

DM 731

Seminar on the Black Church: History, Theology, Prophetic Voice

Dr. Michael Nabors

### **Course Description**

The course will examine historical and theological foundations of the Black Church in the United States, with particular emphasis on the institution's prophetic voice. Course readings, lectures, videos and presenters will focus on pre-Revolutionary War, Revolutionary War to the Civil War, Reconstruction to WWII, WWII to 1968, and 1968 to 2021. Specific attention to the political and social ethos of the United States during these eras, will help illuminate how Black Churches shared, taught and preached an understanding of God at work in the lives of Black people. Students will gain an understanding of the movement, growth, development, challenges, setbacks and victories of the Black Church and how it became a primary prophetic voice for the country and world.

### **Pre-Course Work**

- 1) Write a two-page summary on what you know about Black Church History and Theology.
- 2) Write a two-page summary on a selected Black prophetic voice out of the Black Church tradition between 1786 and 1861.
- 3) Write a three-page summary on your current church demographics and the neighborhood and community it serves.

All summary papers are due July 28th by 5:00 P.M. Please email them to [michael.nabors@garrett.edu](mailto:michael.nabors@garrett.edu).

### **Post-Course Work**

Final Paper: 8-10 pages. The theme of the paper will be focused on your local church setting, or a church you once attended. The paper will include analysis of the church's history and theology. Based upon assigned readings and class lectures, does your church

possess a prophetic voice for this day and age? If so, why? If not, why not? Is your church involved in any social justice or civil rights issues of the day?

### **Book List**

James H. Evans, Jr., We Have Been Believers, (Fortress Press, 2012), ISBN 978-0-8006-9878-2

Cornel West and Eddie Glaude, Jr., African American Religious Thought, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003) ISBN 0-664-22459-8

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, (Duke University Press, 1999) ISBN 0-8223-1057-0

Kate Masur, Until Justice Be Done, (W.W. Norton and Company, 2021) ISBN 9781324005940

Katie Cannon, Emilie M. Townes, Angela D. Sims, eds., Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader (Westminster John Knox, 2011) ISBN 0664235376

A detailed syllabus with reading assignments and projects for the week will be forthcoming.