

Department of Anthropology  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Course Room: 3058 LSA  
Time: Monday & Wednesday 10:30-12:00

Professor: Melvin D. Williams  
Office: 2040A LSA  
Office Hours: Weds. 10-11:30  
or by appointment  
Phone: 764-7154 or 764-7274

ANTHROPOLOGY 451 (CAAS 457)  
AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGION  
FALL 1992

Course Description:

This is a lecture-seminar course. It will examine the nature of religion in the lives of humans, within the framework of culture, and as a pervasive social institution. The course will focus on the special case of the intensive and involved character of religion in the history and the lives of Afro-Americans. These special uses of religion create special problems. We will analyze those problems.

The course is open to all students and it requires no special background or preparation. There will be two examinations and two short written assignments. Class participation and attendance are required.

Required Texts:

1. THE BLACK CHURCH IN AMERICA BY C.E. LINCOLN & L. MAMIYA.
2. COMMUNITY IN A BLACK PENTECOSTAL CHURCH: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY BY M.D. WILLIAMS.
3. THE HUMAN DILEMMA BY M.D. WILLIAMS.

Course Objectives:

1. Introduce the subject of religion as a social institution, as a pervasive component of culture, and as a contemporary adjustment and adaptation to peculiar social problems.
2. Demonstrate how an anthropological analysis can be used to understand religion in contemporary society.
3. Develop skills in critical thinking and analysis.
4. Present the relationship between culture, institutions, religion, subculture, and the nature of man (humans).
5. Enable students to understand the religious institutions of humans generally and Afro-American specifically.

Course Requirements:

1. Class Attendance
2. Class Participation
3. Midterm
4. Final
5. Two Written Assignments

Calendar:

## September:

14 ORIENTATION  
 21 THE NATURE OF RELIGION  
 28 THE AFRICAN CONNECTION

Readings:

Lincoln, Chapters 1 AND 9  
 Lincoln, Chapters 2,3,4

## October:

5 SLAVE RELIGION: THE  
 INVISIBLE INSTITUTION  
 12 FIRST REPORTS DUE  
 19 URBAN RELIGION: THE  
 NORTHERN MIGRATION  
 26 CRISIS IN RELIGION  
 AND COMMUNITY

Lincoln, Chapters 5,7,8  
 Lincoln, Chapters 6,11,12  
 Williams, Community  
 Lincoln, Chapters 10,13  
 Williams, Dilemma

## November:

2 SECOND REPORTS DUE  
 9 SECTS, CULTS, AND  
 DENOMINATIONS  
 23 FIELD RESEARCH IN  
 CONGREGATIONS  
 30 FIELD RESEARCH IN  
 CONGREGATIONS

Individ. Reading Assignments  
 Individ. Reading Assignments

## December:

4 FIELD RESEARCH IN  
 CONGREGATIONS

Individ. Reading Assignments

Recommended Readings:

Banton, Michael (ed.)

1969 Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion.  
 New York: Tavistock.

Beidelman, T.O.

1982 Colonial Evangelism. Bloomington: Indiana University  
 Press.

Durkheim, Emile

1969 The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. New York:  
 Free Press.

Faucett, Arthur Huff

1971 Black Gods of the Metropolis. Philadelphia:  
 University of Pennsylvania Press.

Frazer, Sir James George

1951 The Golden Bow. New York: Macmillan.

- Frazier, E. Franklin and C. Eric Lincoln  
1974 The Black Church Since Frazer. New York: Schocken Books.
- Gayraud, Wilmore S. (ed.)  
1989 African American Religious Studies. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hall, William T. et.al  
1985 Religion: An Introduction. New York: Harper & Row.
- Lanternari, Vittorio  
1965 The Religions of the Oppressed. New York: Mentor Books.
- Leslie, C.M. (ed.)  
1960 Anthropology of Folk Religion. New York: Vintage Books.
- Lessa, W.A. and E.Z. Vogt (eds.)  
1972 Reader in Comparative Religions. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lincoln, C. Eric  
1984 Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya  
1990 The Black Church in the African American Experience. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Norbeck, Edward  
1974 Religion in Human Life. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Nottingham, Elizabeth K.  
1968 Religion and Society. New York: Random House.
- Raboteau, Albert J.  
1980 Slave Religion. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sernett, Milton C. (ed.)  
1985 Afro-American Religions History: A Documentary Witness. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Smith, Huston  
1986 The Religions of Man. New York: Harper and Row.

Spindler, George and Louise

1990 The American Cultural Dialogue and Its Transmission.  
New York: Falmer Press.

Washington, Joseph R., Jr.

1964 Black Religion. Boston: Beacon Press.

Williams, Melvin D.

1983 "The Conflict of Corporate Church and Spiritual  
Community." In C.S. Dudley, Building Effective  
Ministry pp. 55-67.

Yinger, J. Milton

1970 The Scientific Study of Religion. New York:  
Macmillan.

Zaretsky, Irving I. and Cynthia Shambaugh

1978 Spirit Possession and Spirit Mediumship in Africa and  
Afro-America. New York: Garland.