SEMINAR IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:
AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

Sociology 403
King 235

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Sociology 403
King 235
Fall Semester 2014
Meets: W 2:30-4:20 P.M.
Office Hrs: M 2:30-4PM; TTH 10-12
AM or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to examine theoretical and empirical issues relating to the social psychological and psychological study of African-Americans. Specific attention will be given to: (1) traditional social psychological and non-traditional approaches (Africentric) to the study of African-Americans; (2) issues of measurement or assessment of the minority personality (e.g., testing bias, intelligence testing, etc.); (3) self-concept and developmental issues, such as cognition, self-esteem and racial identity (4), institutional effects such as the role of family and education in the social psychological study of African-Americans.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE: This is a seminar class and as such particular emphasis is placed on the participation of the students. Therefore, attendance on a regular basis and participation in class discussions is ESSENTIAL. Class participation is worth 15% of your final grade.

You are allowed one unexcused absence.

SEMINAR FORMAT: For the first twelve weeks of the class, each class session will explore a topic on African American psychology incorporating a discussion of the relevant literature and informed opinions on the topic. Some of the responsibility for the introduction of the topic will be taken by the instructor. However, students are expected to report on and respond to specific readings as they are assigned for class discussion. It is expected that members of the class will address these issues with commentary and/or questions on the topic.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS: There will be assigned readings from books listed below and articles on Blackboard. Readings for a specific week are listed in the lecture topic section of the syllabus unless otherwise noted (see pp. 5-9). During the course of the semester additional readings assignments may be given to supplement present assignments.
Required books for the course:


Recommended but not required


**WEEKLY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** During the 10 weeks of the class you are required to submit 7 out of 10 possible essays in response to a particular question on African American psychology for a given week/topic provided in the assignment section of the syllabus. You must incorporate the readings assigned for that week in the essay in addition to any other resources you may wish to add. The essays must be between two to five pages in length. Readings for the specific week should be referenced in the paper (e.g., Guthrie, 1980). Each paper is worth 5%, for a total of 35% of the final course grade. **THE PAPER WILL BE DUE THE DAY OF CLASS FOR THE TOPIC OF THAT WEEK. NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER OR DURING WEEKS SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR ORIGINAL DUE DATE. BE ADVISED TO GET THESE PAPERS DONE EARLIER IN THE SEMESTER.**

**WRITTEN PROPOSAL & PROJECT:** Each student will be responsible for completion of a written research project. Students must explore through independent research an issue or topic related to the African American personality and/or psychology. Before you begin this project there are several steps you must follow.

1. First, you are **required** to discuss your research project with me. Make an appointment with me to discuss your project by **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8.** **However, the earlier you do this the better.**

2. Secondly, please submit by **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15,** a one page summary of your research topic and a bibliography OF AT LEAST TEN SOURCES. Your description should detail the nature of the problem/issue to be explored. If you plan to conduct or use empirical data be sure to provide a statement on how that data is to be collected or if you already have collected data (secondary data) you will need to identify where that data originates. Also provide a statement of hypotheses if testing a specific construction.

3. Finally, the **FINAL WRITTEN PART OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS DUE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21.** For your information, on outline on how the paper
should be organized is given at the end of the syllabus. The research project is worth 40% of your final grade. This paper must range between 15 and 20 pages.

**ORAL PRESENTATION:** The last two weeks of class have been set aside for everyone to present their project to the class. Time allotted for the presentations will depend on the number of students in the class. However, each presentation will be on average 15 minutes followed by questions and answers. Each student is expected to prepare an outline on the presentation and distribute it in class. Any audio or visual equipment needed for the presentation should be requested through me at least the Monday before your presentation. If you have handouts for the class (including the outline) also turn them in to me to have them copied. The oral presentation is worth 10% of your final grade. Each presentation will be evaluated by the students in the class and will be used to assess the final grade for this aspect of your grade. Essentially, the grade you receive will be dependent on the performance review of the group.

**GRADING:** Your course grade will be determined by your class participation, written assignments, course project, and oral presentation. Below is the distribution of each requirement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Research Proposal &amp; Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written assignments (7 @ 5%)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**HONOR CODE:** On all assignments, you are expected to follow the guidelines as established by the Oberlin College Honor System.

http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-students/honor/students.dot

As such, you are required to follow the letter of that code and write and sign at the end of each academic exercise submitted for credit the following: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this exam/assignment”. The default of this statement is that you are required to do your own work without the help from others not explicitly authorized by me (You may, however, use campus resources, such as the library, composition instructors, or writing tutors).

**CLASS POLICIES**

- **GROUND RULES: BE RESPECTFUL.** Let it be known that not everyone is going to agree with every author’s comments or perspectives or my comments for that matter. I encourage you to openly express your thoughts,
ideas, and experiences in written assignments or discussions. However, it is also important that you support your assertions with literature/research on the topic. Ultimately, be respectful of the rights of others to their thoughts and opinions. Be cognizant that we are engaging in intellectual learning and by no means assume that everything will be resolved in our discussion.

• **OPEN DOOR POLICY**: I encourage all of you to see me outside of class, during office hours or by appointment, especially as it relates to assignments and any questions or comments you may have about course content or related issues. Do not hesitate to ask for help!

• **SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES**: If you require special accommodations in this class, please see me at your earliest convenience so that we can address these needs in a timely manner. You will need to present a letter from the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (Peters Hall G27) documenting the accommodations needed. Please contact Ms. Jane Boomer at x5588 or visit [http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/) for more information.

• **OTHER CONCERNS**:
  1. **TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF OR SILENCE THEM DURING CLASS PLEASE!**
  2. **PLEASE DO NOT EAT IN CLASS** (unless okayed by me). It is very distracting. (besides some of us may be hungry as well!). Drinking a beverage is fine.
  3. Do not talk or whisper conversations with your neighbors during class. This is distracting to the rest of the class and to me!
  4. **AVOID BEING LATE TO CLASS**. This is also disturbing to the class and me.
  5. You may **NOT** have your laptops open unless it relates to certain readings and topics of discussion.
TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(BB) = indicates that the reading is on Blackboard

HISTORY, THEORY, METHODS AND THE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY


WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 10  HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY:

Essay Question 1: Describe briefly the historical development of the social-psychological and psychological study of African Americans. How does each of the writings inform us about that history? Include references from each of the required readings in your response.

Required Readings:
2. Neville et al., *Handbook of African American Psychology* (HAAP), Introduction and Chapter 1

WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 17  THEORETICAL ISSUES:

Essay Question 2: What is the Africentric perspective in African American psychology and how does it differ from traditional sociological and social psychological approaches to the study of human behavior? Identify the perspectives and how each of the readings below contribute or exemplify a particular perspective. (If necessary you should review sociological and social psychological text for further information on perspectives).

Required Readings:
1. Belgrave and Allison, AAP, pp. 31-53
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapters 3 and 5.
WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 24: GENERAL RESEARCH & METHODOLOGICAL DEBATES:

Essay Question 3: Are the methods and measurements used to investigate the psychological character of the African-American adequate? Discuss the arguments presented in the articles and provide your individual reactions to this assessment.

Required Readings:
1. Belgrave and Allison, AAP, pp. 53-63.
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapter 6.

WEEK 5 OCTOBER 1: RACISM AND PSYCHOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS.

Essay Question 4: What is racism and what is it’s’ significance to the social psychological and psychological study of African Americans?

Required Readings:
1. Belgrave and Allison, AAP, pp. 103-133.
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapters 12, 22.
3. Lawrence Bobo and Cybelle Fox, “Race, Racism and Discrimination: Bridging Problems, Methods and Theory in Social Psychological Research”, (BB)

SELFF ATTRIBUTES AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

WEEK 6: OCTOBER 8: SELF-CONCEPT, SELF-ESTEEM and RACIAL IDENTITY

Essay Question 5: What are self-concept and self-esteem? Do blacks typically possess low or high levels of self-esteem? How do we explain the level of self-esteem among African Americans? Describe historical arguments and contemporary theories and/or assertions that try to explain levels of self-esteem among African Americans using the readings below. How is racial identity different from self-esteem? Do blacks have a strong sense of racial identity?

Required Readings:
3. Neville et al., HAAP, chp. 21 (Racial Identity Theory).

Suggested but not required:

WEEK 7: OCTOBER 15: DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES OVER THE LIFE COURSE

Essay Question 6: Describe what is meant by the study of the African American through the life-span. Research on the life-span of African Americans is vast. However, how has this research aided in our understanding of the psychological make-up of African Americans?

Required Readings:
1. Belgrave and Allison, AAP, 339-374
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapters 19 (Racial Socialization: Roots, Processes, and Outcomes)

WEEK 8: OCTOBER 18-26 FALL BREAK/NO CLASSES

WEEK 9: OCTOBER 29: COGNITIVE ISSUES: COGNITION, COGNITIVE STYLE, INTELLIGENCE AND STRENGTHS

Essay Question 7: Are blacks inferior to whites in their cognitive abilities? Or do blacks just think differently than whites? Discuss the general arguments associated with these questions and provide a brief summary on how each of the readings below contribute to our assertions about intelligence and cognitive “differences” between black and whites.

Required Readings:
2. Claude Fischer et al., Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth, “A Summary of the Bell Curve” pp.217-224, then Chapters 1-5, 8, (BB)
SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 5: FAMILY, COMMUNITY & AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY:

Essay Question 8: What significant issues have emerged regarding the impact of the African American family on the psychological development of African Americans? In what ways does the community and neighborhood contribute to psychological condition of the African American?

Required Readings:
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapters 8.
3. A. Thomas and S. Sillen, Racism and Psychiatry, Chapter 6, "Family and Fantasy", pp. 83-100 (BB)

WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 12: EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE: STRUCTURE, CULTURE OR STEREOTYPE THREAT

Essay Question 9: Although there has been significant progress in the educational development of African Americans over the years, why do African American lag behind whites in their overall educational experience? Discuss the role the cultural and structural arguments that have been suggested and position yourself in support one or the other arguments.

Required Readings:
2. Neville et al., HAAP, Chapters, 13, 14, 16.

WEEK 12 NOVEMBER 19 ADJUSTMENT AND ADAPTATION: MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL BEHAVIORS (PRO AND ANTI-SOCIAL)

Essay Question 10:

Required Readings:
1. Belgrave and Allison, AAP, Chapter 12, 13, 15.

WEEK 13 NOVEMBER 26 NO CLASS
WEEK 14  DECEMBER 3  PRESENTATIONS
WEEK 15  DECEMBER 10:  PRESENTATIONS / LAST CLASS
           DECEMBER 13-16  READING PERIOD

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20: WRITTEN PROJECT DUE
RESEARCH PROJECT/PAPER GUIDE

The goal of the project is for you to explore an issue of African American psychology that is of great interest to you. The topic can be related to any of the issues we have discussed in class or to some others that have not been mentioned thus far. In other words, topics can range from issues that we have already examined (although not a repeat but delving further into something not touched upon), or that which we have not talked about (e.g., drug use and abuse; prosocial and antisocial behavior; careers, vocations and employment). The unit of analysis can range from the micro (e.g., racial identity) to the macro (e.g., institutional discrimination).

Before you begin, however, you should have a sense of what it is you are interested in examining. While at first, you may have a vague notion of questions for which you would like to find answers for, as you get more involved in the project, you should narrow the focus of your search. This is crucial. The most advanced research projects are usually limited to answering one or two questions. If you can whittle the focus of the project down to a single question, then you are on the right track.

Once you have chosen your question, the next step is to decide how you plan to learn more about this: i.e., library research, observation, etc. Regarding observation, this can include examining an African American psychology issue in a local community setting (e.g., volunteering in a community agency, surveying individuals, observing racial interaction in for example, schools, public settings) or seeking out an interview with individuals who are involved in the issue you are investigating or merely focusing an in-depth exploration through library research. **Please note that observation or data collection is not a requirement.**

The following is a brief description of how you might approach each of the sections of the project. Please remember that this is only meant to serve as a general guide to help you if you have not done something like this before. An alternative strategy is fine, provided that you let me know in advance or outline this method in your project proposal. For a more general and useful guide on conducting social research I would recommend that you review a copy of *The Craft Of Research* (3rd) by Wayne Booth et al. (2008) or *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers by The Sociology Writers Group* (3rd edition or later).

The Research Project Proposal

This is simply a summary of what it is you plan to study and how you plan to study it. It should be no more than two pages in length. Introduce the topic that you will be investigating and describe how you expect to approach this inquiry. In this proposal, you should identify a single question that highlights the focus of your investigation. Also specify the general areas of literature you intend to look into as a way to further develop your knowledge of this subject. The proposal might also include a statement as to why this subject
is important and worth investigating. **Attach a preliminary bibliography consisting of at least 10 sources.**

**QUICK OUTLINE GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN REPORT**

Following the more detailed descriptive outline, below is a more abbreviated outline of social science research. I ask that you proceed with your project with this outline in mind. You are reminded that the topic of your chosen must be related to the issues on the African American personality or psychology.

I. **TITLE PAGE: WITH TITLE, NAME, DATE, COURSE NAME**

II. **INTRODUCTION STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM UNDER INVESTIGATION**
   A. What is it you intend to examine? (e.g., What factors negatively impact African American racial identity?)
   B. Why is it a problem and hypothesis to be addressed? (Discuss difference between what is and what ought to be). (e.g., We know that there are several factors that have a positive impact on racial identity, but we have little information on those that have negative effect. What are those? The variable we believe tend to negatively impact African American identity are …)

III. **LITERATURE REVIEW**
   A. What have other persons' said about this in the past? What does the literature say? Here you must examine and discuss previous research on the issue/problem raised.
   B. If possible, discuss some of the problems and questions raised by the previous research.
   C. Propose the extent to which your research is going to provide some new information or is it going to basically summarize the old.

IV. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (OPTIONAL)**
   A. Incorporate a theory that explains your issue or discuss to what extent certain theories or approaches explain (What theory proposes to explore basic (e.g., nigrescence theory vs. symbolic interactionist theory of identity) explain the topic/issue you are examining.
   B. Discuss how the various theories might explain the problem.

V. **METHODS AND ANALYSIS (OPTIONAL)**
   A. If engaging in data collection, discuss how one went about investigating the problem (e.g., taking one of the identity scales and measuring racial identity among black students at Oberlin among other variables, like income, age, education, etc.)
   B. How did you collect your data?
   C. How did you analyze it the data? What was your plan of analysis?
VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary of your findings. Do your findings reflect your objectives or hypotheses?
B. What do you conclude from this investigation?
C. What is in store for the future research? Identify any difficulties with own research and how they might be addressed in the future.

VII. REFERENCES, WORKS CITED, BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Alphabetical order
B. American Psychological Association (APA) style/formatting.

For further information on writing sociology papers see A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers by The Sociology Writing Group, ST: Martin’s Press

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QUICK STYLE GUIDE FOR STUDENT WRITING SOCIOLOGY PAPERS

Quick Style Guide for Students Writing Sociology Papers. The following is taken from American Sociological Association Style Guide (2nd ed.), 1997. This is intended as a quick reference for students preparing papers.

References in the main text:
Include the last name of the author and the year of publication. In order to avoid plagiarism (inappropriately using another person's words without proper citation), you must directly quote verbatim, using quotation marks and the name, date, and page number in parentheses or you must paraphrase and mention the source of the idea (name and date only).

Use page numbers only when you quote an author's words:

☐ Sociological analysis of cities is “critical to achieving far-reaching social change in this century,” according to Duncan (1959, p. 71)

Otherwise, if the author's name is in the text, follow the name with the year in parentheses. If the author's name is not in the text, enclose both the last name and year in parentheses:

☐ According to Duncan (1959), sociological analysis of cities is critical to creating positive social change in America.
☐ Sociological analysis of cities is critical to creating social change (Duncan 1959)

For joint authors, use both last names: (Martin and Bailey 1988)

For institutional authorship, use minimum identification in the text and complete citation under references: (U.S. Bureau of Census 1963, p. 117)
Separate a series of references with a semicolon: (Burgess 1968; Maxwell 1971)

If there is no date for a publication use n.d. in place of the year.

For unpublished materials, use “forthcoming” to indicate material scheduled for publication. For dissertations and unpublished papers, cite the date: (Smith, forthcoming).

For works with three authors, list all last names in the first citation in the text; thereafter use “et al.” For more than three authors, use “et al” throughout: (Carr, Smith, and Jones 1962), then (Carr et al. 1962)

Block quotations are presented in smaller type and are set off in a separate, indented paragraph. They are not enclosed in quotation marks:

☐ As stated by Wright and Jacobs (1994):
   The variation in men's earnings relative to their peers in the labor force was not a reliable predictor of men's attrition. This finding is inconsistent with the prediction that declines in earnings are responsible for male flight from feminizing occupations. (P. 531).

Footnotes & Endnotes:
Endnotes are used to explain or amplify text, cite materials of limited availability, or append information presented in a table or figure. Number endnotes and list at the end of your paper. Increasingly people use endnotes rather than footnotes and use either one sparingly as they tend to disrupt the flow of the text. Use footnotes and endnotes only when necessary. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page in which they originate.

Miscellaneous Style & Grammar Matters:
☐ Foreign words in your text should be italicized or underlined. Commonly used foreign words or terms, however, should appear in regular type. Examples are per se, ad hoc, et al.
☐ When using an acronym, spell out the complete term the first time you use it and present the acronym in parentheses:
   Later: “CPS data show that . . . .”
☐ Equations in the text should be typed or printed. Use consecutive Arabic numerals in parentheses at the right margin to identify important equations. Align all expressions and clearly mark compound subscripts and superscripts.
☐ Do not use abbreviations such as etc., e.g., or i.e. in your text. You may use these abbreviations in parenthetical information, however:
   For example, some terms used in specific areas of sociology are not readily understood by the general sociologist (e.g. cultural capital, etc.).

Cited References (reference list):
A bibliography includes all the works you read or scanned during the writing process. List references in alphabetical order by authors' last names. References without an author
name appear at the beginning of the list. For two or more references by the same author, list them in order of the year of publication. Use six hyphens and a period (------.) in place of the name when the authorship is the same as in the preceding citation. To list two or more works by the same author from the same year, distinguish them by adding letters (a, b, c, etc.) to the year and list in alphabetical order by the title.

Sample formats:

**Books**


**Journal Articles:**


In most cases, journal pages are numbered consecutively within a volume year. Therefore you can often omit the issue number. Only include the issue number or month only when it is need to distinguish one issue from another within a volume year.

**Articles from Collected Works/Chapters in Books:**


**Unpublished Manuscripts:**

Mechanics:

- Page Numbering: Although you count pages from the first page of the text, page numbering starts to appear on the second page (as page 2). Carry the numbers system through endnotes and references.
- Tables: Number consecutively throughout the text. Place tables at the end of the paper, but refer to them in the text by number. Each table includes a descriptive title and headings for both columns and rows.
- Figures and other Artwork: Number consecutively throughout the text. Place figures at the end of the paper, but refer to them in the text by number. Each figure must have a descriptive title and appropriate headings.

For more information . . . check out these additional references


For further information on APA see the following:

http://www.ehow.com/how_5645962_cite-apa-format.html

http://www.ehow.com/how_6968649_write-apa-format-references.html

http://psychology.about.com/od/apastyle/ig/APA-Format-Examples/

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/