

**Your Professor**

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**How This Course Helps You Graduate**

This course fulfills your World/Comparative Religion requirement and carries the Global Studies designation.

**Course Texts**

Joseph Murphy, *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora* (Beacon Press, 1995).

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Vintage, 2017).

Both books are required.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

EdPuzzle sign up: <https://edpuzzle.com/join/jukvoko>

# RELIGIONS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to a variety of religions in the African diaspora. As such, the course focuses on theoretical understandings of diaspora, Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. Religious traditions considered include: Santería, Vodou, US Black Christianity, Kongo religion, Yoruba religion, & Candomblé.

We will look at the history of these traditions, the ritual practices and beliefs that shape these communities, and the role of colonialism past and present. Diaspora forces a unique approach to the study of religion. To study communities in diaspora prompts questions about identity, multivocality, ritual, home, story, and space.

**World Comparative Religion Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will identify the sacred texts, traditions, and theological developments of one or more religious communities, attentive to

## Course Policies

I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will be reported to your advisor, and you will receive a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another's work off as your own. For more on plagiarism consult the guide on blackboard. Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic violations.

The Gonzaga University Academic Honesty Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work. Each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. [Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga.](#)

insider perspectives, debates, and scholarly methods of analysis.

In Religions of the African Diaspora, students will introduce students to a number of religious traditions of the African diaspora.

2. Students will categorize the theological language in one or more traditions concerning, for example, images of the divine or sacred, religious art, the human condition and liberation, sex and gender, community, worship, practice and ritual, ethical responsibility, and marginality, attending to intercultural competence and human diversity in the study of religion.

In Religions of the African Diaspora, students will explore many of these components in a number of different traditions in the African diaspora.

3. Students will evaluate the potential of religious teachings and practices to both empower and suppress social justice in the cultural contexts of human life.

In Religions of the African Diaspora, students will analyze the influence of colonialism on both past and present and investigate how colonialism has shaped religions of the African diaspora.

## How to Succeed in this Course

1) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. I laid out the class like a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday course to give you and me some structure. By keeping with my schedule, you'll probably make it easier on yourself to keep on track of things. Because we could all be in different time zones, everything listed with a time here is in Pacific time (Spokane local time).

2) Regularly check your Gonzaga email. This will be my primary form of communication with you.

3) Complete your reading journals and your EdPuzzle videos on time, and I don't recommend putting it all off until Saturdays.

4) Complete the essay exams, in a timely manner. I will allow extensions for distressing cases of family emergencies and extreme illness. But with only six weeks, we're on a tight schedule! Late essay exams will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late, starting Saturdays at 5:30 pm (Please note that this gives you a 30 minute grace period). We will be using Turnitin for all three essay exams. Turnitin will email you a receipt when you successfully

upload something. Until you get that receipt, don't assume you've turned in your assignment. If Turnitin is being temperamental, try another browser and email me your essay exam so that it's in on time.

5) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist students in their attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments. I am always available via email and typically respond within a few hours.

## Requirements and Grading

1) Three Essay Exams: There will be **three essay exams**. Each exam will consist of a short essay question. These will be based off the readings and the "lecture" content. You will receive the questions on a Sunday and the essay exams are due by 5:00 pm Saturday, Spokane time. The point totals vary by essay exam. Essay exam 1 will focus on *Working the Spirit*, essay exam 2 takes us into the world of film (and *Daughters of the Dust*), and essay exam 3 reflects on *Homegoing*.

2) Reading Journal: For each reading you will complete a reading journal. Each journal entry will include a quote that jumped out at you from the reading and 3-4 sentences explaining why that quote struck you as interesting. Worth 90 points (18 reading journals at 5 points each). I space the readings out as if this was a MWF class, but your reading journals are due on a week-by-week basis. The three journals for Week 1 are due by Saturday, May 21 at 11:59 pm Pacific time, and so on. I recommend trying to keep with a MWF schedule and not attempt to do it all on Saturday.

3) Participation: Participation points will be earned by engaging with the course lecture videos. We'll be using EdPuzzle, which allows me to embed questions for you into the lecture videos and the platform will save your answers. Strong answers will be thoughtful, engage the reading material and other course material, and reflect sustained interaction with course content. Each video will have 1-3 questions. Think of these as a Check or Check Minus grade. There will be 18 videos in all. For each day that you get full checks, you'll earn 5 points. Each check minus answer will lose you a point from the day's 5. Worth 90 points (18 videos at 5 points each).

## Course Policies

Americans with Disabilities Act:

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Access.
2. Email me your Disability Access letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done **during the first week** of class.

For more information about services available to GU students with disabilities, contact:

[disability@gonzaga.edu](mailto:disability@gonzaga.edu); 313-4134. Or visit their office in Foley 209. See also <http://www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp>

I am **more** than happy to be a part of your success in this regard (and it's the law!). But I can't help if I don't know how how to help, so work with the Disability Access Office and touch base with me about concerns.

I will make the lecture videos available every Monday and your participation engagement with them is due on a week-by-week basis. The three videos for Week 1 are due by Saturday, May 21 at 11:59 pm Pacific time, and so on.

Essay Exam 1:	100 points
Essay Exam 2:	75 points
Essay Exam 3:	125 points
Reading Journals:	90 points
<u>Participation:</u>	<u>90 points</u>
Total:	480 points

### **Grading Breakdown:**

A: 446–480 points	A-: 432–445 points	B+: 412–431 points	B: 398–411 points
B-: 384–397 points	C+: 364–383 points	C: 350–363 points	C-: 336–349 points
D+: 316–335 points	D: 302–315 points	F: 301 points and below	

### **A Note on Course Content:**

This is a course in religious studies and not confessional in nature; that is, we are not here to promote a particular religious viewpoint or to debate religious “truth.” Rather, we will be engaging religious materials as anthropologists, historians, and sociologists to understand their meanings for the people who have produced and used them. You may have your own religious commitment; if so, throughout this course you will likely encounter opinions and religious beliefs and activities with which you do not agree. This does not make them unworthy of your study, consideration, and respect. I ask you to imagine yourself in the shoes of someone else whose practices and beliefs may differ from your own and yet carry immense meaning and value for that person.

Furthermore, students will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

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## **Course Schedule**

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Even though we don’t physically meet together in a classroom, I’ve given us a course schedule. Do the day’s assigned reading before engaging with the day’s course video. The videos will assume that you have read.

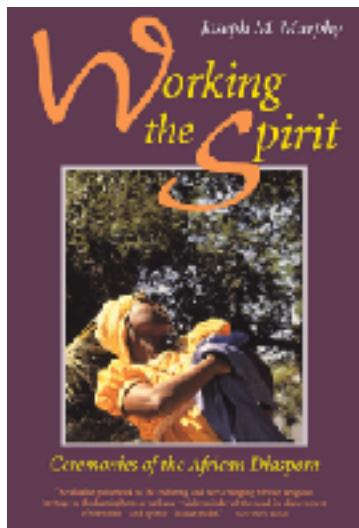
NOTE: All times/dates are using the Pacific time zone (Spokane local time).

Week 1: Africa, Caribbean, and Diaspora

**All Week 1 EdPuzzle Videos available Monday, May 16 at 6 am**

Monday, May 16: Course Introduction: Religion, African, Diaspora

Reading: “Introduction” in *Working the Spirit*



Wednesday, May 18: West African Religions

Reading: "West African Sacred Cosmos" on blackboard

Friday, May 20: Haitian Vodou

Reading: Ch 2, "Haitian Vodou" in *Working the Spirit*

**Week 1 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm**

Saturday, May 21

Week 2: Africa, Caribbean, and Diaspora

**All Week 2 EdPuzzle Videos available Monday, May 23 at 6 am**

Monday, May 23: Haitian Vodou

Reading: "Of Worlds Seen and Unseen" on blackboard

Wednesday, May 25: Brazilian Candomblé

Reading: Ch 3, "Candomblé in Brazil" in *Working the Spirit*

Friday, May 27: Cuban Santería

Reading: Ch 4, "Cuban and Cuban American Santería" in *Working the Spirit*

**Week 2 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm Saturday, May 28**

Week 3: Africa, Caribbean, US, and Diaspora

**Essay Exam 1 prompt available on Blackboard Sunday May 29**

**All Week 3 EdPuzzle Videos available Monday, May 30 at 6 am**

Monday, May 30: Revival Zion and Rastafari Movements

Reading: Ch 5, "Revival Zion in Jamaica" in *Working the Spirit*

Wednesday, June 1: African Americans and Diaspora

Reading: Ch 6, "The Black Church in the United States" in *Working the Spirit*

Friday, June 3: Comparisons

Reading: Ch 7, "Working the Spirit" in *Working the Spirit*

**Essay Exam 1 due to blackboard by 5pm Saturday, June 4**

**Week 3 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm**

Saturday, June 4

Week 4: Africa, America, and Diaspora

**Essay Exam 2 prompt available on Blackboard Sunday June 5**

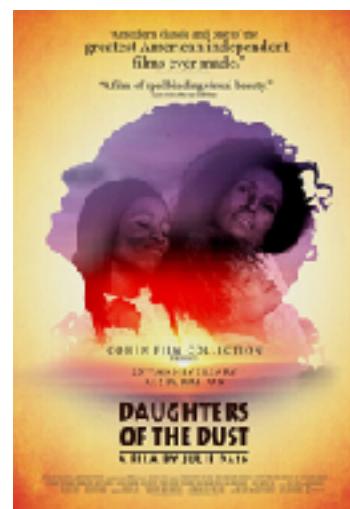
**All Week 4 EdPuzzle Videos made available Monday, June 6 at 6 am**

Monday, June 6: *Daughters of the Dust*

Reading: Watch *Daughters of the Dust*, instructions on accessing the film are in the assignment prompt for essay exam 2

Wednesday, June 8: A Diasporic Deity

Reading: "Oshun Across the Waters" on blackboard





Friday, June 10: Ongoing Importance of *Daughters of the Dust*  
 Reading: “[Beyoncé vs. Daughters of the Dust](#)” and “[How Beyoncé’s Lemonade Helped Bring a Groundbreaking Film Back to Theaters](#)” (links here and links and pdfs of the webpages on Blackboard)

**Essay Exam 2 due to blackboard by 5 pm Saturday, June 11**

**Week 4 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm Saturday, June 11**

Week 5: *Homegoing*

**All Week 5 EdPuzzle Videos available Monday, June 13 at 6 am**

Monday, June 13: The Atlantic Slave Trade and *Homegoing*

Reading: Effia and Esi in *Homegoing*

Wednesday, June 15: American Slavery and *Homegoing*

Reading: Quey, Ness, and James in *Homegoing*

Friday, June 17: American and African Modernity and *Homegoing*

Reading: Kojo and Abena in *Homegoing*

**Week 5 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm**

**Saturday, June 18**

Week 6: *Homegoing*

**Essay Exam 3 prompt available on Blackboard, Sunday June 19**

**All Week 6 EdPuzzle Videos available Monday, June 20 at 6 am**

Monday, June 20: American and African Modernity and *Homegoing*

Reading: H, Akua, and Willie in *Homegoing*

Wednesday, June 22: American and African Modernity and *Homegoing*

Reading: Yaw and Sonny in *Homegoing*

Friday, June 24: *Homegoing* and Homecoming

Reading: Marjorie and Marcus in *Homegoing*

**Essay Exam 3 due to blackboard by 5pm Saturday, June 25**

**Week 6 Reading Journals and EdPuzzle Videos due by 11:59 pm Saturday, June 25**

