Explaining the Course
This is a newly conceptualized field methods course that examines Gospel music performance in African American communities in West Philadelphia. There are three dimensions to the study of gospel music in the United States: gospel's historical antecedents in slavery embodied in the spiritual, gospel in its contemporary church communities, and gospel as in its commercial and mediated forms.

The educational goal is to provide students with archival and ethnographic experience and expertise, and to develop community ties between the gospel community in West Philadelphia, a small group of students from University City High School, and Penn grad students. As the research is conducted it will be transformed into an html format CD ROM/website for more generalized public display and consumption. The website becomes a means of reciprocating to the gospel community for the information we gather in partnership with them. It will also constitute the beginning of a larger virtual archive on Gospel music in West Philadelphia.

Philadelphia is one of the first major cities north of the Mason-Dixon line, i.e. the dividing line between the North and South, so it is a major site for the movement of African Americans between the north and south in the post-slavery days. It is the city in which WE Du Bois lived and wrote, is the place where the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded by Richard Allen. Opera singer Marian Anderson was born and nurtured in this city.

The primary site of fieldwork will be the Millennium Baptist Church in West Philadelphia. All students are urged to attend services at Millennium as often as they are able to through the course of the semester to deepen understanding of gospel music performance in its contemporary church environment and what it means to its community. Services run from 11 am sharp for two hours. Hopefully we will be able to arrange a van for group transportation (we require the appropriate license to do this).

The archival work will focus on the Marian Anderson Collection housed in the Rare Books and Manuscripts, floor 6 in Van Pelt. Marian Anderson left an enormous recorded and written archive a good part of which focused on the Spiritual. Additional archives may be consulted, for example, at Temple University--, the Pennsylvania State Historical Society, the AME church archives, among others. (The Bausch Institute for Ethnic Studies unfortunately is closed from October 1 through March 2002 because they are moving.)

In addition, this semester we will assist the music librarians in building the collection of gospel audio and video recordings in Van Pelt. And you are encouraged to listen to gospel music
on radio, and broadcast on television. This occurs largely on Sundays. We will have several 
community experts on Gospel Music visit our class, including Clayton White and Linda Timmons.

This seminar will be conducted as one might imagine a research project might be 
conducted. It means that we can plan to some extent, but may need to be flexible about some 
aspects of the class.

There are two kinds of projects: archival and ethnographic, though they will overlap in 
important ways. You should choose which you would prefer to focus on.

Class Requirements:  Weekly Journal—submitted at end of semester:  40%
Class participation: 10%
Website production: 10%
Formal Reflection Paper: 40%

Both the journal and formal reflection paper are due at the end of the semester, one week after 
the last class.

Readings
These are divided into three parts:
(1) West Philadelphia and Rationale for Community Partnership Program
(2) African American Gospel: Past and Present
(3) Field Methods and Ethnographic Representation

PART ONE: Bulkpack of readings from Ira Harkavy and CCP

PART TWO
(1) Thinking of the Sacred—in African American music scholarship, compare with others.
chs. 3-5
Ricouer, Paul. 1995. Figuring the Sacred. Religion, Narrative and Imagination. Minneapolis: 
Fortress.
Berkeley: Univ. of California.

(2) Reference Works
ed.),( pp. 355-372.

(3) “White” Perspectives on Gospel/Music in Philadelphia


(4) General


Reagon, Bernice. 2001. *If you don't go, don't hinder me.: The African American Song Tradition*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.


(5) Early History

*Please Note: The Rare Books and Manuscripts section of Van Pelt has a large collection of Negro Spirituals and other religious music, particularly Christian music used in early American communities. Check under keyword “spirituals”*


(6) Contemporary History: Spirituals in 20thc. and Gospel Music Performance


(7) Special Focus: Marian Anderson
Check the Marian Anderson link on the Penn Library homepage; visit this collection, navigate with librarian from Van Pelt.

Anderson, Marian. 1956. My Lord What a Morning. (Ghost Written by Howard Taubman, from interviews conducted with MA, copies of interviews in Van Pelt.)


(8) Gospel Music Ethnography


**PART THREE**

(9) *Field Methods and Ethnographic Representation*


Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Ch. 1 (Thick Description), Ch. 4 (Religion as cultural system), and Ch. 5 Analysis of sacred symbols.


Marcus, George and Michael Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P.


Narratives. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois.


