

**Popular Culture:** Sinners: How Religion Shapes Popular Culture

**Faculty:** Dr. Ambre Dromgoole, Assistant Professor of Africana Religions and Music, Africana Studies & Research Center

**Week One:** July 5 – 11, 2026

**Schedule:** Monday - Friday, 9-12 and 1:30-3:30, except Wednesday afternoon.

**Location:** Lincoln Hall, room 124

## Welcome to **Sinners: How Religion Shapes Popular Culture!**

I am so excited that you've chosen to join my course! To be honest, I have been dreaming of teaching just such a class since Ryan and Zinzi Coogler's blockbuster movie *Sinners* first hit the big screen in April 2025. I hadn't initially planned to see the film (I'm one of those people who "doesn't do horror"), but a scholar-friend messaged me after seeing it that weekend and demanded that I sit for the next viewing.

There was something about the film that he believed resonated deeply with my work. So much so, that when I appealed to him using my usual excuses (e.g. "gore grosses me out!" "I'm going to miss the plot through my fingers!" "The nightmares will keep me up at night," etc.) he told me that it was worth conquering my fears. And he was right! The film's combination of spirituality, sound, culture, and history are just what my scholastic dreams are made of, nightmares and all.

Using the Oscar-winning juggernaut as our compass, this class will explore the intersections of religion and popular culture through film, tv, sound, theatre, visual art, and more. From Oprah to Tony Kushner, Bob Dylan to Carrie Mae Weems, this course will broaden your religious understandings and spiritual horizons. You will leave with your hearts full and your minds blown. It is my greatest hope that by week's end you'll have a new perspective on the spiritual significance of the creative world. It is my great honor to be your guide in this endeavor!

Sincerely,

Ambre