

**Winter 2024**

 **Theological Studies 250 Course Syllabus**

**Voices in the Wilderness:**

**Black Perspectives in a Historical**

**and Theological Dialogue**

**Huron University College Land Acknowledgment**

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

**Course Dates:** Tuesdays, January 30th-March 5th, 2024

**Time:** 8:00-10:00 p.m. Eastern Time, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Central Time

**Delivery:** Hosted via Zoom

**Instructor:** The Reverend Steve Greene and Irene Moore Davis with Guest Presenters

**Contact:** stevegreene@diohuron.org, irenemooredavis@gmail.com

**Course Description**

With the support of content experts of Black, African, and Caribbean descent, participants will be introduced to the history of ancient and pre-colonial African civilizations as well as Black communities in the Caribbean and Canada; Black voices in the scriptures and contributions of early Christians of African descent; the impact of colonization, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and race as a social construct, on the lives of people of African descent; how Christian faith traditions and institutions have both facilitated and confronted anti-Black racism; and an overview of challenges facing Canadians of Black, African, and Caribbean descent in the present day. Particular attention is given to the ways in which church leaders and people of faith, as an expression of our shared values and beliefs, can participate in dismantling anti-Black racism in favour of inclusion and belonging.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will:

Describe key historical contributions of ancient and pre-colonial African civilizations

Identify key individuals of African descent in the Bible and their significance

Describe the impact of people of African descent on the development of early Christianity

Describe the impact of colonization and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on West African civilizations

Identify how the evolving concept of race has shaped the lived experiences of people of Black/African/Caribbean descent in the Americas

Assess how religion, colonialism, and race have intersected in the history of Africa and the Americas, and describe the impact of those intersections

Briefly explore the history of communities of African descent in Canada and the Caribbean

Evaluate how Christian ideas and practices, particularly belief in the “God of the oppressed,” have assisted Christians of Black/African/Caribbean heritage to critique racism and advocate for justice

Identify the complex interactions between religious belief and practice and the historical, social, political, cultural, and economic context in which people understand and practice their faith

Explore the role of language, culture, and identity in shaping the Afro-Canadian experience of people of Black/African/Caribbean heritage

Develop critical awareness of interpretations of Christianity as they relate to whiteness, race, racism, and Black lives

Describe major challenges faced by Canadians of Black/African/Caribbean descent in society today

Evaluate a variety of methods for supporting Black/African/Caribbean siblings in Christ through intentional anti-racist efforts within and beyond the church, dismantling anti-Black racism, and creating communities of inclusion and belonging

Improve skills in critical reading, writing, thinking, and speaking

**Guest Presenters for this course will include:**

Brother Reginald Crenshaw, the Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields, the Reverend Michael Blair, and the Reverend Wilson Akinwale.

**Study Documents**

The Holy Bible - While the New Revised Standard Version is an excellent choice, other translations are welcomed.

Weekly content consisting of articles, videos, and excerpts of texts will be made available digitally to course participants.

**Course Outline/Plan**

(Please note that this outline is subject to adjustment and change)

**Week 1 (January 30th, 2024)**

Ancient and Pre-Colonial African Civilizations, with Irene Moore Davis; Black Voices in the Scriptures and Contributions of Early Christians of African Descent, with Brother Reginald Crenshaw

**Week 2 (February 6th, 2024)**

Colonization, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the Invention of Race, with Irene Moore Davis; African Language, Identity and Culture in the Context of Canadian Christian Society, with the Reverend Wilson Akinwale

**Week 3 (February 13th, 2024)**

African Diasporic Communities in the Americas, with Irene Moore Davis; How We Got Here, and How Do We Get to Where God Is: A Theoretical Framework for Dismantling Anti-Black Racism, with the Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields

**Week 4 (February 20th, 2024)**

Further Exploration of Black Canadian History, with Irene Moore Davis; Acknowledging and Addressing Anti-Black Racism in the Church, Past and Present, with the Reverend Michael Blair

**Week 5 (February 27th, 2024)**

Black Canadian Experiences in the Twentieth Century and Now, with Irene Moore Davis; “Where Do We Go From Here?”, a discussion about fostering representation, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism in the church and beyond, with the Reverend Steve Greene and panelists; concluding remarks and resolution of remaining questions unanswered in the course

**Week 6 (March 5th, 2024)**

Practical Ministry Applications: exploring how the content covered in this course might be shared with others within our respective ministry contexts. This conversation will be facilitated by the Rev. Steve Greene.

What does diversity look like within our ministry practices? Are there groups of people who face barriers as a result of the actions of our churches or our membership? What is our role in raising awareness and seeking new relationships towards eliminating racism, oppression and exclusion of individuals or groups of people who are different than those making up the membership of our communities. What existing resources might be available to us at the local, diocesan and national levels of Church?

**Method of Evaluation and Criteria for Grading** (only for students choosing to be evaluated for full course credit)

Two document studies (500 words each) and a Final Essay (1000 words) will be completed by each student seeking evaluation for full LTh credit.

1. Class Engagement/Participation – 20%

2. Reflection Paper #1 – 20% - due at 11:59 p.m. Feb. 13th

3. Reflection Paper #2 – 20% - due at 11:59 p.m. Feb. 27th

4. Final Reflection Paper – 40% - due at 11:59 p.m. March 19th

**Huron Grade Descriptors**

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|  A+   |  90-100    |  One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level |
|  A |  80-89   |  Superior work which is clearly above average |
|  B |  70-79 |  Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory |
|  C |  60-69 |  Competent work, meeting requirements |
|  D   |  50-59 |  Fair work, minimally acceptable |
|  F |  below 50 |  Fail |

**Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf.

**Statement on the Recording of Class Activities**

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recording are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor(s) or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.

**Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.

