

Graduate Division of Religion Spring 2012 Course Atlas

JS 531: Methods in Jewish Studies: Text and Context in Jewish Mysticism

Don Seeman

Monday 1:00-4:00

Content: This seminar introduces students to critical issues in the methodologies and disciplines that make up contemporary Jewish Studies. . It does not presume background in any specific field or discipline and is open to all doctoral students who wish to learn about Jewish Studies broadly or about the topic of Jewish mysticism from a variety of different perspectives. Methods in Jewish Studies is also required course for the Jewish Studies Certificate Program and is meant to build collegiality and shared experience among students with Jewish Studies interests from any department or program in the Laney Graduate School. We will have frequent class visits from scholars representing different Jewish Studies disciplines, and will also supplement class with films and in-class text study.

This seminar aims to introduce students to a broad range of methods and disciplines involved in contemporary Jewish Studies. Jewish Mysticism is a topic that has been approached from an extremely wide variety of perspectives, including history, ethnography, gender studies, theology, literary theory and philosophy. It is also a topic that spans all historical periods and has many comparative dimensions with other cultural and religious traditions. Whether or not they have a primary interest in mysticism, students from across Emory will be able to find methodological and theoretical dimensions of this course that relate to their own chosen areas of Jewish Studies. We will focus on secondary (and some primary) literature representing many of the major disciplines represented in Jewish Studies as well as different geographical regions and periods: from 11th century North Africa to 13th century Spain, 19th century Poland and 20th century Israel and the United States.

JS 560: Approaches to Jewish History

David R. Blumenthal

Tuesday 2:30 -5:30

Content: The purpose of this course is to provide students for the Christian ministry and education with a historical, theological, and practical introduction to Judaism and the Jewish community. Accordingly, the course is divided into four parts: the secular forms of Jewish identity, the religious forms of Jewish identity, the holocaust as the formative trauma of contemporary Jewish life, and A. J. Heschel as a representative Jewish theologian.

Texts:

Bible (any translation).

H. Wouk, *This Is My God*

E. Wiesel, *Night*

A. J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man*

Material on Blackboard (be sure to bring computer to class or print it out for yourself):

D. Blumenthal, *Essays for Christian-Jewish Understanding*

D. Blumenthal, *"Timeline of Jewish History"*
S. Dubnow, *"The Doctrine of Jewish Nationalism"* (excerpt)
A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (excerpts)
S. Woocher, *American Jewish Civil Religion*
D. Blumenthal, *"Memory and Meaning in the Shadow of the Holocaust"*
D. Blumenthal, *"Repentance and Forgiveness"*
A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews,
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Supplemental reading (on reserve though you may wish to buy some of these):

L. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*
S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History*
A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*
E. Evans, *The Provincials*
A. J. Heschel, *Who Is Man?*
J. Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*

Particulars:

No prerequisites.

The teaching method is discussion; students will have to prepare all readings.

There will also be a field trip.

Final exam: Take home, choice of questions, short essay.

Doctoral students will be expected to do the supplemental reading.

JS 730R: Topics in Jewish Studies: Midrash

David R. Blumenthal

Wednesday 8:30-11:30

Content: Midrash is the key form of biblical interpretation in rabbinic Judaism. It is also one of the main genres of rabbinic literature. This course will study closely one text: *Bereshit Rabba*. We will read through the text of Chapters 39-41 in Hebrew.

Goals: To give participants a taste of midrashic text in the original Hebrew, to introduce students to basic definitions and terms, to teach value-concepts as an analytic tool, and to compile a list of midrashic literary techniques. The basic thesis of the seminar is that midrash is not "exegesis" but "Torah," that is, a literary method for creating a new worldview.

Texts: *Bereshit Rabba* (on Blackboard); *Tanakh*

On Reserve: D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, esp. Chapters 1, 2, 5; M. Fishbane, *Garments of Torah*.

Prerequisites: Ability to read and understand Hebrew. You will need to read and translate. You may use the English to prepare but you may NOT bring it to class. This is a course for graduate students; qualified undergraduates may also attend.

RLAR 737 Ramayana Traditions in South Asia (cross-listed with MESAS 570-000)

V. Narayana Rao

Thursday 1:00-4:00

Content: This course examines the world of the Ramayana in the South and the Southeast Asian languages and arts. The main aim of the course is study the narrative as a carrier and creator of culture. Without necessarily accepting that the Valmiki text is the original which spread across the subcontinent and beyond, we will study the various Ramayana tellings and their cultural, political, aesthetic, and ideological expressions.

The seminar will cover the Ramayana traditions in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, and Laos and in the Indian Diaspora in the US and other Western Countries.

The topics we study include:

- Ramayana as an epic, nature of Asian epics, and a brief comparison with other epics of the world.
- The power of Sanskrit and the name of Valmiki played in the cultural history of South and Southeast Asia and the regions beyond.
- The ideological role the Ramayana tellings play in their written and oral forms, the role of patronage in sustaining the hegemonic tellings and the power of aesthetics in the life of these tellings.
- The Valmiki's text and its role as the first poem in Sanskrit, which in turn influences the kavya tradition, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Murari and the later Ramayana writers.
- Ramayana in the political imagination of South and Southeast Asian cultures.
- Ramayana in the Bhakti traditions focusing on Ramacaritmans of Tulsidas.
- Adhyatma Ramayana and other regional variations.
- Ramayana in performance. Ramayana theme in theater, and dance, film and other performing traditions.
- Counter Ramayana traditions of Jains, and Women and modern narratives of Colonial writers, Dravidianists, Marxists, Feminist and Dalits.

Course requirements:

Regular attendance and participation in readings and discussions.

Presentation of an assigned book or books.

Presentation of the draft of your paper before final submission.

Participating as an assigned discussant of your colleague's paper.

Final paper of about 25 pages double spaced

Graduate students will research the general area of the seminar and their specific area related to their paper, and read to the extent they can texts in South and Southeast Asian languages.

Students interested in reading Valmiki text in original Sanskrit can meet with me as a separate group once a week.

RLAR 738 Sufi Belief and Practice (cross-listed with MESAS 570-001)

Scott Kugle

Wednesday 1:00-4:00

Content: This graduate seminar is an inter-disciplinary exploration of Sufism, so-called Islamic Mysticism. The goal of the seminar is to give students in-depth experience interpreting Sufi phenomena from mystical theories to theological controversies to ritual practices.

Theoretically, the seminar will be grounded in an “Islamic Civilization” approach that sees mysticism as an important component of Islamic religions discourse and Muslim society. Chronologically this seminar will focus on the “formative period” (9-12th centuries) and “middle period” (13-16th centuries). The seminar draws material from regions spanning from Morocco to India. Students will have the opportunity to focus on a particular region or period (including the ethnographic present) in their final research project, in which they are encouraged to pursue a topic related to their PhD dissertation project and produce a substantial essay.

The seminar will use disciplinary approaches from social history, literary analysis, religious studies methodology, gender studies and ethnomusicology. The seminar draws an evenly upon recent scholarly analysis and readings of primary source texts in translation (from Arabic and Persian primarily). Students will be given an opportunity to do primary data analysis with either an original language text or an interview related to Sufism.

Students will gain familiarity with basic Sufi doctrines and beliefs, and will get experience in Sufi styles of interpretation and symbolism. Students will be exposed to various genres of literature important to Sufism: doctrinal works, spiritual letters, saintly biographies, poetic lyrics, and ritual manuals.

Texts:

- Ahmet Karamustafa, Sufism: The Formative Period. Berkeley: UC Press, 2007. Paperback ISBN-13: 9780520252684.
- Michael Sells, Early Islamic mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Miraj, poetic and theological writings. Classics in Western Spirituality Series, Paulist Press, 1996. ISBN 0809136198.
- Kristin Zahra Sands, Sufi Commentaries on the Qur'an in Classical Islam. London: Routledge, 2006. ISBN-10: 0415366852
- Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Kalabadhi, Doctrine of the Sufis [Kitab al-Ta'arruf li-Madhab Ahl al-Tasawwuf], transl. by Authur Arberry from Arabic]. Newcastle: Atheneum Press, 1991. Paperback reprint ISBN: 0521292182
- Ali ibn Uthman Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub [Revelation of the Mystery, translated from Persian by Reynold Nicholson]. London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-0906094372

- Shahzad Bashir, Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam. Columbia University Press, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0231144902. ISBN e-book: 9780231517607.
- Earle Waugh, Memory, music, and religion: Morocco's mystical chanters. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-1570035678
- The Hundred Letters of Sharafuddin Maneri [*Maktubat* transl. by Paul Jackson from Persian]. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979. ISBN-13: 978-0809122295.
- Ahmad ibn Ata'illah, The Key to Salvation: a Sufi Manual of Invocation [*Miftah al-Fallah wa Misbah al-Arwah*, transl. by Mary Ann Kouri Danner from Arabic]. Islamic Texts Society, 1996. ISBN 0946621276, 9780946621279.

RLE 701R Social Justice

Elizabeth Bounds

Tuesday 2:00-5:00

Content: This course examines contemporary critical theories of justice, evaluating these theories on their own merits and in light of contemporary social problems and contexts. Themes include: definitions of justice, relation of economic and social/cultural justice, role of religion, understanding of race, gender, and sexuality, attention to punishment.

Possible Texts:

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*; Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*; Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*; Cornel West, *Race Matters*; Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice*; Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice*; Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*; Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self*; Kathryn Tanner, *Politics of God*; Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment*; Judith Butler, *Giving An Account of Oneself*; Patricia J. Williams, *Seeing A Color-Blind Future*

Particulars: In addition to weekly seminar preparation and participation, students will lead discussion, and choose from other assignment options including: designing and answering an examination question, applying a theory to a specific situation, and preparing a research/analytic paper.

RLE 736 Contemporary Christian Ethics

Ellen Ott-Marshall

Wednesday 2:30-5:30

Content: Drawing on the approach of Ernst Troeltsch and H. Richard Niebuhr, this seminar studies Christian ethics by exploring the relationship between faith and history. After an introduction to this triadic framework, we will use it as a lens to study the work of contemporary scholars in Christian ethics. (Figures may include: Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jürgen Moltmann, James Gustafson, Wendy Farley, Anthony Pinn, Sallie McFague, Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, and Miguel de la Torre.) As we work through this material, we will focus on the ways in which the authors construe the relationship between faith and

history in order to foster a particular ethical disposition. Thus, the central question of the course becomes: How should one negotiate between faith and history? In addition to exploring this central question in relationship to the work of some formative figures, students in this course will also pursue a three-step writing project in constructive theological ethics. Like the texts we are reading (though on a smaller scale), students' papers will (1) describe an ethical problem, (2) identify and critique theological matter related to this ethical problem, and (3) put forth a constructive theo-ethical response to the problem.

Requirements: preparation for and participation in class discussion, discussion leadership, one 6- page essay, two 15-page papers.

RLHB 790R: An Introduction to Middle Egyptian

Joel M. LeMon

Wednesday 1:00- 4:00

Content: This course introduces students to Middle Egyptian, which first appeared in written form at about 2100 B.C.E. and served as the standard hieroglyphic language in ancient Egyptian history from that point forward. In addition to exploring the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of Middle Egyptian, the course will contain several excurses on ancient Egyptian religion, history, literature, and art. These excurses (1) situate ancient Egyptian culture within the larger context of the Ancient Near East and (2) explore the historical periods and regions where Egyptian influence was most palpable.

Texts: Readings required for the course may include material from the following, as well as other sources:

Allen, J. *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*

Borghouts, J. *Hierogram: A Concise Grammar of Middle-Egyptian.*

Borghouts, J. *Hierogram: A Reference Grammar of Middle Egyptian with Reading Texts.*

Hoch, J. *Middle Egyptian Grammar*

Prerequisites: Intermediate knowledge of at least two other Afro-Asiatic languages (e.g., Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Ugaritic, Arabic)

Course requirements: regular participation, seminar presentations on Egyptian culture, translation exam

RLHT 735 Native Americans and Christianity (cross-listed with ENG 789R and ILA 790)

Craig Womack

Wednesday 4:00 – 7:00

Content: The class will involve an inter-disciplinary framework that combines historical and literary analysis in order to study the interactions between Native peoples and Christianity. One of the unique features of the course will be lectures from Native American theologians who will visit through the videoconference technologies available in the ECIT classroom. We will explore the ways in which Native identities intersect with Christian ones, especially in terms of the ways in which Native ceremonialism and political activism has shaped distinctive identities inside of, and outside of, mainstream Christianity.

A main theme of the course will be the critique of oppositional frameworks that simplify the dynamic interactions of the two religions.

Texts will include *God Is Red*, a comparative religious text by Vine Deloria Jr. (Sioux) that has greatly influenced Native studies; *Around the Sacred Fire*, a book about the influence of Native ecumenical movements on Indian activism by James Treat (Creek); *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, a novel about gender deviation within Native Christianity by Louise Erdrich (Chippewa); and *First White Frost*, a history of the Methodist denomination's work in Indian country by Homer Noley (Choctaw). Supplementary texts will involve short case studies about the history of institutions such as the Muscogee Creek Baptist churches, short stories about Native American interactions with Christians, and poetry about Native religious conflicts and identities.

RLHT 736 Sexuality, Law, and Religion in the Middle Ages

Philip Reynolds

Wednesday 9:00-12:00

Content: The seminar explores the regulation of sexuality in light of religious belief (chiefly but not exclusively Christian) during the long Middle Ages (400–1600). The theme of medieval sexuality today has generated a profuse variety of specialties, which have tended to obscure normative models and mainstream theology. This seminar honors both aspects: the normative models and their rationale, as well as variety, deviance, and suppression. The course is in two parts. During the first part, we share common texts as a basis for further explorations: primary texts that represent the normative view of theology and canon law; and secondary texts that begin to open up the variety of ways in which men and women actually regarded and spoke about sexuality. In the second part, each student will focus on a chosen field of study. He or she will present to the class a report (with bibliography) on the field and its current state, and, finally, submit a research paper within the field, after presenting a draft of it to the class for discussion.

Particulars: Emphasis is on the study of primary literature. Students are urged to read this in the original language(s) if they are able, but reading in modern translation is quite acceptable.

Texts: Common readings include the following:

- Augustine, *De bono coniugali, De sancta virginitate* (Oxford, 2001)
- Raymond of Penyafort, *Treatise on Marriage* (Toronto, 2005)
- Thomas Aquinas, selections from the supplement to *Summa theologiae*
- Selections from Guido of Monte Rochen's *Handbook for Curates*
- John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex* (1994)
- Ruth M. Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe* (2005).
- Selections from Bullough & Brundage, *Handbook of Mediev*

RLHT 738 Theory and Methods in Religion

Gary Laderman

Thursday 10:00-1:00

Content: This seminar will be an opportunity for students to explore both the history of and recent trends in theory and method in the study of religion. We will look at an assortment of

books and articles, thinkers and innovators, that have made an impact in the field from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Students will be expected to give presentations, write up short essays, and participate in weekly discussions.

Texts: TBD

RLNT 760 New Testament and Theology

Luke Johnson

Wednesday 9:00-12:00

Content: We will examine the relationship between the New Testament and theology in three distinct ways. First, we will ask what it means to speak of the "theological voice" of a New Testament composition. Does the expression, "the theology of John," make sense, and if so, how? Second, we will consider several classic examples of the intellectual experiment called "New Testament Theology," and by analysis of the several outstanding examples of the genre, discover the possibilities and limits of the exercise. Third, we will give some attention to the "use of the New Testament in theology," by interacting with some examples of contemporary theological discourse.

RLNT 770 History of New Testament Interpretation II- Reformation to the Present

Vernon Robbins

Monday 1:30-4:30

Content: This seminar covers interpretation of the New Testament from the sixteenth century to the present. It will begin with an exploration of forces at work in New Testament interpretation during the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter Reformation, and new developments during the eighteenth century. After this, it will investigate the nineteenth and twentieth century contexts of analysis and interpretation of history, myth, philosophical truth, and biblical theology in which the literary-historical methods of text, source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism emerged. Then the seminar will turn to late twentieth century and current twenty-first century modes and methods for interpreting the New Testament. An overall goal of the seminar is to gain an understanding of the contexts that gave rise to literary-historical approaches and to assess their relation to additional approaches that emerged during the last four decades of analysis and interpretation. Participants in the seminar will read secondary sources as guides to primary interpretive literature. The emphasis, however, will be on primary interpretive sources. Specific examples of interpretation will be especially important.

Texts:

William Baird, *History of New Testament Research, Volumes 1-2*

Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*.

Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: the history of the investigation of its problems*.

Wayne A. Meeks, *Writings of St. Paul*

Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship*

Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*

Heiki Raisanen, *Beyond New Testament Theology* (Second edition, 2000)

John K. Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study*
Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*
Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*
Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*

Particulars: Seminar participants will write short weekly reports on the history of the interpretation of various NT writings through the centuries from the Reformation to the present. These will be expanded, revised, and incorporated into a final paper.

RLR 700R Intro to the Study of Religious Practices

Thomas Long

Friday 9:00-12:00

This course explores the conversation between two sometimes independent, sometimes overlapping projects: the academic study of religious practices and the activity of doing practical theology. This exploration involves examining such questions as,

- What is a practice? How do religious practices relate to the texts, artifacts, and other materials of religious life and thought?
- How are practices lived? How do communities of faith sustain, extend, and teach the practices of their traditions?
- By what means and methods do communities of faith think about, assess, and seek renewal or transformation of their practices? How do practices relate to the lived theology of communities of faith?
- How are practices most usefully studied? What methods (e.g., sociology, ethnography, performance studies, ritual analysis) best illuminate the content and role of religious practices?
- What is practical theology? How does practical theology, particularly in Christian traditions, proceed in critical reflection on practices in conversation with the heritage of practices and contemporary cultural contexts?
- What are the implications of the study and interpretation of religious practices for the formation of leadership in religious traditions?

The course is a seminar. Students will engage a broad variety of relevant readings, will make presentations on these readings, and are expected to participate fully in discussions. Each student will conduct a limited exercise in field research and will then develop a final presentation and paper comprising the study of a religious practice in a particular context.

This seminar is open to all students and required of all Concentrators in Religious Practices and Practical Theology.

RLTS 710 Encountering God: Case Studies in the Material Mediation of the Divine

Ian McFarland

Thursday 9:00-12:00

Content: This course will explore Christian reflection on the capacity of matter to mediate the divine through a series of case studies taken from the history of the church. It will begin with an examination of classical Christology (with readings from Cyril of Alexandria, Justinian I, and Maximus the Confessor), since the doctrine of the incarnation provides the conceptual framework for most subsequent Christian reflection on the material mediation of the divine. The course will then explore particular topics related to the capacity of matter to mediate divine presence, including the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy, western debates over Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and modern discussions of miracles and the inspiration of the Bible.

Texts to be examined may include:

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1 (selections)

John Calvin, *A Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine Concerning...the Lord's Supper*

John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*

Martin Luther, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica* (selections)

Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*

Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (selections)

Francis Turretin, *Institututes of Elenctic Theology* (selections)

RLTS 740 Feminist Theology

Wendy Farley

Monday 1:00-4:00

Content: Women share the experience of seeking a religious life in a more or less hostile and demeaning ecclesial structure. Until perhaps the 1950's they did not have access to the educational system available to men. Women's theological writing is therefore generally the writing of those who are marginal to the primary structures of authority within Christianity. This perspective has not produced a body of literature in which women's writings are all the "same" but it has encouraged brilliant and innovative interpretations of the nature and meaning of suffering, salvation, ultimate reality, power, incarnation, religious practice, and ecclesial existence. During the late twentieth century theological women adopted the term 'feminist theology' for their writing. But before this term was used women wrote theology and in the twenty first century women theologians do not always deploy the term to describe their work. This class will attend to these women theologians who reside at the outskirts of both the church and feminist theology itself.

Texts:

Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*

Marguerite Porete, *A Mirror of Simple Souls*

Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: a Theology of Remaining*

Michelle Voss Roberts, *Dualities: a Theology of Difference*

Marcia Mount Shoop, *Let These Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ*
Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way*
Women, Writing, Theology: Transforming a Tradition of Exclusion, edited by Emily Holmes
and Wendy Farley

RLTS 750 Philosophies of Religion- Bataille and Kierkegaard

Jill Robbins

Wednesday 1:00-4:00

Content: In this seminar we will read closely selected texts by Georges Bataille and Soren Kierkegaard in order to follow out the conceptual figures of sacrifice, gift and patience. The commonality between the two thinkers lies in their engagement with the conceptuality of Hegel, their effort to reach a certain beyond of philosophy, and their recourse to the category of existence. But while Bataille's "theory of religion", in which a virulent, violently disruptive sacred is said to serve as the basis for social formations, draws largely from the sociology of religion of Durkheim and Mauss, Kierkegaard's philosophy of religion is riveted intensively to particular places in scripture—the ordeals of Abraham and Job—and to questions about the New Testament diction.

Texts: Georges Bataille, Theory of Religion (Zone), The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge (Minnesota); Botting and Wilson, eds. The Bataille Reader (Routledge); Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy," in Writing and Difference (Chicago); Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling/ Repetition (Princeton), "Ultimatum: The Upbuilding That Lies in the Thought That in Relation to God We Are Always in the Wrong" from Either/Or Part II, Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits (Princeton); Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses (Princeton); selections from Maurice Blanchot, The Writing of Disaster (Nebraska).

RLTS 753 Criteria of Black Expression in Art, Religion and Culture (cross-listed with ILA 790)

Thee Smith

Thursday 2:00-5:00

Content: This graduate seminar offers a multi-disciplinary approach to sources, theorists and performers in pursuit of a new, critical vocabulary for constructing a more informed approach to the analysis of black expression. The challenge of the seminar "to pursue an entirely new scholarship that incorporates Visual and Performing Art, Literature, Linguistics, Music, Anthropology, Religion, and systems of Cosmology, i.e., Dogon, Yoruba, and Akan. Such a pedagogical exegesis will be launched with an inquiry into the significance of African ontology and social practices within the African Diaspora that might lead to the reconstruction and formulation of a critical model erected from the worldview of the "African Continuum." Relevant to this pursuit are the following key questions for the development of such a "critical vocabulary:"

- [Is there such] a repository of African culture for ideal expressive production that might pave the way toward an alternative style of work not limited to Western traditions [?]
- [Are there] rubrics of Black Theatre, Black Music, Black Poetry, Black Dance, Black Visual Art without a culturally specific critical language to make valid assessments about what makes the expressive product *black* [?]

- [Is a work adequately] considered *black* if it is represented in a black *milieu*, or if otherwise the black persona is figured on a canvas, or featured on a stage, or speaking-in-the-tongue of Blues in poetry and song [?]
- [Is the] Representation of *blackness*, and worse, the performance of *blackness*, only a convenient, and certainly flawed index to validate an expressive experience as being *black* [?]
- [To what extent has] the critical establishment, using the yardstick of the Western Canon, been the arbiter of which works are most representative of the familiar references to black experience [?]

Readings may include:

- Theodore Adorno, "Jazz"
- W. E. Abrams, "The Mind of Africa"
- Dwight Andrews, "From Black to Blues"
- W.E.B. DuBois, (Ed.) "Criteria of Negro Art" (1926, May). *Crisis*, (pp. 290-297).
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *Figures in Black: Words, Signs and the "Racial" Self*. NY: Oxford, 1978; ed. "Race," *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1985/86; *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. NY: Oxford, 1988
- Addison Gayle, Jr. ed. *The Black Aesthetic*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1972; *Black Expression: Essays By and About Black Americans in the Creative Arts*. NY: Weybright & Talley, 1969.
- Paul Carter Harrison, "Critical Vocabulary."
- Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
- Charles H. Long. "Perspective for a Study of Afro-American Religion in the U.S.," *History of Religions* 2 (Aug. 1971): 54-66; also in *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986; "Structural Similarities and Dissimilarities in Black and African Theologies," *Journal of Religious Thought* 332 (Fall-Winter 1975): 9-24.
- George Schuyler, "The Negro-Art Hokum"
- Cornel West & Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., eds. *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology* (Westminster/John Knox, 2003)