

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE (CE 33-646)

*Professor: Dr. Reginald Blount*  
*Spring 2025 Th 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm*

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### TENTATIVE

#### Course Description

The aim of this course will be to broaden our understanding of Christian education and its role in the ministry of the Black Church and the African American Experience; to explore the various approaches to congregational learning, develop tools of analysis for assessing the state of Christian education in our congregational context and develop methods for enhancing congregational learning in our own congregational context.

#### Class Goals and Outcomes:

**Goal:** To examine, assess, and lead a variety of approaches to teaching and learning appropriate to communities in varying contexts.

#### **Outcomes:**

1. To evaluate educational strategies and approaches for emancipatory teaching and learning;
2. To utilize race critical and intercultural competencies for social justice education in settings diverse.

#### Course Texts

Burke, Tarana J. and Brene Brown (editors). **You Are Your Best Thing: Vulnerability, Shame Resilience, and the Black Experience**, Random House, 2021; (ISBN-10: 0593243625, Price: \$17:00)

Jenkins, Marcus. **Black Lives Matter to Jesus: The Salvation of Black Life and All Life in Luke and Acts**, Fortress Press, 2021; (ISBN-10: 1506474624, Price: \$22.27)

Menakem, Resmaa. **My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies**, Central Recovery Press, 2017; (ISBN-10:1942094477, Price: \$15:95)

Thurman, Howard. **Jesus and the Disinherited**, Beacon Press, 1996; (ISBN-10: 9780807010297, Price: \$14.00)

Wimberly, Anne E. Streaty **Soul Stories: African American Christian Education (Revised Ed.)**, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005; (ISBN: 068749432X, Price: \$20.00)

Wimberly. Anne E. Streaty, Annie Lockhart-Gilroy, Nathaniel West (editors). **From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry**. Wesley's Foundry Books, March 2020; (ISBN: 978-1945935749 Price: \$32.73)

## Course Organization and Schedule

**January 30<sup>th</sup>:** Introductions; Review of Syllabus; Purpose of Christian Education; “The Danger of a Single Story”

**February 6<sup>th</sup>:** African Americans, Education and Freedom  
*Readings: “Black Lives Matter to Jesus,” entire book*

**February 13<sup>th</sup>:** James Cone/Emilie Townes Lecture

**February 20<sup>th</sup>:** Toward Whole Making: Theological Considerations  
*Readings: “Jesus and the Disinherited,” entire book*

**February 28<sup>th</sup> & March 6<sup>th</sup>:** Toward Whole-Making: Contemporary Culture Challenges  
*Reading: “You Are Your Best Thing,” entire book*

**March 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>:** Toward Whole-Making: Contemporary Culture Challenges II  
*Reading: “My Grandmother’s Hands” entire book*

**March 27<sup>th</sup>:** NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>:** Toward Whole-Making: Teaching to Transmit, Transform, and Transgress  
*Readings: “Soul Stories,” entire book*

**April 17<sup>th</sup>:** Maundy Thursday (Teaching Preparation)

**April 24<sup>th</sup>:** Peer Teaching Sessions using **“From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry.”**

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**May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Toward Whole-Making: Integration

**Assignments:**

1) *Reflection Papers*: Write a **one-page single space (12-font) paper** offering reflection and critique of each of the readings. Also provide three questions the readings raised for you. These questions will be used as part of class discussion. **(P/F)**

2) *Peer Teaching Session*: Complete a teaching session as well as a written evaluation. The assignment includes:

- Preparing a 45-minute Bible study using the Soul Stories Model and drawing from one of the chapters in "From Lament to Advocacy".
- Preparing for class a one-page handout offering a summary of your approach.
- Writing an individual evaluation paper **(5-7 pages)**. The evaluation should address the following:
  1. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses from biblical/theological and educational perspectives.
  2. Assessment of yourself as a teacher, including what you learned about your strengths and weaknesses.
  3. As you write these papers, use the vocabulary we develop together in class drawing on readings.

**4) Final Project:*****"Toward Whole-Making: Passing on the Faith to the Next Generation"***

In an **8-10 page paper (double-spaced, 12-font)**, carefully analyze what is done in your congregation (or a congregation you know best) to pass on the faith to the next generation. Drawing from your assignments, readings, class discussions, and personal reflection, prepare an evaluative report on their existing ministry and propose a process and model for enhancing this congregation's ministry to pass on the faith to the next generation, taking seriously our conversation on Teaching to Transmit, Transform, and Transgress. You may choose to evaluate the total Christian education ministry, or one facet of that (ie: Youth Group, Music Ministry, Worship, Mission Trips, etc.) This evaluation and proposal need to be done to demonstrate that you have engaged the readings and dialogue with your classmates as we explored congregational learning in the African American experience. **(Paper Due: May 9<sup>th</sup>) (Graded)**

**Course Policies**

1. **Cheating and Plagiarism**: These are serious breaches of academic integrity, involving claiming credit for the work that someone else has done. Don't do this! If you are uncertain in any way as to what is entailed in these activities, talk with the instructor.

2. **Excellence in Writing:** Even though this is a Christian Education course, everything you have learned about good writing style still counts! Obtuse or inelegant writing in your essays will be reason for a reduced grade. If you need help with your writing, please talk with the instructor.

3. **Intellectual Virtue:** We are striving not only to learn about a subject but also to sharpen our abilities to think critically. To do this, we must practice intellectual virtue by being open-minded, straightforward, and thoughtful in our spoken and written work. We show our scholarship not only by considering issues and questions that are central to our faith, but by being careful and respectful in our treatment of the authors of our texts, the ideas we discuss, and the thoughts of our fellow classmates.

4. **Disability Accommodation Statement:** Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see “Disabilities Policies and Procedures” in the Student Handbook.

## Grades

It is assumed that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members identify the strengths and problems in their written work. The syllabus has provided detailed information on each assignment to limit the amount of “guess work” by students about what needs to be included and addressed in the assignment.

A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment are in place.

A “B+” means that the assignment is also well crafted.

An “A-” means that the assignment is well crafted and probes the issues with considerable insight.

An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject.

A “B-” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus. It tends to explore issues superficially.

A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity and focus, tends to be superficial, and lacks personal insight into the issues being discussed.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and class discussions to engaging them with the issues being discussed.

A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

A "D" is a grade of grace.

An "F" indicates that the assignment has not been fulfilled at all points.