

**Title of Course:** Black Embodiment and Ethics

**Course Summary:**

The Black body in Christian religious studies has been transported from the bowels of Middle Passage ships and the branches of poplar trees with blood on the leaves to toggling between fugitivity and autonomy, where it sets its limits and define its terms of liberation. The project of liberation theologians and ethicists is to set the Black body free from the constraints of colonized Christianity. Yet, few theorize the Black body as a religion in and of itself, as a site of morality through which our constructive ethics arise. As Charles Long suggests, religion is orientation and meaning making for people of African descent, and the Black body, as systematic theologian M. Shawn Copeland states, is a site of divine revelation. Following this, the Black body as religion is the divine site by which Black people orient and make meaning of their existence. This course will explore how the Black body as religion is materialized through the cultural production of embodied Blackness. We will study the literature, music, and theories of Black embodiment and ground our study in the normative concerns of Christian liberative ethics. Our goal is to use the cultural production of Black embodiment as a moral source to craft a constructive ethical response that centers Black people's resistance, healing, and liberation.

**Selected Readings:** Students will read selected readings from the following books in addition to related journal articles, visual culture materials, and music:

Copeland, M. Shawn. *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*. Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 2010.

Long, Charles H. *Significations Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*. Aurora, CO: Davies Group, 1999.

Mason, Qrescent Mali. “#BlackGirlMagic as Resistant Imaginary.” *Hypatia* 36, no. 4 (December 10, 2021): 706–724.

Pinn, Anthony B. *Embodiment and the New Shape of Black Theological Thought*. New York, NY: New York Univ. Press, 2010.

Townes, Emilie Maureen. *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Turman, E. *Toward a Womanist Ethic of Incarnation: Black Bodies, the Black Church, and the Council of ... Chalcedon*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.