

AAAS/RELS/MHIS 333; HUM 3335: Introduction to Gospel Music

Tuesday 6:10-9 PM 1047 CB Fall 2010 University of Michigan-Dearborn

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 11:30-12:30; Tues. 4:30 – 5:30 pm and by appointment

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Required Texts:

Darden, Robert. **People Get Ready**. Continuum. 2004.

Pollard, Deborah Smith. **When the Church Becomes Your Party**. Wayne State U. Press 2008.

There are also other readings on CTools. Make certain you print them out, read them and bring them to class as you would your textbooks.

Course Description

This course explores the history and aesthetics of Black sacred music within cultural context. Major figures (including but not limited to Thomas Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, The Moss/Clark Family, The Winans Family, and Kirk Franklin), periods (slavery, Great Migration, Civil Rights movement), and styles (folk and arranged Negro spirituals, congregational songs, and gospel songs—traditional to urban contemporary) will be studied through recordings, videos, and films. Underlying the course is the theory that Black sacred music is an expression of African American culture that fuses both African and European elements into a unique whole.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able name the various forms of Black sacred music, the characteristics they share and the attributes that differentiate the genres.
2. Students will be able to trace the development of Black sacred music from the African continent to the New World, from the work song/spiritual to holy hip hop and name the cultural and political dynamics that affected the aesthetics of the music.
3. Students will be able to identify leading performers and composers within Black sacred Music, the periods during which they performed, and the songs/styles associated with them.
4. Students will be able to articulate how Black sacred music represents a synthesis of West African and Euro-American cultural elements and yet remains a distinctive African American expression.

OBJECTIVES

Students will meet the goals of through the successful completion of the following assignments

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| 1. Midterm (multiple choice and matching) | 15 percent |
| 2. Final (multiple choice and matching) | 20 percent |
| 3. Analysis of one of three worship services that I have specifically selected for this assignment. The assignment will include a list of the songs that were performed, the time and the point of the service in which they were utilized, and an essay in which you discuss the way the music functioned and how well the music selections facilitated the service based on the responses of the congregation. Detailed guidance will be provided. | 20 percent |
| 4. Analysis of two hours of a gospel music radio program hosted by a Black gospel music announcer. Detailed guidance will be provided. | 15 percent |
| 5. One quiz | 10 percent |
| 6. Gospel Website Discovery. This assignment will be done in teams of two and will require you to evaluate and present to the class a gospel website that should be better known and utilized | 20 percent |

Because of my total number of students, I can only accept hard copies of your papers. No electronic versions will be accepted, so please watch your deadlines. Papers are due during the first 15 minutes of class. I reserve the right to refuse late papers.

Classroom Protocol:

- This is an electronics-free zone. This includes cell phones, laptops, iPhones, etc. No exceptions.** If you are expecting emergency calls or pages, set your devices on vibrate and then step outside.
- Plan to be in your seat from the beginning of class.** If you must arrive late, do so quietly which may mean taking whatever seat is available without disturbing others. If your work schedule prevents you from being on time, alert the professor, and then select a seat close to the door. Thank you for your courtesy.

Attendance: Plan to be present for all of the sessions since you are responsible for all material covered in class, amendments made to the schedule, etc. The foundation of the course is participation, so it is expected that you will read the assignments and come prepared to take part.

You may miss two classes without a penalty. **Three missed classes will result in your grade being dropped by one half step**, for example, from A to A-. **Five or more classes missed without a documented medical note will result in your grade being dropped by one full step** (A to B, for example). Missing an assignment will not automatically generate a makeup. I will make that decision on a case by case basis. If you are legitimately ill with the flu, please stay home so that you don't infect the rest of the class!

PLEASE NOTE: If you must be absent, you need to follow the procedure outlined here in order to gather the information covered in class:

1. Check the CTools site for the course to see if there are any posted changes. Then contact one or more of your peers, not the professor, to get the notes
2. Review the notes. Then, contact me IF clarification is needed or if any handouts were distributed. (Please do not call or E-mail the professor and ask, "Did I miss anything?" Assume you will ALWAYS miss something!)

Attention Students with Disabilities: The University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should register with Disability Resource Services located in Counseling and Support Services. You must register by September 30, 2010, to be guaranteed services during Fall Term.

Plagiarism: The University of Michigan - Dearborn values academic honesty and integrity. Each student has a responsibility to understand, accept, and comply with the university's standards of academic conduct as set forth by the Code of Academic Conduct, as well as policies established by the schools and colleges. Cheating, collusion, misconduct, fabrication, and plagiarism are considered serious offenses. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. At my discretion, any or all papers submitted in this course may be submitted to a plagiarism detection service.

***Introduction to Gospel Music: WEEKLY CALENDAR**

All readings are either in **People Get Ready** or in **When the Church Becomes Your Party** except for materials found on CTools. Classroom time is for discussion and listening, not for doing homework, so come to class having already done the reading! The syllabus is **subject to change**, so check CTools OFTEN, but especially a few days before class to look for updates.

9/14: Week 1: Intro the course and syllabus

9/21: Week 2: Gospel's African Roots-
Read: People Get Ready: Preface-33.

9/28: Week 3 New World: Conversion and Transformation
Read: **People Get Ready**: "The Rise of Spirituals in North America," 33-69
Listen to: "The Sounds of Slavery"
Choose Website Discovery partners

10/5: Week 4: The Negro Spiritual
Read: **People Get Ready**: "What Spirituals Are, What Spirituals Mean," 70-93.
View: "American Experience: The Fisk Jubilee Singers"
View: "An Evening with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre"-
Handout: Radio Assignment

10/12: Week 5: The Gospel Song: Foundations
Wade in the Water: Congregational Singing
Read: **People Get Ready**: Quartets: 130-158.
Video and audio demonstrations
Handout: "This Little Light of Mine" sheets
*****Quiz: Bring a Scantron strip!**

10/19: Week 6: The Gospel Song:
Read: Burnim: "The Black Gospel Music Tradition: A Complex of Ideology, Aesthetic, and Behavior." From More than Dancing, 135-169. (CTools

Read: **People Get Ready**: "The Foundations" and "The Fathers of Gospel": 159-180
Listen to: Dorsey's sacred and secular songs
View: "Say Amen Somebody"
*****DUE: Radio Assignment**

10/26: Week 7: The Gospel Song: *****Read: Burnim: "Functional Dimensions of Gospel Music Performance." From Western Journal of Black Studies 12.2 (1988): 112-21. (CTools)
View in class: "Let Freedom Sing"
Handout: The Archetypal Black Church Service

11/2: Week 8: The Gospel Song: Functional Dimensions*****Midterm Exam. Bring the Scantron strip form**Read: **People Get Ready** “Chicago and the Rise of Gospel Music,” 181-195**In-class collaborations on Website Discovery assignment****11/9: Week 9: The Gospel Song: Functional Dimensions continued**Read: **People Get Ready** “Three Divas—Rosetta Tharpe, Clara Ward, and Mahalia Jackson,” 196-220**When the Church Becomes Your Party: “Women Gospel Announcers”**

Lecture/Demonstration: What Does It Take to Create the Gospel Sound?

Watch and analyze key gospel performances

11/16: Week 10: The Gospel Song: Detroit and Contemporary GospelRead: **When the Church Becomes Your Party** Introduction, 1-16

Video Performances by the Winans Family, Moss-Clark Family, etc.

Special Guest: Top-selling gospel artist Lisa Page Brooks

11/23: Week 11: Gospel Song: Contemporary GospelRead: **People Get Ready**: “Contemporary Gospel: Six Defining Voices,” 302-24.**When the Church Becomes Your Party**: chapter 3 (“Muscle Tee Shirts, Tight Jeans and Cleavage”)**11/30: Week 12: Christian Rap/Holy Hip Hop**Read: **When the Church Becomes Your Party** chapter 5 (“Preachers in Disguise”)*****DUE: Church Visitation Assignments** (hard copies only during the first 15 minutes of class)**12/7 Week 13: The Gospel Song: “Praise and Worship Music”**Read: **When the Church Becomes Your Party** chapter 1 (“Praise Is What We Do”)

Watch: Praise and worship performances

Read: **When the Church Becomes Your Party** ch. 2: “Right under Our (Upturned) Noses: The Gospel Musical Stage Play”**12/14: Week 14: The Gospel Song: The Gospel Musical Stage Play********Due: Team Presentation of Website Discoveries**

Course evaluations

12/21: *FINAL EXAM: Bring Scantron Booklet**

If you are unsure of how to retrieve information from CTools, go to casl.umd.umich.edu/caslonline. Click on “CTools Info and Help” from the left hand side menu.

*Syllabus Subject to Change