 (1): 27-51. {Canvas}	
02/24/21	Reconstruction		This Far by Faith God is a Negro <a href="https://vimeo.com/142295034">https://vimeo.com/142295034</a>
<b>02/26/21</b>	<b>First Take Home Essay Due</b>		
03/01/21	Great Migration	Sernett Chapters 38, 40, 41, & 46	Many Rivers to Cross: Making a way out of no way
03/03/21	Great Migration	Sernett Chapter 42	Father Divine <a href="https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/father-divine?context=channel:american-history-in-video">https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/father-divine?context=channel:american-history-in-video</a>
03/08/21	Black Freedom Movement	Sernett Chapter 53	Howard Thurman Backs Against the Wall <a href="https://www.pbs.org/video/backslants-the-howard-thurman-story-cgv9gi/">https://www.pbs.org/video/backslants-the-howard-thurman-story-cgv9gi/</a>
03/10/21	Black Freedom Movement		
<b>03/15/21</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>		
<b>03/17/21</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>		
03/22/21	Black Freedom Movement	Sernett Chapter 54	Many Rivers to Cross: Rise!

03/24/21	Black Power Movement	Williams, Delores S. 1998. "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices." In Black Theology A Documentary History Volume Two: 1980-1992, eds. James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. {CP}	Malcolm X <a href="https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/malcolm-x-excerpt-from-interview-with-louis-lomax?context=channel:american-history-in-video">https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/malcolm-x-excerpt-from-interview-with-louis-lomax?context=channel:american-history-in-video</a>
03/29/21	Black Power Movement	Sernett Chapters 57 & 58	Shrine of the Black Madonna <a href="https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/shrine-of-the-black-madonna/transcript?context=channel:tony-brown-s-journal">https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/watch/shrine-of-the-black-madonna/transcript?context=channel:tony-brown-s-journal</a>
03/31/21	Black Power Movement	Reese, Laura A., Ronald E. Brown, and James David Ivers. 2007. "Some Children See Him...: Political Participation and the Black Christ." Political Behavior 29: 517-37. {Canvas}	
04/05/21	Contemporary Black Politics	Rustin From Protest to Politics  Sharpton, Al. 2004. "2004 Democratic National Convention Address." July 28. {CP}  Obama, Barack. 2004. "2004 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address." July 27. {CP}	Many Rivers to Cross : A more perfect Union

04/07/21	Contemporary Black Politics	Harris Price of the Ticket Chapter One  REV. JEREMIAH WRIGHT, "CONFUSING GOD AND GOVERNMENT" (2003) <a href="https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/2008-rev-jeremiah-wright-confusing-god-and-government/">https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/2008-rev-jeremiah-wright-confusing-god-and-government/</a>  Obama, Barack. 2008. "A More Perfect Union." March 18. {CP}	
<b>04/09/21</b>	<b>Second Take Home Essay Due</b>		
04/12/21	Religion and Racial Attitudes	Hutchings, Vincent L. and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2004. "The Centrality of Race in American Politics." Annual Review of Political Science 7 (1):383-408. {GS}	
04/14/21	Religion and Racial Attitudes	Johnson, Megan K., Wade C. Rowatt, and Jordan LaBouff. 2010. "Priming Christian Religious Concepts Increases Racial Prejudice." Social Psychological and Personality Science 1 (2):119-26. {GS}	
04/19/21	Religion and Racial Attitudes	Emerson, Michael O., Christian Smith, and David Sikkink. 1999. Equal in Christ, but Not in the World: White Conservative Protestants and Explanations of Black-White Inequality. Social Problems 46 (3): 398-417. {GS}	Christopher, Aaron J. 2019. "White Savior: Racism in the American Church."

04/21/21	Religion and Black Political Behavior	McDaniel, Eric L., Maraam A. Dwidar, and Hadill Calderon. 2018. "The Faith of Black Politics: The Relationship between Black Religious and Political Beliefs." <i>Journal of Black Studies</i> 49: 256-83.	
04/26/21	Religion and Black Political Behavior	Shaw, Todd C., and Eric L. McDaniel. 2007. 'Whosoever Will': Black Theology, Homosexuality, and the Black Political Church. <i>National Political Science Review</i> . {CP}	
04/28/21	Religion and Black Political Behavior	Philpot, Tasha S., and Eric McDaniel. 2020. "Black Religious Belief Systems and Political Participation." <i>National Review of Black Politics</i> 1: 374-95.	
05/03/21	Black Church and Social Services	Owens, Michael Leo. 2006. Which Congregations will take Advantage of Charitable Choice? Explaining the Pursuit of Public Funding by Congregations. <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> 87 (1):55-75. {GS}	
05/05/21	Black Church and Social Services		Camara, Jeremiah. 2013. "Contradiction: A Question of Faith."
<b>05/10/21</b>	<b>Third Take Home Exam Due</b>		