

**Public Worship (Rel 335)**  
Benedict College  
Columbia, South Carolina  
Fall 2001

**Instructor:** Dr. Harry Singleton

**Office:** Antidel Chapel (East Upper Level); ph#: 253-5098

**Office Hours:** M-W 12pm-3pm; T-Th 2pm-4pm or by appointment

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**Course Description**

This course examines the uniqueness of the African American worship tradition. Particular emphasis will be given to the psychological, sociological, historical, cultural, and experiential factors that have and continue to shape the African American worship experience. The student will be pushed to see how these factors necessarily inform the way we see God, Jesus, humanity, and the nature of revelation and salvation and how these categories of theological reflection are expressed in worship services. It is hoped that the student will, at the conclusion of this course, be able to implement the aforementioned factors in articulating a theology of worship as well as to acquire a working knowledge as to why worship continues to be of paramount significance in the black religious experience.

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- 1) identify the sociological, psychological, cultural, experiential and historical factors informing African American worship;
- 2) have a working knowledge of worship traditions outside his/her own tradition;
- 3) trace the historical development of African American worship from slavery to the present.

**Course Requirements**

Ethnography (2) (20% each)

Midterm and Final Examinations (20% each)

Class Participation (10%)

Attendance (10%)

**Exams**

The exams will be subjective. They will primarily consist of essay questions with the possibility of some objective questions. Students are required to take all exams on the days designated by the instructor. Make-up exams will be given only in cases of emergency (to be determined by the instructor). If a student wishes to take a make-up exam, he/she must consult with the instructor before the scheduled exam. Only in rare instances will the instructor permit a make-up exam if consulted after the scheduled exam. Students have up to the next class meeting after the scheduled exam to take the make-up. No make-ups will be given after that! Students not taking either the scheduled or make-up exam will be given a numeric grade of zero for that exam.

## Grade Scale

- A 100-90
- B 89-80
- C 79-70
- D 69-60
- F 59-50

## Cheating

Cheating on exams or other assignments will not be tolerated. It will result in your immediate dismissal from this class and a failing grade for the course. These measures will be taken in addition to whatever action(s) Benedict College deems appropriate.

## Attendance

Benedict College maintains a standard attendance policy. Students should consult the Benedict College Student Handbook for specifics. Students in violation of the attendance policy may be administratively dropped from the class. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, to fulfill reading assignments and to participate in class discussion. Most of the material on the exams will come from class lectures but an exam question(s) not covered in the lecture but in the readings is considered fair game.

## Required Course Text

Costen, Melva Wilson, African American Christian Worship. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

## Course Outline

Phase I - Why Do We Worship: Articulating a Theology of Worship

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
1-4	Chs. 1-2	Why Do We Worship? Factors Contributing to Worship Theology of Worship

Phase II - Worship In The Invisible Institution

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
5-8	Chapter 3	The African Religious Heritage Worship in the Invisible Institution <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>

Phase III - Worship In The Visible Institution

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
9-11	Chs. 4-6	Praise House Worship Liturgy in Worship Congregational Worship

Phase IV - Worship In The Twentieth Century

Week(s)

12-15

Reading(s)

Chs. 7-8

Topic(s)

Worship from Plessy  
to the Civil Rights

Movement

Worship in the

Mega-Church

**FINAL EXAM**

Although this is the stated outline, it is subject to change as dictated by either time availability or unforeseen circumstances.