

## World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

**Teacher Name:** Alphonso Atkins **Humanities Discipline:** Theatre Appreciation (HUMA 100) **Date:** February 26, 2016

**World Religion:** Christianity **Teaching Module Title:** Directing Cultural Theatre/Theatre of Identity

### Teaching Module Goals:

1. Introduce Cultural Theatre/Theatre of Identity through basic definitions of key vocabulary, significant contributions of theatre artists.
2. Explore theatre as a vehicle of seeing the world through another person's eyes.
3. Develop competencies in production/concept planning and script analysis of plays associated with cultural theatre.

### Assigned Readings:

Wills, *Christianity in the United States*, pp.44-64

Downs, *The Art of Theatre*, "Theatre and Cultural Diversity" chapter 3

Downs, *The Art of Theatre*, "Modern Theatre" chapter 16

Downs, *The Art of Theatre*, "The Art of Directing" chapter 8

Beebe, Beebe, & Redmond, *Interpersonal Communication*, "Adapting to Others" chapter 4 (excerpt)

*The Green Pastures* by Marc Connelly

### Study Questions:

1. What is the definition of culture? In what ways do religion, race and ethnicity inform how we interact with others and how we see the world (worldview)? What significance/priority is given to self-concept/identity by religious belief? Does it transcend identity by race or gender?
2. What are the fundamental "stories" and beliefs of Christian identity in America? What themes emerge from those stories?
3. What role does race play in the development of Reconstruction-era and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Christianity in America? Did Black Christians and White Christians have different faith traditions? What political implications were there?
4. Do you believe the Pulitzer-prize winning play *The Green Pastures* represents a celebration of African-American Christian traditions or an example of white bigotry of the time period? (NOTE: This was one of the earliest Broadway shows to feature an all-Black cast.)
5. What ethical challenges are presented in staging this play for a modern audience? Can they be overcome?

**Assignment:**

Prepare a “concept portfolio” for the following play:

*The Green Pastures* by Marc Connelly

The concept portfolio will act as a guide for your Directing project. In designing a production, the first step is to perform a script analysis which will require knowledge of the following three (3) areas:

1. An in-depth knowledge of the “stories” (themes) of the play
2. History of the play itself (previous or contemporary productions, historical context)
3. History and background of the playwright and other works

Read the play. In addition to the Assignment Study Questions; develop responses for the three (3) areas above. Be prepared to discuss the three areas in our initial concept meeting.