

HDFS 521: AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

Fall 2009

Instructor: Adrienne Duke

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Office Hours: TR 2:00-4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Office: 3rd floor Middleton Building

Classroom: Human Ecology 118

Class Time: Tues. & Thurs. 4:00 - 5:15 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a historical and sociological examination of the issues related to the experiences of African American families that have emerged out of the overlapping contexts of racism, sexism and economic exploitation. We will investigate how African Americans have continuously constructed, defined, and lived family life in the face of social, political, and economic challenges. This course has the following objectives:

1. To study African American families from a historical, holistic, and multidisciplinary perspective;
2. To expose students to factual information about African American families in contradiction to prevailing myths and stereotypes, particularly from the perspectives of African Americans;
3. To foster students' ability to critically examine how structural inequalities and social policies have historically and continue to affect the formation and development of family life for many African Americans.

Class Organization and Expectations

- This course will be taught using a combination of lecture, class discussion, and small group discussion.
- Students are expected to read materials *before* class. It is hard to participate if you have not read the material.
- I will take attendance through your reading motivators. They should be typed and will be taken up at the end of each class.
- After 3 missed classes, 5 points will be taken off your final grade.
- If you have flu-like symptoms, please email me and let me know that you will not be attending class. The university is undergoing attendance policy changes because of the heightened awareness of the flu season this year.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

521 African American Families Reader available at Bob's Copy Shop 1401 University Ave

*** There is a course reader on reserve at College Library***

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Participating in Class

I expect students to read and do reading motivators **before** class. Students must be prepared to participate in critical, constructive, and respectful discussions of the readings and other course materials.

As the class or small groups engage in discussion make sure you remember the following:

1. Oppression (i.e., racism, classism, sexism, etc) does exist and manifest in different forms.
2. We must acknowledge that one of the mechanisms of oppression (i.e., racism, classism, sexism, etc.) is that **we are all** systematically taught misinformation about our own group and about members of devalued groups.
3. We cannot be blamed for the misinformation we have learned, but we will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. When you disagree with someone, make sure that you **criticize the idea** and not the person themselves.
5. Each person has varying life experiences and view points; one person should not be viewed as the spokesperson for his or her race/ethnicity/class/gender.
6. We will share information about our groups with other members of the class and we will never demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences. We each have an obligation to actively combat the stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls which prohibit group cooperation and group gain.

Reading Motivators

The purpose of the reading motivator is for you to explore, respond, and/or critique, class readings. You can write generally about the readings or about a specific idea or theme for the day. You can also compare or contrast this week's readings to another week. A reading motivator is only one page and is due every class meeting; unless otherwise noted on your syllabus. I expect it to be typed, not handwritten (this is so I can be assured that it was completed before class).

I will take it up at the end of class so that you can refer to your writings during class discussion. Turning in the reading motivators is to your benefit. This is how I will take attendance and make

sure that you are doing the assigned readings. Every Thursday we will take time to do group work and discuss our reading motivators. Your reading motivators and attendance will be graded one and the same. These are worth 1 pt each and worth 10% of your grade.

Reading Motivator Important Points to Remember:

1. It is only **one** page (typed, double spaced, 12pt font).
2. I will not grade you on your grammar, but will be evaluating the quality of your thinking. Ask good questions; acknowledge your confusion; describe contradictions; explore your ideas.
3. Avoid vague statements. Do not say, "I found this reading interesting" but be specific and say, "Hill (92) talked about the socialization process of Black children; I wonder how white children are socialized to live in American society?" *Please note the inclusion of the author and page number to give some reference of what triggered your thinking.*
4. If you cannot get your printer to work, email me your reading motivator **BEFORE** class starts. Make sure you leave me a note after class stating that you emailed me. This will ensure that I will not count you absent for the day.

Midterm Essay

The midterm assignment is a 7 page essay covering one of the topics we have discussed in class. Topics are limited to what we have covered before October 20th. You can use readings from the class, as well as sources outside of class readings. The format should be done in APA style, double spaced, and in 12pt font. Papers are due on Oct 20th. In order for grades to be posted before the drop date, **I will not accept late papers. Please turn in your papers on time.** If you have any questions concerning the topic of your paper, please do not hesitate to ask.

Reading Motivator Expansion

Take one of your reading motivators and expound on a topic you have previously written about. Although you are expanding a previous paper, it should follow formal writing conventions (APA style). This assignment is 5 pages.

News Article Assignment

Find a news article, in print or on the web (NO BLOGS), with the Black Family as its feature. Print or cut out and bring to class on the assigned date. Write a 1-2 page summary and/or critique of the article, staple it, and turn it in at the end of class.

Final Project

The final project will be a 10 minute power point presentation focusing on images of the Black family in television, print media, or cinema. Students can focus on a show, a movie, or images

in magazines, catalogs, or newspapers. This project is designed to get you to examine how media teaches you about Black family life.

Grading

1. Reading Motivators/Attendance	20pts	10%
2. News Article Critique	30pts	15%
3. Midterm Paper	50pts	25%
4. Reading Motivator Expansion	40pts	20%
5. Final Media Project	60pts	30%
Total	200pts	100%

A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-69
F	59-0

ACCESSIBILITY

Please let me know if you need any special accommodation as soon as possible. For questions regarding the University's disability policies and services, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 905

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: **9/3** Course Introduction
Why are we here?

Week 2: **9/8 Family in the Context of a Racialized Society**
Wideman, John Edgar. 1994. "Common Ground," in *Fatheralong: A Meditation on Fathers and Sons, Race, and Society*.

9/10 "History as Fact or Fiction" in L.B. Johnson and R. Staples *Black Families at the Crossroads: Challenges and Prospects*. 2005. John Wiley & Sons, INC (1-29)

Week 3: African American Families Research and Theory

9/15 "Studying Black Families" in L.B. Johnson and R. Staples *Black Families at the Crossroads: Challenges and Prospects*. 2005. John Wiley & Sons, INC (30-58)

9/17 Sudarkasa, N. Interpreting the African Heritage in African American Family Organization. Chapter 3 in H. P. McAdoo, *Black Families* 4th ed. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. (29-47)

Week 4: What does the African American family look like?

9/22 Billingsley, A. Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families. "Black and White Together: Trends in Interracial Marriage," Chapter 11 p. 245-261
Gallup Poll Article

9/24 News Paper Article Assignment Due
No Reading Motivator

Week 5: Policy

9/29 The Moynihan Report: The Negro Family and the Case for National Action
March 1965 (39-94)

Furstenburg, F. (2009) "If Moynihan had only known: Race, class, and family change in the late twentieth century." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 621, 94.

10/1 Jewell, K.S. (2003). Survival of the African American Family: The Institution Impact of U.S. Social Policy. A Reaffirmation of Institutional Exclusivity: Removing the Façade, Chapter 8 p.139-158

Schiele, J.H. (1998). "The Personal Responsibility Act of 1996: The bitter and the for African American families." *Families in Society*, 79: 4.

Week 6: Economics/Class

10/6 Hattery, A.J. & Smith, E. (2007). African American Families. Welfare and Wealth Chapter 8 p. 205-232

Dymski, G.A. & Mason, P.L. Chapter 16 Racial Inequality and African Americans Disadvantage in the Credit and Capital Markets in C.A. Conrad, J. Whitehead, P. Mason, & J. Stewart (eds). African Americans in the U.S. Economy p. 151-156

10/8 Stack, C. (1974) *All our Kin* Chapter 2, 3, 5 (22-89)

Week 7: Social Class

10/13 Times Article: "America's Rising Black Middle Class"
Washington Post Article: "Middle Class Dream Eludes African American Families"

10/15 The Middle Class
Benjamin, L. 2005. The Black Elite. Chapter 5 p.127-132, 141-157.

Week 8: Social Class cont.

10/20 The Upper Class
Graham, L.O. 1999. Our Kind of People. Chapter 1: The Origins of the Black Upper Class p. 1-18
"How White People taught me to be a Good Black Neighbor." Chapter 6 in Graham, L.O. (1995) Member of the Club (123-133).

**10/22 Midterm Essay Due
In Class Project**

Week 9: "Single" Parenting

10/27 Hammer, Jennifer. (2001) What it means to be daddy: Fatherhood for Black men living away from their children. "Chapter 7: Live-Away, but Absent?" p.151-175

10/29 R.J. Taylor, J.S. Jackson, & L.M. Chatters (Eds). Family Life in Black America (1997). Rukmalie Jayakody & Linda M. Chatters. "Chapter 10: Differences among African American single mothers: Marital status, living arrangements, and family support" p. 167-200

Week 10: Issues in Parenting

11/3 Hill, S. (1999). African American Children: Socialization and Development in Families. "Chapter 4: Racial Socialization" p. 81-102

Hill, S. (1999). African American Children: Socialization and Development in Families. "Chapter 5: Gender Socialization" p. 103-128

11/5 Pinderhughes, E.E. & Harden, B.J. "Chapter 14 Beyond the Birth Family: African American Children Reared by Alternate Caregivers." p. 285-310

Week 11: Family and Institutions

11/10 Video "White Man's Burden" **No Reading Motivator**

11/12 African American Families and Education

Guest Lecture: Amy Hilgendorf

No Daily Reading Motivator

Reading Motivator Expansion Due

Week 12: Health

11/17 Discussion of Final Project

A.J. Hattery & E. Smith. (2007). African American Families. "Chapter 6: HIV and other Social and Health Issues" p. 123-169.

11/19 Washington, H.A. (2006). Medical Apartheid: The dark history of medical experimentation on Black Americans from colonial times to the present. Chapter 8: "The Black Stork the Eugenic Control of African American Reproduction" p.189-215.

Week 13: Holiday

11/24 No class

11/26 Thanksgiving

Week 14: Media Images

12/1 Ford, T.E. 1997. Effects of Stereotypical Television Portrayals of African Americans on Person Perception. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60:3, pp 266-275.

12/3 The Obama's: The New Black Family Image
Presentations?

Week 15:

12/8 Presentations

12/10 Presentations

**12/15 Last Day of Class
Presentations**

Final Project

Here's a list to get you started. You are not limited to these titles.

List of Television Shows:

Fresh Prince
Good Times
The Cosby Show
Family Matters
ROC
House of Payne
My Wife and Kids
227
Soul Food
Jeffersons
That's so Raven
Everybody Hates Chris
The Proud Family

List of Movies:

Soul Food
This Christmas
Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins
Maeda Family Reunion
Daddy's Little Girls
Crooklyn
A Raisin in the Sun
The Ditchdigger's Daughters

Print Media:

ESSENCE Newsweek
Time Ebony
People Family Circle
Parents Heart and Soul
Your Local Newspaper