I. General Education Review - Writing Course

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>African American Studies</th>
<th>Course # (i.e. ENEX 200)</th>
<th>AAS/HIST/RELS 450</th>
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<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Prayer and Civil Rights</th>
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II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Tobin Miller Shearer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>406-2434-6225/tobin.shearer@umontana.edu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Tobin Miller Shearer</td>
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III. Overview of the Course Purpose/Description:

Provides an introduction to the subject matter and explains course content and learning goals.

This course explores the meaning of public prayer in the Civil Rights Movement. Built around the question, “Does religion help or hinder the pursuit of social change?” this class combines historical and religious studies inquiry to trace changes in civil rights activists’ efforts to make use of religion. By focusing on a particular religious practice – in this case prayer within the Christian community – in a specific, but limited period of time, this course challenges students to consider how meaning is formed through historical action and study the social significance of religious practice. This course complicates prevailing ideas about the normalcy of African-American religious practitioners’ prayer, invites students to examine their assumptions about the nature of prayer, and traces how religion spilled out of sanctuaries into the streets during the civil rights era.

IV. Learning Outcomes:

Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

**Student learning outcomes:**

Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts

Students will analyze a provided set of primary documents on the practice of prayer to examine how religious resources affect social change movements in a series of blogs, essays, and a research paper.

Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing

Through the written exercises described above students will develop their ideas about prayer practices in the civil rights movement.

Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose

Through two in-class writing workshops, students will first receive instruction on writing for specific audiences and then practice by writing blogs addressed to their classmates, essays addressed to general audiences, and a research paper addressed to the scholarly community.

Revise written work based on constructive feedback

Students will write a minimum of two drafts of their research paper based on peer and instructor feedback.

Find, evaluate, and use information effectively (see [http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/](http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/))

Students will be given instructor support about research strategies to identify secondary bibliographic sources in addition to the provided primary source base.
Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions

Through feedback and class instruction the students will receive guidance on the primary conventions of African American Studies with a particular focus on analysis of primary sources (history) and logical argumentation (English).

Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Through in class instruction and paper feedback students will evaluate how to properly use the English language.

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<th>V. Writing Course Requirements Check list</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is enrollment capped at 25 students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If not, list maximum course enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance.</td>
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| Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations? | X Yes ☐ No |

| Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations? | ☐ Yes X No |
| Students will be informed of information literacy expectations during the first class session. Students need to have basic familiarity with the difference between primary and secondary sources, use of web-based subject resources, and use of library databases. For students lacking this literacy, a tutorial with a librarian faculty member will be arranged. |

| Are detailed requirements for all written assignments included in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments? | X Yes ☐ No |
| In addition to the requirements listed in the syllabus, students will receive a detailed rubric for each writing assignment. |

| What instructional methods will be used to teach students to write for specific audiences, purposes, and genres? | Students will write for classmates in a blog form, for general audiences in two essays, and for the scholarly community in a research paper. |

| Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability. | X Yes ☐ No |
| The first three sets of assignments (blogs and two essays) will be submitted without revision but will receive peer and instructor feedback. The final research paper will be written in a minimum of two drafts. |

| VI. Writing Assignments: Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 16 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment. |
| Formal Graded Assignments | To encourage focused engagement with the texts, students will write five blog entries on the course website and submit two five-page essays. Each student will complete the course by writing a fifteen-page research paper that analyzes one text from a set of primary sources including video footage of prayers by grassroots civil rights |
With knees bent and heads bowed, a group of fervent African-American activists prepared to pray on the sidewalks of Albany, Georgia, in 1963. A few minutes later, dour-faced police officers arrested the young people and removed them from the sidewalk to a local jail. This course explores the meaning of such pious action. Built around the question, “Does religion help or hinder the pursuit of social change?” this class combines historical and religious studies inquiry to trace changes in civil rights activists’ efforts to make use of religion. By focusing on a particular religious practice – in this case prayer – in a specific, but limited period of time, this course challenges students to examine African-American history and religion from two primary perspectives. First, students will consider how meaning is formed through historical action, in this case through the public recitation of appeals to divine authority. Built around the question, “Does religion help or hinder the pursuit of social change?” this class combines historical and religious studies inquiry to trace changes in civil rights activists’ efforts to make use of religion. By focusing on a particular religious practice – in this case prayer – in a specific, but limited period of time, this course challenges students to examine African-American history and religion from two primary perspectives. First, students will consider how meaning is formed through historical action, in this case through the public recitation of appeals to divine authority. Secondly, students will study the social significance of religious practice by examining how African-American religious actors in the Christian community articulated a rationale for change, appealed to commonly held ethical values, and evoked the assurance of divine support. This course thus complicates prevailing ideas about the normalcy of African-American religious practitioners’ prayer, invites students to examine their assumptions about the nature of prayer, and traces how religion spilled out of sanctuaries into the streets.

Objectives: students will be able to –
- ask purposeful questions about religious practice and answer them creatively;
- differentiate among and explain the major characteristics of the ritualistic, rhetorical, and political aspects of Christian prayers;
- identify significant shifts in the Civil Rights Movement between 1950 and 1970 and describe where, when, and how civil rights actors used prayer in public;
- use resources from the disciplines of African-American history and religious studies to analyze primary source documents;
- develop, revise and defend written arguments explaining the meaning of a specific instance of public prayer.

Assignments:
Each week’s classes will include input on religious theory and African American history, opportunities for student discussion, topical readings, and regular writing assignments. In all classroom activities, students will draw on readings from both religious studies theory and African-American civil rights history. To encourage focused engagement with the texts, students will also write five blog entries on the course website and submit two five-page papers. Each student will complete the course by writing a fifteen-page research paper that analyzes one text from a set of primary sources including video footage of prayers by grassroots civil rights activists, written prayers, and sound recordings of civil rights activists giving public prayers.

**Grading:**
- Participation – 20%
- Blog entries – 10%
- Essay 1 – 20%
- Essay 2 – 20%
- Research paper – 30%

**Grade scale:**
- A+ 98-100
- A 93-97
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D+ 67-69
- D 63-66
- D- 60-62
- F ≤59

**Class size:**
Enrollment is limited to 25 students.

**Classroom etiquette:**
In a wired world gone casual, a few words on etiquette in the classroom will prove helpful. During lectures, I will give you my complete attention. I ask the favor of the same from my students. To this end, during class time it is considered inappropriate to communicate via tech-savvy means (i.e. texting, writing e-mails, surfing the web, instant-messaging, etc.) or in a more quaintly Luddite fashion (whispering, passing notes, having conversations, etc.). Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in this matter. Please turn off all cell phones and use laptops only for note taking during lectures and class discussion. Acting contrary to these basic standards of etiquette will not only be considered rude but will likewise negatively impact participation grades.

**Instructor contact:**
I maintain regular office hours that I will post on the course website. You are also welcome to contact me by e-mail. My goal is to respond within 24 hours. In case of emergency, you may contact me by phone as listed on the course website.

**Missed deadlines:**
My goal is always to encourage your best work in the midst of multiple classroom demands and real life emergencies. Limited deadline extensions can be arranged if the student makes advance contact. Late papers or projects will be marked down a 1/3 grade/day. Make-up exams will not be offered unless they are arranged along with appropriate documentation from medical, athletic or administrative officials.
**Academic honesty:**
Stealing someone else’s ideas is the same as stealing someone’s property. Cite others’ ideas in standard footnote or endnote format (in written work and all projects). Paraphrase whenever possible. In general, a paraphrase uses no more than three of the same words in a sentence as the original source. See: http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode for a full review of the University of Montana’s student conduct code.

**Accessibility:**
Students with documented disabilities as per University policy (see: http://www.umt.edu/dss/current/expect_access/ldver.html for more information) will be appropriately accommodated in accordance with counsel from University of Montana Disability Services for Students (DSS).

**Readings:**

**Course pack:**


**Schedule:**

**Week 1:** Course introduction, religion introduction, civil rights movement introduction

*Zaleski and Zaleski. “Prayer and the Public Square.”*

**Week 2:** In-class intensive writing workshops

* Blogs 1 and 2 due. Topics: Introduced in class.*

**Week 3:** Religious Theory 1 – What is religion?

*James. “The Reality of the Unseen.”*

*Smart. Blog 3 due. Topic: What is religion?*

**Week 4:** Religious Theory 2 – What is ritual?

*Alexander.
Bell.
Livingston. Blog 4 due. Topic: What is ritual?*

**Week 5:** Religious Theory 3 – What is prayer?

*Bell. “Constructing Meaning.”
James. “Mysticism.”
Zaleski and Zaleski. “The Ecstatic.”
Essay 1 due. Topic: What is prayer?*

**Week 6:** The Broad American Religious Context
Wuthnow.

Week 7: African American Religious Context
  Costen.
  Krause.
  Moore.

Week 8: Civil Rights Movement 1 – 1940-1955
  Garrow.

Week 9: Civil Rights Movement 2 – 1955-1963
  Findlay. “Churches Join the Movement.”
  Research paper topic due.

Week 10: Civil Rights Movement 3 – 1963-1974
  Balmer.
  Findlay. “Religion and Politics in the Sixties.”
  Blog 5 due. Topic: What defines American religion?

Week 11: In class intensive workshops on primary source analysis
  Orsi.
  Research paper bibliography due.

Week 12: Reading Prayer into Civil Rights Movement History
  Marsh.
  Research paper outline due.

Week 13: Reading Prayer out of Civil Rights Movement History
  Payne.

Week 14: Thinking Faith into African-American Religion
  Wilmore and Cone.
  Research paper draft one due.

Week 15: Thinking Faith out of African-American Religion
  Chapman.

Finals week:
  Research paper draft two due at end of finals week.