Course Description:
This course is an interdisciplinary inquiry into the moral issues related to enslaved Africans who worked in the economies of the North America. Most scholars who study the transatlantic slave trade talk consistently about quantitative numbers and business transactions without any mention of the ethical complexities that offer a critique of the various ways that religion both empowered and disenfranchised individuals in the struggle to actualize an embodied sacred self. Close textual reading of slave novels will spell out how four centuries of chattel slavery affected Christians in previous generations and currently.

Objectives: a) to examine theological themes and contemporary ethical issues in the freedom narratives of enslaved African Americans; b) to understand how novels functions as continuing symbolic expression and transformer of Christian discipleship; and c) to develop familiarity with literature in the field of study.

Requirements and Procedures:
- Regular class attendance and reading that is complete, careful and on schedule are essential for this course.
- To help promote lively, meaningful exchange, everyone is required to complete the five steps in writing the Epistolary Journal Entry beginning with Tuesday, February 16, 2010, and each class session thereafter.
- As facilitators, 1) each student will open with a devotional moment, 2) watch a clip from a slave documentary that jump-starts a conscientization free write, 3) circulate photocopies of their Epistolary Journal Entry, and 4) discuss findings with the class.
- A self-evaluating culminating journal entry is due Week 11.

Criteria for Evaluation:
--- accuracy and precision of scholarship
--- clarity of oral and written presentation
--- completion of assignments on the due dates
--- contribution to the group process of inquiry and discussion
--- creativity, critical judgment, and imagination

Guidelines for Epistolary Journal Writing
The purpose of epistolary journaling is to reflect upon, learn from, and discover patterns of theoethical meaning in our experiences as embodied social-selves.

Step 1: Conscientization: For each class session, write a letter to a friend with whom you have covenanted. Discuss a sentence in the reading that surprises you, excites you,
encourages you, or troubles you. As succinctly as possible, identify an ethical dilemma or moral question in the text(s) that you genuinely would like to research.

Step 2: **Emancipatory Historiography:** Write quickly (3-5 minutes) your first reaction to the required socio-literary-religious-historical reading, whatever that may be without critical constraint; do not edit. In other words, write in free-style your “felt sense” of the values, ideas, and/or experiences you bring to today’s texts. When you finish your free-style writing, edit your reflections.

Step 3: **Theological Resources:** Next, answer the designated question in accordance with the due date indicated in the syllabus.

Step 4: **Norm Clarification:** Complete a scholarly book review of a title listed in today’s background or supplementary reading that offers theoethical warrants to a future research project, enabling you to unmask the institution of slavery so that new understanding might be revealed regarding codes of ethics in freedom narratives.

NOTE: Cathartic, free writing is useful before attempting the epistolary journal entry. This material is not part of the assignment in this course, but may serve as an appropriate resource in completing the subsequent steps in the epistolary writing process.

Everyone should make two copies of each epistolary journal entry, one for a seminar colleague or a friend via cyberspace or snail-mail who has covenanted to read and respond to your entries, and the other copy for the professor’s file. The reader of the epistolary journal entry should write her/his response to the reflections. The responses can include questions, ideas you liked, disagreements, analogies to other readings, bibliographical suggestions, etc.

**Required Socio-Literary-Religious-Historical Texts: (4)**

**Required Slave Novels (4):**
4. (select an additional novel from the list included in the syllabus)
SYLLABUS and ASSIGNMENTS

Week #1: 2/9  Introduction to Content and Process of Seminar

Week #2 2/16
Theme – Challenging Imperialist Notions in White Supremist Theology

Facilitator __________________________________________________________

Q: Write a dialogue between Albert J. Raboteau, Harriet Jacobs, a character in The Price of a Child, and you on the topic, The African Diaspora. Make certain that the conversation you construct requires you to draw upon at least three insights learned from the required readings.

Supplementary Texts
Olwell, Robert. Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in South Carolina Low

Week #3 2/23
Theme - Revolutionary Will

Facilitator __________________________________________________________
Required Reading:

Q: Write a persuasive letter about Death of the Gods from the point of view of one the following persons: 1) an enslaved person who is spirit possessed; 2) an itinerant evangelist; 3) Melvin J. Herskovits, anthropologist; 4) E. Franklin Frazier, social historian; 5) Daniel Alexander Payne, bishop; 6) Marie Laveau, priestess; 7) a free African; 8) an enslaver/slaveholder; 9) a child on the plantation; or 10) a minister in your faith tradition.

Supplementary Texts


**Week #4  3/2**

Theme - **Structured Subtleties of Racial Enslavement**


Facilitator

Required Reading:


Q: Imagine that you are a plantation catechist, denominational executive, a missionary, a runaway slave, the wife of the slaveholder, an agent for the Propagation of the Gospel, a revivalist preacher, or an enslaved teenager; explain *chattel slavery and faith formation* to your local youth group.

**Supplementary Texts**


**Week #5: 3/9**

**Theme – Fostering Liberationist Hopes and Identities**


Facilitator __________________________________________________________

Required Reading:


Q: Taking examples from today’s readings, point out some of the distinguishing features between African American and European American ways, as well as female and male ways, of participating in and/or resisting *The Rule of Gospel Order*.

**Supplementary Texts**


Week #6 No Class – Spring Holidays - March 15 -19

Week #7: 3/23
Theme – Possibilities for Freedom

Facilitator __________________________________________________________
Required Reading:

Q: In a careful thought-out opening paragraph, sum up what you believe are the essential characteristics of religious life in the slave community. Next, identify the ethical values held by enslaved Africans. In a final paragraph, analyze the significance of African values for your faith community in the 21st century.
Supplementary Texts

**Week #8: 3/30**

**Theme- Theological Anchors within Black Religion**

Background Reading: *Our Nig: or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* by Harriet E. Wilson edited by Henry L. Gates, Jr., *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* by Rosalind Shaw, 2002; and *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America’s First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers* by Henry L. Gates, Jr., 2003.

Facilitator __________________________________________________________

Required Reading:


Q: Based on your understanding of the required readings, describe the typical plantation *conversion*
experience. Then demonstrates your grasp of conjuring as a power to destroy and as a power to heal.

Supplementary Reading

Week #9  4/6
Theme - Mediums and Mechanisms in the Struggle for Freedom

Facilitator
Required Reading:

Q: Summarize the point of view of Frederick Douglass, Charles Ball, Emily Burke, John Brown, William Wells Brown, Charles Colcock Jones, William Grimes, Irving Lowery, Candance Richardson or a person at Monticello or a character in A Mercy. From this viewpoint of religion,
rebellion and docility, discuss an issue that would be most relevant to you in today’s news.

Supplementary Texts

Week #10  4/13
Theme - Word as Deed: The Construction of Public Truth

Facilitator __________________________________________________________
Required Reading:

Q: Having read the afterword in Rabotueau’s book and a new novel about slavery, what would you identify as the new theoethical battlefield and who are the abolitionists doing the work of justice in 2010?

Supplementary Texts

Week #11: 4/20  No Class – Work Session

Week #12: 4/27
Due: Culminating Journal Reflections

Week #13: 5/4
Theme: Closure and Evaluation

Contemporary novels about slavery:
‘Aguiar, Fred. The Longest Memory (Pantheon Books, 1994)
Bacon, Eugenia Jones. Lyddy: A Tale of the Old South (1898) (Univ. of GA, 1998)
Barnes, Steven. Lion’s Blood (Aspect/Warner 2002)
Beaumont, Gusteve de. Marie: or, Slavery in the U.S.: A Novel of Jacksonian America (1835)
   (Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1998)
Cather, Willa. Sapphira and the Slave Girl (1940) (Univ. of Nebraska, 2009)
Chase-Roboud, Barbara. Echo of Lions (Morrow, 1989)
Clarke, Austin. The Polished Hoe (Amistad, 2003)
Cliff, Michelle. Free Enterprise (City Lights, 2004)
Doctorow, E. L. The March (Random House, 2005)
Eastman, Mary H. Aunt Phillis’s Cabin (1968) (Univ. of Michigan, 2005)
Emecheta, Buchi. The Slave Girl (Allison & Busby, 1977)
Gilroy, Beryl. Stedman and Joanna – A Love in Bondage (Vantage Pr., 1991)
Gregory, Philippa. A Respectable Trade (G.K. Hall, 1995)
Hummel, Maria. Wilderness Run (St. Martin’s Griffin, 2003)
Jackson-Opoku, Sandra. The River Where Blood Is Born (One World, 1997)
Johnson, Charles R. Middle Passage (Atheneum, 1990)
Jones, Edward P. The Known World (Amistad, 2003)
Lisle, Holly. Hawkspar (Tor Books, 2008)
McLaurin, Melton. Celia, A Slave: (Univ. of GA Pr., 1991)
Miles, Jacquelyn L. Cold Rock River (Cumberland House, 2008)
Neighbour, Mary E. Speak Right On: Dred Scott (Toby, 2006)
Peacock, Nancy. Home Across the Road (Longstreet Pr., 1999)
Unsworth, Barry. Sacred Hunger (H. Hamilton Pr., 1993)
Williams, Sherley A. Dessa Rose (Quill, 1999)

Guidelines for a Scholarly Review

1. Author of the Book _____________________________________________________
2. Include one fact about the Author that might be relevant to her/his contribution to the subject matter.
3. Title of the Book __________________________________________________________
4. Publisher ___________________________ Date of Publication ______________________
5. Author of the Review _______________________________________________________
6. Include one fact about the Reviewer that might be relevant to the Reviewer’s approach to the
   subject.
7. Review Publication ________________________________________________________
8. Volume ___________ Month ____________ Date ___________ Page #________
9. According to this scholarly review
   a. In what ways does the author take advantage of the most recent developments in
      scholarship on the topic?
   b. What new issues does this text raise?
   c. For whom was the book written?
   d. What are the book’s major weaknesses?
   e. What are its primary strengths?

10. Summarize your findings.

    SELF-EVALUATING CULMINATING JOURNAL ENTRY
    Due: Week 12 (two copies)
    1. After carefully re-reading the conscientization quotations in my journal entries, I am
       aware of the following three concerns that contribute to my ongoing faith formation …

    2. When I reflect on the emancipatory historiography generated after reading each of the
       required texts, I appreciate the way that I now think new thoughts about…

    3. What makes engaging with theological resources embedded in the designated questions
       intellectually challenging is that

    4. Based on norm clarifications emerging from scholarly book reviews, I found the
       following to be significant theoethical warrants that enabled me to pull slavocracy apart
       so that new understanding might be revealed regarding codes of ethics in freedom
       narratives…

    5. In re-reading the comments on the evaluation/feedback form on the day when I served as
       seminar facilitator, I learned the following three (3) things about my strengths as an
       ethical thinker. And, I identify these three (3) as professional growing edges (areas for
       improvement):
6. If I were to write a letter indicating what I will remember most about the work of ethics as a communal process in this seminar, *Codes of Ethics in Freedom Narratives*, I would say:

Katie G. Cannon

Spring 2010