Afterword:
Emilie M. Townes
in Teaching African American Religions
Published in print: 2005 Published Online: September 2006
Item type: chapter

This concluding chapter presents a synthesis of the chapters presented in this volume. It also discusses the subject of African American religious studies.

The Burden of Black Religion
Curtis J. Evans
Published in print: 2008 Published Online: May 2008
Item type: book

This book is about the crucial role that black religion has played in the United States as an imagined community or a united nation. The book argues that cultural images and interpretations of African American religion placed an enormous burden on black religious capacities as the source for black contributions to American culture until the 1940s. Attention to black religion as the chief bearer of meaning for black life was also a result of longstanding debates about what constituted the “human person” and an implicit assertion of the intellectual inferiority of peoples of African descent. Intellectual and religious capacities were reshaped and reconceptualized in various crucial historical moments in American history because of real world debates about blacks' place in the nation and continuing discussions about what it meant to be fully human. Only within the last half century has this older paradigm of black religion (and the concomitant assumption of a genetic deficiency in “intelligence”) been challenged with any degree of cultural authority. Black innate religiosity had to be denied before sufficient attention could be paid to actual proposals about black equal participation in the nation, though this should not be interpreted as a call for insufficient attention.
to the role of religion in the lives of African Americans and other ethnic groups.

Conclusion
Julie Coleman

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: January 2009
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199549375.003.0014
Item type: chapter

The conclusion draws together trends observed in the dictionaries discussed, noting particularly the difference in perspective between British historical dictionaries and American contemporary dictionaries. In Britain, Australia, and the United States slang had a different social meaning, and this is reflected in the dictionaries. The Conclusion also summarizes developments in slang lexicography and looks forward to developments to be discussed in Volume IV of the series.

Keepin' It Real
Prudence L. Carter

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2012
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195168624.001.0001
Item type: book

How can we help African American and Latino students perform better in the classroom and on exams? Why are so many African American and Latino students performing less well than their Asian and White peers? Researchers have argued that African American and Latino students who rebel against “acting white” doom themselves to lower levels of scholastic, economic, and social achievement. However, this book argues that what is needed is a broader recognition of the unique cultural styles and practices that non-white students bring to the classroom. Based on extensive interviews and surveys of students in New York, the book demonstrates that the most successful negotiators of the American school systems are the multicultural navigators, culturally savvy teens who draw from multiple traditions, whether it be knowledge of hip hop or of classical music, to achieve their high ambitions. The book refutes the common wisdom about teenage behavior and racial difference, and shows how intercultural communication, rather than assimilation, can help close the black-white gap.
Who Set You Flowin?
Farah Jasmine Griffin

Published in print: 1995 Published Online: October 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195088960.001.0001
Item type: book

This book is the first sustained study of migration as it is portrayed in African American literature, letters, music, and painting. It identifies the “migration narrative” as a dominant African American cultural tradition. Covering a period from 1923 to 1992, the book provides close readings of novels, autobiographies, songs, poetry, and painting; in so doing it carves out a framework that allows for a more inclusive reading of African American cultural forms.

Tribal Talk:
Will “Esuyemi” Coleman

in Teaching African American Religions

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: September 2006
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/019516797X.003.0011
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the text, Tribal Talk. Topics covered include Black theology, the use of broken English in the narrative, hermeneutics, African-derived religions in the Americas, and African-American religious history.

Teaching in the Contact Zone:
Carolyn M. Jones

in Teaching African American Religions

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: September 2006
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/019516797X.003.0002
Item type: chapter

In a course like African American religion, the classroom is a “contact zone”, a term used by Mary Louise Pratt. To illustrate the difficulties in dealing with the contact zone, this chapter describes an African American Religion course recently taught by the author of this book. It then looks at the issues involved when a classroom becomes a contact zone. The chapter then discusses the use of David Remnick's biography of Muhammed Ali, King of the World, and America in the Civil Rights era.
for understanding the significance of the Nation of Islam. Finally, building on the spiritual journey of Muhammed Ali, the central issue in teaching religion, transformation, whether it is African American Religion or not, is considered.

Rethinking the Core:
Edwin David Aponte

in Teaching African American Religions

This chapter explores some pedagogical challenges, responses to, and strategies for the inclusion of African and African American cultural perspectives into the required core curriculum courses at a graduate theological seminary. This chapter represents the author's longstanding personal interest in African and African American religions and cultures — an interest that was deepened through participation in the workshop “Mining the Motherlode of African American Religious Life”. This personal commitment is used to develop seminary courses that draw on African American religious life. In the teaching context, part of the challenge of rethinking the core curriculum lies in the particular nature of theological education.

Teaching African American Religions
Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost (eds)

The variety and complexity of its traditions make African American religion one of the most difficult topics in religious studies to understand. The sheer scope of the subject is daunting to anyone wanting to learn about it, especially if they are not experts in African American religious traditions. Also, the unfamiliarity of the subject matter to the vast majority hoping to investigate the subject makes it difficult to achieve any depth of understanding. The chapters in this book will supply functional, innovative ways to teach African American religious traditions in a variety of settings.
The Color of Success
Ellen D. Wu

This book tells of the astonishing transformation of Asians in the United States from the “yellow peril” to “model minorities”—peoples distinct from the white majority but lauded as well-assimilated, upwardly mobile, and exemplars of traditional family values—in the middle decades of the twentieth century. As the book shows, liberals argued for the acceptance of these immigrant communities into the national fold, charging that the failure of America to live in accordance with its democratic ideals endangered the country’s aspirations to world leadership. Weaving together myriad perspectives, the book provides an unprecedented view of racial reform and the contradictions of national belonging in the civil rights era. It highlights the contests for power and authority within Japanese and Chinese America alongside the designs of those external to these populations, including government officials, social scientists, journalists, and others. It also demonstrates that the invention of the model minority took place in multiple arenas, such as battles over zoot suiters leaving wartime internment camps, the juvenile delinquency panic of the 1950s, Hawai’i statehood, and the African American freedom movement. Together, these illuminate the impact of foreign relations on the domestic racial order and how the nation accepted Asians as legitimate citizens while continuing to perceive them as indelible outsiders. By charting the emergence of the model minority stereotype, the book reveals that this far-reaching, politically charged process continues to have profound implications for how Americans understand race, opportunity, and nationhood.

F.B. Eyes
William J. Maxwell

Few institutions seem more opposed than African American literature and J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). But behind the scenes, the FBI's hostility to black protest was energized by fear of and respect for black writing. Drawing on nearly 14,000 pages of newly released FBI files, this book exposes the Bureau's intimate policing of five decades of African American poems, plays, essays, and novels. Starting
in 1919, year one of Harlem's renaissance and Hoover's career at the Bureau, secretive FBI “ghostreaders” monitored the latest developments in African American letters. By the time of Hoover's death in 1972, these ghostreaders knew enough to simulate a sinister black literature of their own. The official aim behind the Bureau's close reading was to anticipate political unrest. Yet, as this book reveals, FBI surveillance came to influence the creation and public reception of African American literature in the heart of the twentieth century. This book details how the FBI threatened the international travels of African American writers and prepared to jail dozens of them in times of national emergency. All the same, it shows that the Bureau's paranoid style could prompt insightful criticism from Hoover's ghostreaders and creative replies from their literary targets. For authors such as Claude McKay, James Baldwin, and Sonia Sanchez, the suspicion that government spy-critics tracked their every word inspired rewarding stylistic experiments as well as disabling self-censorship. Illuminating both the serious harms of state surveillance and the ways in which imaginative writing can withstand and exploit it, this book is a groundbreaking account of a long-hidden dimension of African American literature.

Conclusion
Joanna Brooks

in American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African American and Native American Literatures

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: October 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195332919.003.0007
Item type: chapter

This chapter presents some concluding thoughts from the author. The first generation of African American and Native American authors set into motion processes that forever changed the course of American literature, religion, and culture. In addition to setting powerful precedents for future authors of color, they established a defining trajectory for the development of American literature in the next century. The most revolutionary aspect of early African- and Native American literatures is their revelation of deep continuities between the past and the present. If the contemporary restoration of these forgotten texts demands a new accounting of American literary and cultural history, it also demands a new understanding of our relationship to that history.
African American Christianity can be used to engage the questions of social practice and theology. From a variety of sources, the Black Church has constructed practices that counter and subdue oppressive forces felt by African Americans while simultaneously establishing a context for a more abundant life. This chapter presents a model for teaching those contexts. It presents the rationale and several of the strategies used in the course, “The Social Contexts of the Black Church”. The course requires students to ground their ministerial vision in a dialectical understanding of the Black Church. Moving between the contemporary interdisciplinary interpretation of the sociocultural contexts of African Americans and the history and established theological teachings of the Black Church, an approach is presented that equips theological students to construct a ministerial direction and praxis.

This chapter proposes two ways to study religion and healing. The first outlines a program that involves an urban ethnographic study of culturally/religiously based approaches to healing in the African Diaspora communities of Boston, Massachusetts. The second relates to ways in which findings from the first kind of course can be incorporated into different levels of medical education, thereby introducing a highly-focused aspect of religious studies into the training of biomedical clinicians.
This chapter discusses two strategies that have proven to be helpful in building trust and creating a transformative understanding of African American religions in relation to resistance to racism. The first strategy helps students to see diversity within African American religion (and thus also the African American experience) by providing methods for analysing arguments, persons, and events from the history of African American religions. The second strategy helps students see how their own experiences and perspectives on racism are related to racism in the United States. Used together, these strategies can empower students in their analysis of racism and the variety of ways African American religions have resisted racism. This, in turn, may help students to consider their own relationship to racism and their resistance to it.

Teaching “African American Religions” is an intense experience. Teaching the course calls on the teacher to observe the students changing as the students go through a transition during the course. This course has to be seen as a journey. It must be framed as a process of reunification and reconstruction. The teacher needs to feel compassion as he or she works in the community reconciling students to their roots as they explore the foundations of African American religiosity.
The main purpose of religious studies as an academic discipline is to make “the strange familiar and the familiar strange”. This is what the course “Introduction to Religion in America: Religion Observed in Popular Film” attempts, with particular emphasis on making the familiar strange. The class has three foci: religion, movies, and America. In this chapter, after a review of the issues at stake in the “Introduction to Religious Studies” course and a description of the operative method, race as a crucial concern in the interpretation of three movies: Being There, The Color Purple, and Daughters of the Dust, is discussed.

Introduction:
Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost

This introductory chapter discusses the subject of teaching African American religions. It argues that teaching in the 21st century classroom requires a larger “toolkit”, which must involve interdisciplinary and perhaps multidisciplinary approaches. It must also emphasize material: the body, artifacts, and movement. An overview of the chapters included in this volume is presented.

On the Plantation
Nancy A. Hardesty

This chapter describes the teaching of a basic-level course called “African American Religion”. The course, taught by the author of the book, is
open to anybody with an interest in the subject. In 1999, there were only seven students who completed the course: five black, two white. In 2001, there were twenty-eight: twenty-three black and five white. The course will continue to be offered.

Border Disputes:
Stephanie Y. Mitchem

in Teaching African American Religions

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: September 2006
Item type: chapter

This chapter explores the ideas of honoring ancestors and self in the classroom, along the borders. To begin this exploration, it focuses on some aspects of the borders of black lives in the United States. The borders of education is the focus in the next section of the book. The idea of honoring ancestors is related to the course, “Womanist Spiritual Autobiography”; and honoring self is discussed in relation to the course “Womanist Theology and Literature”.