

# SYD-4730-Fall 2008

## African Americans in U. S. Society

### Class

Rm. HCB 210  
MW: 11:00-12:15

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00- 2:00, Wednesday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus.

### Course Description

The study of race/ethnic relations focuses on the social relationships between groups with physical and cultural differences and the conflict and the potential conflict generated by such differences. As a specific area within race/ethnic relations, the study of African Americans attempts to use the tools and theories of sociology as well as the special terminology of race relations to explore and understand the relationship between the African American community and the larger American society.

The topics covered include: (1) official and subjective definitions of who is considered African American in the U.S.; (2) the institution of slavery and its significance in shaping the African American experience and black-white race relationships; (3) the significance of the segregation era and World Wars for social and economic development in the African American community; (4) the Civil Rights Movement as a major social movement; (5) the debate over color-blind racism in the post-Civil Rights era; (6) the opportunity structure and the African American community; (7) the African American family; and (8) the impact of racism on the health of African Americans.

### Course Objectives:

1. To demonstrate an understanding of the social and economic experiences of African Americans and the role of the larger society in shaping those experiences.
2. To demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the diversity found within the African American population.
3. To critically evaluate and apply information in the analysis of issues relevant to the contemporary African American community.

## Required Readings

Available on Blackboard and through online link.

## Course Requirements and Evaluations

### 1. Reading Assignments

For each topic, readings have been assigned. You are strongly encouraged to read the materials before the lecture so that the lectures will be intelligible, you will do well on quizzes, and so that we can have lively, informed discussion.

### 2. Attendance and Unannounced Quizzes (15 % of final grade)

Attendance is assessed via sign-in sheets, participation in classroom exercises, and short quizzes. The quizzes will consist of questions that have come from the readings or the lecture. There will usually be about 3-5 questions. With 3 questions, scores will be: 0=absent, 3=no correct answers but attended class, 6=1 correct answers. 9=2 correct answers, and 12= 3 correct answers. When no quiz is given, students get 3 points for attendance. There will be **no make up quizzes. In lieu of recording or tracking excused absences, students may drop the lowest 4 grades.**

3. **Class participation** includes engaging in class discussions, being called upon to answer questions, and perhaps completing short, in-class assignments. Your personal opinions are encouraged, but discussions should primarily reflect analysis of the assignments. In other words, strong emphasis is placed on attempts to understand and reflect upon the reading material. Asking and answering questions in class are additional ways to measure your exam preparedness. Class participation is taken into consideration when the course grade is assigned.

### 4. Written Assignments (25% of final grade)

Each student must complete two (2) short written assignments. **The project should be typed, double-spaced on white paper with name on top. Please use an 11 or 12 point font. The penalty for late papers is 1 point per day.** Grammar and organization are graded. A more detailed handout will be available on Blackboard.

Assignment #1: Students will engage in an online exercise called “Sorting People” and then complete a 1 page write up indicating what they did and what they learned. The assignment is worth a total of 25 points.

Assignment #2: Students will use materials from an online site to conduct a comparative analysis of residential segregation in Leon County Florida and the County where they have resided the longest period in their lives. If students have moved around much of their lives or grew up in Leon County, select Wayne County Michigan. The assignment should include the url for their residence and indicate if contact between African Americans and other groups does or should differ from the county in which they resided and why. The assignment should be 1 page and is worth a total of 25 points.

Grading Scale (Rounded): 24-25=A+ 22-23=A- 20-21=B+ 18-19=B- 16-17=C+  
14-15=C- 12-13=D 0-11=F

5. Exams (60% of final grade)

Three exams will be given during the course of the semester. **The third exam is not comprehensive and will be given during the time scheduled for the final exam.** Each exam is worth a total of 40 points. The exams will be multiple-choice and/or short-answer.

Grading Scale:        38-40=A+  36-37=A-  34-35=B+  32-33=B-  30-31=C+  
                              28-29=C-  24-27=D  0-23=F

6. Make-up exams (**Make-up exams are essay**)

Make-up exams are given only in the following situations:

1. Illness of the student with confirmation by medical personnel.
2. Family emergency such as illness or death with proper documentation.
3. Informing the instructor in advance of the exam and presentation of an acceptable justification. Acceptable justifications do not include the following: weddings, vacation trips, family reunions, etc.

7. Final letter grades

The final letter grade will be determined by weighting attendance (15%), written assignments (25%), and exams (60%). Final grades will be assigned as follows:

95-100%=A  90-94%=A-  85-89%=B+  80-84%=B-  75-79%=C+  70-74%=C-  
60-69%=D  0-59%=F

## Academic Honesty

**Academic Honor:** Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process.

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who **plagiarizes**, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy. [**Note: This includes signing in for other students**].

**Plagiarism** is the use of copyrighted or others' materials without proper acknowledgement. It is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution and/or your expulsion from the university.

ALWAYS acknowledge the sources and materials that you use. If you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number in the text. If you paraphrase (use the ideas but not the exact words) or appropriate a concept or phrase, cite the author and year in the text.

Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy: (<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>).

## **ETIQUETTE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Try not to be persistently late for class. It disrupts the lecture and is inconsiderate of your fellow students. If you have special problems or schedule difficulties, see the instructor.

2. Unless you are ill, try to avoid going to the toilet and/or water fountain when class is in session. Again, it disrupts the lecture and is inconsiderate. If you have a problem or issue, see the instructor.

3. **LAPTOPS are permitted for note taking, unless they become bothersome to the instructor or other students**

3. **Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and expulsion from the class may result.** This includes but is not limited to:

- **reading newspapers and other material not related to the class**
- **personal grooming**
- **speaking inappropriately**
- **being rude to other class members or to the instructor**
- **using laptops for non-class related activities**
- **phone conversations**
- **gaming and texting**

4. If you are having difficulty understanding the material, please see the professor before the end of the term. Nothing can be done if you wait.

5. Keep up with the assignments. The readings require thought and careful consideration.

### Reading Assignments and Schedule\*

Date	Topic and Assignment
<b>8/25</b>	<b>Introduction to Course</b>
	<b>What Is Race?</b>
<b>8/27</b>	*American Anthropological Association "Statement on Race"
<b>9/1</b>	<b>Labor Day---No Class</b>
<b>9/3</b>	*Hirschman, "The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race"
	<b>Written Assignment #1 Due 9/3</b>
	<b>Who Is Black?</b>
<b>9/8</b>	Lee et al., "Beyond Black and White: Remaking Race in America"
	McClain, "Black by Choice: Identity Preferences of Americans of Black/White Parentage"
<b>9/10</b>	Fears "People of Color Who Never Felt They Were Black"
	Jackson, "Immigrants, Black"
	<b>Black Identity and Culture</b>
<b>9/15</b>	White et al., "Feeling the Pain of My People"
	Gussow, "Blues in African American Culture"
<b>9/17</b>	Brown, "Their Characteristics and Music: Thoughts on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture"
	Clay, "Keepin' It Real: Black Youth, Hip-Hop Culture, and Black Identity"
<b>9/22</b>	<b>Exam I---9/22 (Covers 8/27-9/17)</b>
	<b>Legacy of Slavery</b>
<b>9/24</b>	Pinkney, "Historical Background" (Pp 1-13)
<b>9/29</b>	Pinkney, "Historical Background" (Pp 13-20)
	<b>Jim Crow Segregation and the African American Response</b>
<b>10/1</b>	Pinkney, "Historical Background" (Pp 20--27)
	McLendon, "Harlem Renaissance"
	<b>Modern Civil Rights Movement</b>
<b>10/6 – 10/8</b>	Pinkney, "Chapter 2: The Persistence of Jim Crow and the Black Revolt" Pp. 36-60

### Reading Assignments and Schedule\*

Date	Topic and Assignment
	<b>Is the U.S. Colorblind?</b>
<b>10/13</b>	McArdle, "Sociologists on the Colorblind Question"
	OL: <a href="http://www.blackpeopleloveus.com/">http://www.blackpeopleloveus.com/</a> (Comical illustration of stereotyping)
	Oliver, "African American Men as Criminal and Dangerous"
<b>10/15</b>	Myers and Williamson, "Race Talk: Race Talk: The Perpetuation of Racism Through Private Discourse"
	Jones, "Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale"
	<b>Residential Segregation-I--Why Don't We Live Together?</b>
<b>10/20</b>	Denton, "Hypersegregation"
	PBS, "The Downward Spiral"
<b>10/22</b>	PBS, "Uncle Sam Lends a Hand"
	Pattillo-McCoy, "Negotiating Adolescence in a Black Middle-Class Neighborhood"
<b>10/27</b>	<b>Exam II---10/27 (Covers 9/24-10/22)</b>
	<b>Residential Segregation-II--Inner City Neighborhoods</b>
<b>10/29</b>	Harding, "Urban Poverty"
<b>11/3</b>	Logan, "Life and Death in the City: Neighborhoods in Context"
	<b>Education: Under and Over Achieving</b>
<b>11/5</b>	Anonymous "The Acting White Myth"
	Witt, School Discipline Tougher on African Americans (online—go to url below) <a href="http://www.chicagotribune.com/services/newspaper/printedition/tuesday/chi-070924discipline,0,5751354.story">http://www.chicagotribune.com/services/newspaper/printedition/tuesday/chi-070924discipline,0,5751354.story</a>
<b>11/10</b>	Carter, "Why the Black Kids Sit Together at the Stairs"
	Harper, "Realizing the Intended Outcomes of Brown"
<b>11/10</b>	<b>Assignment #2 Due 11/10</b>
	<b>The Economic System and African Americans</b>
<b>11/12</b>	Prager, Blacks and Ex-Cons Need not Apply
	Williams, "Shades of Black: Skin tone Outweighs Education for African Americans Seeking Jobs"
<b>11/17</b>	Shapiro, "The Racial Wealth Gap"
	PBS, "A Tale of Two Families"

### Reading Assignments and Schedule\*

Date	Topic and Assignment
	<b>Marriage and Family</b>
<b>11/19</b>	Pinderhughes, "African American Marriage in the 20th Century"
	Qian, " Breaking the Last Taboo: Interracial Marriage in America"
<b>11/24</b>	Edin and Kefalas, "Unmarried with Children"
	Connor and White, "Fatherhood in Contemporary Black America: An Invisible Presence"
<b>11/26</b>	<b>No Class----11/26</b>
	<b>Living and Dying in Black America</b>
<b>12/1</b>	Carr, "Black Death, White Death"
	Smith et al., "'Assume the Position... You Fit the Description:' Psychosocial Experiences and Racial
	Battle Fatigue Among African American Male College Students"
<b>12/3</b>	Gamble, "Under the Shadow of Tuskegee: African Americans and Health Care"
	Wade, "Race-Based Medicine Continued..."
<b>12/12</b>	<b>Exam III---10:00-11:15 a.m. (Covers 11/12012/3)</b>

\*Full citations for readings available from instructor.