



AMBROSE
SEMINARY

WM 700 – Missions Research Project
African Culture and Christianity
Professor: Dr. Charles Cook

3 credits

ccook@ambrose.edu

Course Description

Looking at the similarities between Sub-Saharan African cultures and the major themes of African Christianity, this course integrates anthropological practice and missiology with a broad survey study of African society and spirituality with the aim of developing a well-rounded base of knowledge the student can both use and pass on in a missions context.

Course Objectives

- To gain a basic understanding of the anthropological framework for studying cultures, specifically as it relates to missions, such as participating observation and creating an ethnography
- To gain a broad understanding of Sub-Saharan African cultures in general, while keeping in mind the vast differences between cultures across the continent. The influences of geography and history will be considered, as well as current issues like politics, development, urbanization, and family/social structures
- To gain a sense of the current “flavour” of Christianity in Africa, including the influence of African Traditional Religions and the influence of Islam
- To gain a sense of how the above studies inform missiological practice in a very practical sense, integrating this study into practical skills and knowledge that would be useful for people heading to the field

Required Texts

Bediako, Kwame. Christianity in Africa – The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion. Edinburgh University Press/Orbis Books, 1995, 265 pages

(Recommended by Kenzo as a good foundation for African Christianity studies)

[Amazon.com listing](#)

Gordon, April and Donald. Understanding Contemporary Africa, 5th Ed. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012, 511 pages

(After researching textbooks for courses on African studies, I found this to be a good intro text)

[Amazon.ca listing](#)

* Also attached in a separate file is a PDF with the table of contents and introduction of the text

Hiebert, Paul G. Anthropological Insights for Missionaries. Baker Academic, 1985, 320 pages
(required reading by Africa Inland Mission for full time missionaries, comes highly recommended
by many missionaries)
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Supplementary Texts (for consultation)

Bediako, Kwame. Jesus and the Gospel in Africa – History and Experience. Edinburgh University
Press/Orbis Books, 2004
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Hiebert, Paul G. The Gospel in Human Contexts – Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary
Missions. Baker Academic, 2009
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Hiebert, Paul G. Transforming Worldviews – An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change.
Baker Academic, 2008.
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Ilo, Stan Chu. The Church as Salt and Light: Path To An African Ecclesiology of Abundant Life. In the
African Christian Studies Series. James Clark and Co., 2012.
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Olowola, Cornelius. African Traditional Religion and the Christian Faith, Theological Perspectives in
Africa No. 4. Africa Christian Press, 1993
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

O'Donovan, Wilbur. Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa. Paternoster Press, 2009
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Park, Sung Kyu. Christian Spirituality in Africa: Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Perspectives from Kenya.
In the African Christian Studies Series. James Clark and Co., 2013.
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Thomas, Douglas E. African Traditional Religion in the Modern World. McFarland and Company Inc.
Publishers, 2005.
[Amazon.ca listing](#)

Course Requirements

1. Reading for depth (Due April 18, 2014)
 - Three critical book reviews, 5-7 pages each double spaced
Book reviews are to provide a short summary of the content as well as an interaction with the major ideas in the text, specifically with how they are applicable to intended ministry
 - Gordon: Understanding Contemporary Africa
 - Hiebert: Anthropological Insights for Missionaries
 - Bediako: Christianity in Africa
2. Reading for breadth (Due April 18, 2014)
 - A 30 item annotated bibliography
3. Major Paper (Due April 18, 2014)
 - One 50-60 page research paper looking at critical issues of African culture in a broad sense, and African Christianity specifically, specifically relating to African spirituality, the practice of African Traditional Religions, and the impact, challenges, and opportunities of the current spiritual climate for missions.
4. Practical Summary (Due April 18, 2014)
 - An 8-10 page article or 30-ish minute presentation based on the paper and research that would seek to condense the content into a useful, manageable format for others. This could be used as a primer for someone looking at missions in Africa or wanting to develop a better understanding of African culture and Christianity.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments are to be emailed to the Professor and are due by midnight on or before designated due date.

Grading: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory
C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform College-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Important Notes/Dates:

- Directed Study courses cannot be dropped to audit.
- Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (**withdraw**) –Friday, March 21, 2013 (Winter semester). A grade of “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.
- Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of exams unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by Monday, March 31, 2014 (Winter semester). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

