

SPRING 2021

COURSE TITLE: The Cross and The Lynching Tree; BLACK LIBERATION AND WOMANIST THEOLOGY

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: 75552 THST- 3998- 02 and 73028 CATH – 3998- 06

TIMES/DAYS: Monday/Wednesday 4:00-5:30pm (Synchronous and Asynchronous)

INSTRUCTOR: Kim Harris PhD

CORE AREA: Faith and Reason

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

Historically and contemporarily, the cross, a foundational image of Christian faith, has also been associated with political terror. In this course, beginning with the landmark theological work of Black liberation theologian Dr. James Cone, we will explore the meaning of the cross during the Roman Empire and in the post Reconstruction American South. We will ask who are crucified, and the affect of Black and Brown people being framed as crucifiable. We will reflect on what the cross and the lynching tree mean to Christians and to followers of other traditions, and examine what role we play as the narrative of crucifixion and empire is played and replayed.

This course examines questions of faith, God, religious practice, humanity, spirituality, and liberation in light of diverse African American experiences, ideas, and practices. By an analysis of diverse sources in both Black and Womanist theology, the class explores the complex dynamics between race and religion and highlights how Black voices contribute to the human search for God.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to compare different perspectives on religious, ecclesial, and spiritual traditions. Students will understand and interrelate theology and critical race theory. Students will examine diverse Black and Womanist theological sources and assess the significance of Black and Womanist contributions to religious thought and practice.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: This course is open to Juniors and Seniors.

REQUIRED TEXTS

James Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation
James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree
James Cone, The Spirituals and the Blues
Amir Hussain, Muslims in the Making in America
Bryan Massingale, Racial Justice and the Catholic Church
Delores Williams, Sisters in the Wilderness

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

CLASS DISCUSSION and PARTICIPATION (20%)

READING ANALYSES and WRITTEN WORK (20%)

QUIZZES and FINAL EXAM (20%)

SITE VISIT (online) AND ANALYSIS PAPER (20%)

FINAL PROJECT and PRESENTATION (20%)