**WBU Flame Logo

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***Virtual Campus***

**School of Christian Studies**

**WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:** Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

### COURSE NAME: THST 5354.VC01 History and Theology of the Black Church

**TERM:** Fall 2025

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Christopher Gordon

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** *christopher.gordon@wayland.wbu.edu*

**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING, AND LOCATION:** Contact via email at any time

**CLASS MEETING TIME AND LOCATION**:

See class calendar below

**Course Catalog Description:**

Research in the history of black denominational bodies from the period of enslavement to the present along with the formation and influence of black theology on the Black Church.

**PREREQUISITE:**

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCES**:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Editor/Author** | **Publisher** | **Ed** | **Year** | **ISBN** |
| *History of the Negro Church* | Carter G. Woodson |  |  |  | **979-8301069673** |
| The Negro Church in the America / The Black Church Since Frazier | C. Eric Lincoln  E. Franklin Frazier | **Schocken; Edition** |  | **1974** | **978-0805203875** |
| Black Practical Theology | Andrews, Dale P.Robert London | Baylor University Press |  | 2015 | 978-1602584358 |
| Survey of The Black Church In America | Evans, Tony | Moody Publishers |  | 2024 | 978-0802425416 |

**OPTIONAL MATERIALS:**

*Pinn, Anthony B. The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002. Stone, Howard W. Theological Context for Pastoral Caregiving: Word in Deed. Haworth Pastoral Press, 1996.*

Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South Albert J. Raboteau

*Black Religion and Black Radicalism Gayrod Wilmore*

**COURSE OUTCOME COMPETENCES**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the seven major denominational bodies in the United States that constitute the Black Church
2. Analyze the historical movements, persons, and events that impact black religious tradition in the United States.
3. Demonstrate understanding of important historical, philosophical, and theological aspects with focused relevance to the Black Church.
4. Evaluate the trends of Black Theology and its influence on the Black Church
5. Evidence effective academic research and public presentation skills through written analysis and public presentation of their research findings

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students enrolled at Wayland Baptist University should make every effort to attend all class meetings. All absences must be explained to the satisfaction of the instructor who will decide whether the omitted work may be made up.

Regardless of course format (face-to-face, online, or hybrid), it is the student's responsibility to understand and meet the attendance requirements set forth in the course syllabus.

Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus. Any student who misses 25 percent or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings may receive a grade of F in the course. Additional attendance and participation policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the university’s attendance policy.

**STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Please click on this link to [WBU’s Statement on Academic Integrity](https://www.wbu.edu/academics/writing-center/Academic%20Integrity%20Statement%20Pol%208.4.1%20Attch%20Oct%2020222.pdf) to understand policies concerning plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. All work must be the work of the student. In addition to normal means of plagiarism, the following policy concerning AI generated works also applies:

No use of any generative AI tools permitted. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like ChatGPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.

* All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
* Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**: “In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.”

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA:**

Discussion Board Assignments 20%

The primary means of participation in this course exists with the assigned Discussion Board topics as noted within Tentative Schedule and course Blackboard content. Students are expected to engage in scholarly, informed dialogue. Graduate students are expected to bring informed positions to classroom discussions. In the discussion boards, students will share their thoughts and insights on the specified reading, in a minimum **150-word count**. Students will also reply, engage, give, and receive feedback with other student’s posting at a minimum **70-word count**. The student will submit their work by the assigned date and then react to at least two other students’ entry in a meaningful way by the end of the week (***Total =1-Post and 2-Replies***).

(4) Chapter Appraisals 20%

A short (4-6 page) review inspired by the chapter reading. Student’s will choose a **particular chapter** or **set of chapters** from the reading(s) and give an accurate picture of what the author stated, including 3 noteworthy book citations. This is **not** a summary but an analysis of the claims, a comparison between the author’s view and the student’s view. This is an expansion on the ideas from the reading & engaging them with the student’s analysis and personal experience. The (4) Chapter reviews will come from:

***1st History of The Negro Church –*** Carter G. Woodson - **Due Week 2**

***2nd The Negro Church in the America/ The Black Church Since Frazier***- C. Eric Lincoln E. Franklin Frazier – **Due Week 3**

***3rd Black Practical Theology –*** Andrew Dale - **Due Week 5**

***4th Survey of The Black Church in America –*** Tony Evans - **Due Week 6**

Biographical Research Essay 20%

Students will submit a biographical analysis of a significant person in the study of Black Church History & Theology. Your essay will center on an influential historical figure: (1) their particular influence on the Black Church, (2) their theological convictions, and (3) key biographical insights and background information. Papers will be **10-12 pages** (not including title page) double-spaced, with **three** scholarly references! Times New Roman 12 pt font- for matters of style and form, consult the Writing Instructions for Papers and Research Projects for the School of Christian Studies: A Style Guide for Students, published by Wayland Baptist University. You will need a proper cover page, pagination, footnotes, and bibliography. Students should avoid unscholarly websites, popular magazines, review articles, and survey texts unless approved by the professor

Black Church Then & Now Essay 20%

Due by 11:59pm, on Saturday of Week 8. The objectives of this assignment are to allow students to develop an analysis of the historical Black Church and the Modern Black Church. It allows the student to move from past to present. The paper shall be **at minimum 1,500 words** double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt font. For matters of style and form, consult the Writing Instructions for Papers and Research Projects for the School of Christian Studies: A Style Guide for Students, published by Wayland Baptist University. You will need a proper cover page, pagination, footnotes, and bibliography.

Essays should entail (1) The general background and philosophy of a previous era of Black Church history. (2) The theological emphasis’s of the Black Church during that era. (3) A comparative analysis of the modern Black Church: philosophy, denomination, and key theological emphasis.

Black Church Then & Now Presentation 20%

Final Presentation – Student will present a 5 minute presentation over the **1,500** word essay from which the student comparatively analyzed a previous era Black Church vs the Modern Black Church. Presentation should be either via Microsoft PowerPoint on the est. date or previously recorded via YouTube link for the instructor and class to view.

1. **Measurement Instruments and Grading Chart** *(Criteria can be set up as percentages of grade or by point values)*

*Discussion Board 20% of the Grade*

*Chapter Reviews 2 20% of the Grade*

*Biographical Research Essay 20% of the Grade*

*Black Church Then & Now Essay 20% of the Grade*

*Black Church Then & Now Presentation 20% of the Grade*

1. **Grading Scale**

90 – 100% A

80 – 89% B

70 – 79% C

60 – 69% D

Below 60% F

**Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the vice president of academic affairs to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation**

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK 1**

***History of The Negro Church –*** Carter G. Woodsonchaps 1-3

Week 1 Discussion #1 Board Assignment Initial Posting due Wednesday by 11:59pm

Week 1 Discussion #2 Board Assigned Reading Posting due by Saturday 11:59pm

**WEEK 2**

***History of The Negro Church –*** Carter G. Woodsonchaps 7-9

Discussion #3 Board Assigned Reading Posting due by Saturday 11:59pm

**\*1st Chapter Review Due** Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 3**

***History of The Negro Church –*** Carter G. Woodsonchaps 11-15

Discussion #4 Board Assigned Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

**\*2nd Chapter Review Due** Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 4**

***The Negro Church in the America/ The Black Church Since***- Lincoln/Frazier chaps 1-3

Discussion #5 Board Assigned Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

**\*Biographical Research Essay Due** Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 5**

***The Negro Church in the America*** - Lincoln/Frazier chaps 4-5

***The Black Church Since-*** *Chapters 1-3*

Discussion #6 Board Assigned Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

**\*3rd Chapter Review Due** Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 6**

**Black Practical Theology**: Dale/Smith Jr. chap 1-4

**A Survey of the Black Church in America-**Tony Evans-chap 1-3

Discussion #8 Board Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

Discussion #7 Board Assigned Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

**\*4th Chapter Review Due** Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 7**

**Black Practical Theology**: Dale/Smith Jr. chap 5-7

**A Survey of the Black Church in America-**Tony Evans-chap 4-6

Discussion #8 Board Reading Posting due Saturday by 11:59pm

**WEEK 8**

**\*Black Church Then & Now Essay Due Saturday by 11:59pm**

**\*Black Church Then & Now Presentation Due in Class**