

Master of Divinity Concentration in Black Church Studies

This concentration enables students enrolled in the MDIV degree program to take graduate level courses in history, theology, ethics, homiletics, Bible, and pastoral counseling. Students enrolled in the Black Church Studies concentration can choose four elective courses from the BCS curriculum. In addition, students will be required to take three weekend intensive seminars. Upon graduation seminary students will receive both a Master of Divinity diploma and a certificate in Black Church Studies.

Black Church Studies Courses: The following courses meet the elective requirements for the concentration in Black Church Studies.

TH 218-3 Black Ecclesiology in Public and Pastoral Ministry

Williamson, Scott C.

This course will review the theological foundations and praxis origins of black ecclesiology. Scholarship from the fields of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology provide the resources and methods for this critical inquiry. Beginning with an evaluation of early preaching and pastoral care in black churches, we will examine the public debates over the traditional scope of pastoral ministries and the more radical voices of social justice. The course will trace the major movements within this controversy, extending from the antebellum period through the post-Civil Rights era of Black Theology. Objectives include: students will be able to identify the major thinkers and themes comprising both the traditional development of black ecclesiology and the prophetic appeals of religious ethics. Ultimately, students will develop a practical theological critique of this historical debate.

TH 219-3 The Moral and Religious Thought of Frederick Douglass and His Times

Williamson, Scott C.

This seminar is designed to introduce students to Frederick Douglass. Douglass was one of the most fascinating and influential figures of the nineteenth century. Remembered primarily as a dynamic abolitionist lecturer and candid editor, Douglass was also an important thinker. He was the nineteenth century's foremost spokesperson for social equality and racial assimilation. Douglass is among the first generation of black thinkers to combine elements of Protestantism, black nationalism and assimilationism into an effective model of social progress for blacks. The goal of the course is to discern Douglass's moral and religious point of view by reading autobiographical accounts, as well as the writings of several Douglass scholars.

TH 225-3 The Churches and Black America: Slavery, Reconstruction, and Civil Rights (1787-1989)

Williamson, Scott C.

This course provides a study of the relationship of both the Catholic and the Protestant churches to Blacks in the United States from 1789 (the departure of Richard Allen from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church) to 1989.

TH 234-3 Black Theology

Hill, Johnny B.

This course will review the historical development of Black Theology movement. Through a close reading of early texts of the movement and a review of the social context within which it arose, the seminar participants will be invited to a full engagement with this theological tradition. It will be our purpose to identify not only the discrete contours of the movement, but also to identify its place in late twentieth century theological discourse.

TH 235-3 African-American Christianity

Williamson, Scott C., Hill, Johnny B.

This course will review the historical development, and current state, of the African-American Christian movement. Through a close reading of texts of the movement and a review of the social context within which it arose the seminar participants will be invited to a full engagement with this ecclesial and theological tradition. It will be our purpose to identify not only the discrete contours of the movement, but also to identify its place in larger Christian movement in the United States.

TH 321-3 The Theology and Praxis of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Hill, Johnny B.

This course will explore the theology and witness of Martin Luther King, Jr., establishing King as a major theologian of reconciliation with a global vision. The course will center on the cultural and intellectual resources shaping King's work and his legacy in contemporary society. Fifty years after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, there are renewed and intriguing conversations on King's work and the imprint of the Civil Rights Movement today. The course assumes a comprehensive approach to King's life and thought by considering both the role of the Protestant Liberal tradition and the African American Religious experience in funding his vision of the "beloved community." By reviewing his work, listening to sermons, documentaries, and speeches, we will critically engage the many trajectories of King's legacy, including nonviolence, war and peace, poverty, and the relationship between church and society.

TH 322-3 Feminist and Womanist Ethics

Pauw, Amy

This course will examine issues in contemporary feminist and womanist Christian ethics. Topics include family, sexuality, and justice in the church and larger society. Womanist work in biblical interpretation, theology, and sociology will complement the focus on ethics. The course will begin with a consideration of the relationship between feminist and womanist perspectives, and the intersections of race and class will receive continued attention throughout. The course objectives are to acquaint students with the distinctive emphases and controversies of contemporary feminist and womanist ethics, encourage students to assess the relevance of this ethical reflection for the contemporary church and world, and to help students hone their own theological and ethical perspectives in dialogue with these feminist and womanist scholars.

PW 306-3 Black Preaching

Mumford, Debra J.

The black preaching traditions integrate many patterns of cultural experiences within theological and biblical hermeneutics, as well as rhetorical structures of oral communication within complex dynamics of style and artistry. This course will examine these patterns/structures and the black preaching event itself, via sermon design, delivery, and the worship experience. Students will study several homiletic theories and methods embracing these black preaching traditions.

PW 311-3 Prosperity Preaching in North America

Mumford, Debra J.

This course will survey the evolution of prosperity gospel in the context of North American capitalistic culture. Students will learn basic teachings, hermeneutical approaches, and preaching styles of Word of Faith preachers and visit a Word of Faith congregation. Each student will preach one sermon on a text used by Word of Faith preachers using her/his (the student's) own theology and method.

PT 317-3 Gender, Race, and Class in Pastoral Practice

Walker, Elizabeth Johnson; Carol Cook; Loren Townsend

To a large extent the construction of gender, the rules and practices of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and the differences shaped by socioeconomic class, demonstrate the cultural relativity of family life. In this course we will critique our own internalization of these "rules" and practices and pursue gender and multicultural perspectives that encourage and affirm respect for the diversity in various family systems. We will explore the way sexism, racism, and classism function oppressively to limit possibilities for well being in family systems and shaping the context for care. Using the lenses of gender, race, and class we will examine eight racial groups in North America according to their patterns in the following areas: life cycle issues, religion and ritual, marriage norms, values, gender rules and roles, mental illness/dysfunction, family functions and processes, and attitudes for seeking help. We will consider the implications of such differences for appropriate interventions and continuing care in pastoral practice and family therapy. We will give particular attention to discerning the oppressive effects of racism, sexism, and classism for our own lives and develop personal and professional strategies for resisting their destructive effects. This course will use seminar discussion of readings assigned, video presentations, and experiential exercises. *This course fulfills the Pastoral Care requirement for the Master of Divinity degree program.*

NT 402-3 African American New Testament Hermeneutics

Garrett, Susan

This course will briefly introduce important works of and about New Testament interpretation by African American New Testament scholars. Works to be read and discussed pertain especially to the following topics: the complex history of African Americans' encounter with the Bible; African and African imagery in the New Testament and Early Christian literature; the New

Testament and the American debate over slavery; and interpretation of the Gospels and the Pauline epistles by African Americans. Throughout the course, attention will be given to the particular concerns and perspectives of Womanist biblical interpreters.

OT 510-3 Independent Studies in Old Testament

Bos, Johanna W. H.; Patricia K. Tull

Research on some problems in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, or other Near Eastern literature will be determined in consultation with the professor. This course can include aspects of Israel's history, literature, theology, study of the Aramaic in Ezra and Daniel, or advanced work in learning how to use the Hebrew Bible with facility.

NT 510-3 Independent Studies in the New Testament

Garrett, Susan, Soards, Marion

Advanced study of particular historical questions, theological themes, or NT texts are carried out independently following initial approval of the plan of study, including bibliography and form of reporting. Three or more students with a common interest may request periodic meetings with faculty as a seminar to share and discuss their research.

TH 510-3 Independent Study in Theology, History, or Ethics

Black Church Studies Faculty

This independent study provides an opportunity to concentrate on a topic of theological, historical, or ethical interest related to Black Church Studies after agreeing on a suitable subject with the instructor. The student produces a reading list from library research and meets with the instructor from time to time in individual conference to report on reading. A major paper on the chosen subject is required.

PX 510-3 Independent Study in Practical Theology

Mumford Debra, Walker, Elizabeth Johnson

Upon presenting a viable plan of study in the area of practical theology and Black Church Studies, a student may enroll in this course with permission of the instructor.