The Nation of Islam, under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan, is arguably the most misunderstood religious group in America. Add to this their greatly misrepresented discourses and UFOs and aliens, and we have an interpretive quandary that is not likely to be resolved in media and popular conversations, particularly given the centrality of "race" to the discourse. This presentation will explore the notions of UFOs and "aliens" as critical ideas in the religious thought of the group. Using multiple forms of psychoanalysis, the lecture will argue that such discourses, read in the context of a history of racism in America, are actually quite coherent and meaningful.

Stephen C. Finley is an assistant professor of religious studies and African and African-American studies at Louisiana State University. He is a voting faculty affiliate of the women’s and gender studies program. His book, In and Out of This World: Material and Extraterrestrial Bodies in the Nation of Islam, is currently under review. Finley is coauthoring Malcolm X and Gender. and he is coeditor (with Margarita S. Guillory and Hugh R. Page, Jr.) of “There Is a Mystery”: Esotericism, Gnosticism, and Mysticism in African-American Religious Experience (under contract with Brill). Finley is a member of the Executive Committee of the Society for the Study of Black Religion.

Thursday, Oct 24th
Alumni Center
AGR Room
Reception: 5:30pm
Lecture: 6:00pm

Presented by Professor
Stephen Finley

For more information, please contact
Professor Allison P. Coudert (apcoudert@ucdavis.edu).