

DePaul University - School for New Learning

HC 381 African American Leadership and the Black Church

Oak Forest Campus –Spring 2008

April 3 – June 12, 2008

Instructor: Cynthia R. Milsap

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Competencies: H2A, H1F, A3E, H4.

FX can be negotiated.

Course description: Students will explore the economic, political, and social history of America as it intersects with the African American leadership and the pursuit of dignity, equality, and opportunity. This history will be analyzed within the context of the black Christian church and the role it plays in nurturing and shaping African American leaders such as Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, Jesse Jackson Sr. and others. Students will learn about the historical role of the Black Church in leadership development and social action. The African American interpretation of religion and its impact on individual achievement and participation in social or political movements will also be explored.

Principal topics covered: Key topics will include the history and role of the Black Church in America, profiles of national leaders and movements from the Civil War to the present, African American interpretations of Christianity, and the role of the Black Church leadership in meeting spiritual and social needs.

Required Textbooks

Mitchell, Henry H. *Black Church Beginnings: The long-hidden realities of the first years*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004. ISBN# 0-8028-2785-3

Ross, Rosetta E. *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. ISBN# 0-8006-3603-1

White, John. (1990) *Black Leadership in America: From Booker T. Washington to Jesse Jackson*. London: Longman Group Limited.

Wilmore, Gayraud. (1991) *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. ISBN# 1-57075-182-X

Course Evaluation: Students will be assessed based on attendance, participation in class discussion, feedback papers, a group research project and presentation, and a final paper. All students are required to do a final paper and to participate in a class group presentation.

Evaluation criteria and course assignments

All assignments will be graded based on the clarity of ideas expressed, the ability of students to both describe and analyze the topics covered, and the student's progress in acquiring new knowledge about the role of the Black Christian church. Our special emphasis will be on the Black Church and its role in fostering spirituality, leadership development, racial and social justice, and community development.

Attendance and class discussion	25 percent
Feedback papers	15 percent
Black Church Group case study	35 percent
Final paper	25 percent

Attendance/class -- Regular class attendance is expected since students will receive points for class discussion and for being present. Students should come prepared to discuss the readings and topics for each session.

Feedback papers -- Students will write periodic in-class 1-page opinion papers on various topics/questions related to class readings or discussions. These are graded in a nonjudgmental way and designed to solicit student response and participation in a more personal manner. Students receive credit but no letter grade for these assignments.

Black Church Case study - Students will select and visit a Black church or if desired, two churches. This is a group assignment where students will work together to gather information on their respective church(es) and areas. The group will then present its findings in a 30-minute class presentation. Presentations may include videos, music, transparencies, or other materials, which enhance the group's presentation. All group members must participate in the data collection, church visit, and presentation.

Students will gather information on the church's history and denominational affiliation and structure; the pastoral leader and his or her background and vision for the church and community; the church's organizational and governance structure; its teaching ministries; community outreach and service activities; demographics of the church members vs. those of its geographic community or neighborhood; the role of women (ordained and

lay); the church's stated mission; and the church's influence and impact on the personal and social needs of its members and the surrounding community. Students will also observe and record what they see in the church's worship services and atmosphere. They will relate their findings to the historical characteristics of the Black Church as covered by course readings and discussions. Students will also interview the pastor and another church leader (minister, deacon, etc.) and talk with several church members to gain a comprehensive view of how the church sees its ministry and mission.

Final Research Paper

(dependent upon competency)

The final research paper should be a minimum of 7 to 10 pages not including the cover and reference pages and should be written according to MLA style. The paper should include a reference page citing the sources used (books, interviews, etc.). Topics will vary and must be approved by the instructor. Some possible topics include:

- A. The exploration of the Black church's role in addressing a social issue
- B. A profile of an African American leader and his or her connection with the Black Church
- C. A discussion on the difference between Western European Christianity and African African Christianity.
- D. An analysis of a social issue that and its connection to leadership development, the Black Church or the Black Community
- E. Another topic addressing African American leadership and the student's competencies that is approved by the professor

Weekly Course Outline and Readings

*Readings listed are to be completed for the class session under which they are listed

Week 1 -- Introduction to the Black Church and course requirements

April 3

Mitchell, Chapters 1-5

White, chapters 1 & 2

Week 2 -- Leadership role of the Black church and Black leaders:

4/10

Discussion of Spiritual/Moral and Social dimension of leadership

Discussion of Dr. King's Birmingham letter

Read: Ross, Chapter 1 & 2

Read: History of Pentecostal church (handout)

Black Leadership in America (White) chapters 3 & 4

Black Religion & Black Radicalism (Wilmore) Chapters 1 & 2

Week 3 – Leadership in Urban, Multi-cultural Contexts

4/17 **Attend SCUPE Urban Ministry Evening Session:
Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago (6:30 -9:30)**
Review: White-Chapters 1- 4 (Intro, DuBois, Washington)
Read: Wilmore - Chapters 5 & 6 (Black Church movement)

Week 4 --Leadership in African American contexts: Separation or Integration

4/24 Read: White - Chapters on Garvey and Malcolm X
Wilmore - Chapters 3 & 4
Ross, Chapter 2 & 3
Mitchell, Chapters 6-8

Week 5 -- Political and Economic Leadership

5/1 Read: White, Chapters on Jesse Jackson Sr. and Dr. King
Wilmore, - Chapter 9 & 10

Week 6 -- Women's role in Black Leadership: Ida B. Wells and others

5/8 Read: Handouts on Women and the Black Church
Ross, Chapters 4-6

Week 7 - Black Church case study group presentations

5/15

Week 8 - Group presentations

5/22

Week 9 - Group presentations

5/29

Week 10 - Final Class/Discussion of case studies

6/5 (Last class session)

*****Final papers are due June 12.**

Please note that the syllabus is a class guide to learning and will be modified as needed to accommodate the learning needs of the students. Any major changes in assignments due will be provided to you in writing and with proper advance notice.

Faculty: Cynthia R. Milsap has been a member of the Visiting Faculty team at DePaul University's School for New Learning since 1995. At DePaul, she teaches courses on "African American leadership and the Black Church," "Black Women in the Church and Community," "the Church and Social Justice" and "Public and Community Relations." She also teaches urban policy and community planning as part of North Park University's Master of Arts in Community Development program. She is the Director of Nurturing the Call, a one-year certificate program for urban ministers and church leaders seeking to improve their community and church leadership skills, at the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education. She has served as Executive

Director for The Night Ministry, a nonprofit organization founded by a coalition of 18 congregations, which provides services for homeless youth and adults through its street outreach bus, youth shelter programs, and its nighttime street pastors. She is a past Coordinator of Faith-based Community Development programs at DePaul University's Egan Urban Center. She has also held a range of editorial positions ranging from writer and editor for business and professional publications such as Crain's *Business Marketing* magazine to Director of Public Relations and Marketing for Truman College, one of the state's most multi-ethnic community colleges. She is completing her doctoral work in Education at Northern Illinois University in the Counseling, Adult and Higher Education Department, where she is researching the leadership development and spiritual formation in women in ministry. She has a Master of Science degree in journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. She completed her bachelor's degree in English and French at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. She is a member of Second Baptist Church in Evanston, Illinois.