

Call for Submissions: Reconceptualizing Religion in Early African American Literature

For a special guest-edited issue on early African American literature and religion, *Early American Studies* seeks article-length contributions on how 18th and 19th century Black writers reconceptualized religion beyond the telos of the nation-state. The roles of religion and religious thought in early Black culture have often been understood within the dualistic frame of resistance whereby Christianity, the dominant religion of colonial and antebellum American society, is both employed by masters to subjugate the enslaved and employed by the slaved to resist their masters' subjugation of them. Scholars have thus considered the ways early Black writers strategically utilized Christian discourse to expose the hypocrisy of a supposedly Christian slaveholding society and appeal to a white audience for their civic inclusion within American democracy. Overall, the assumptive logic of such studies has been to understand religion and religious thought as a rhetorical and critical medium or tool for articulating issues of race, rights, and inclusion.

While such critical approaches are no doubt important, this special issue examines how early Black writers turned to religious concepts to not only critique but think outside of the boundaries of civic belonging. The editors invite essays that broaden our understanding of early Black religious culture (i.e., Christian, Islam, West African, transnational, etc.) at the intersection of literary studies, rhetorical studies, religious studies, and print culture prior to the Civil War. **We are interested in both formal article-length contributions (6,000-8,000 words) and shorter essays on "Consider the Source" that highlight innovative or creative ways of reading/using primary-source documents (3,000-5,000 words).**

To submit, please email a CV and a 1,000 word summary of the contribution you propose to write by June 30 to Kevin Pyon (kbp5545@psu.edu) and Don Holmes (doh61@pitt.edu). Please use the subject line "Early African American Religion Special Issue Submission." **We will notify you of your preliminary acceptance by July 31, 2024 and final essays are due on December 31, 2024.** Articles to be published are subject to peer review in 2025.