

## AFAM 215: INTRODUCTION TO BLACK SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Fall 2011

Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:30 – 4:50pm

University Hall 122

Professor Mary Pattillo

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-6pm, 5-111 Crowe

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**Course Description:** This course is a survey of the contours of black life from the perspective of the social sciences. What is the black community, geographically speaking? Is that different from the *social* or *political* black community? What is the current condition of the black family and has it changed or stayed the same over time? How much wealth is in the black community, and how does that compare with the wealth of whites, or of Hispanics? Is African American leisure distinct from that of other groups? What are key concerns of black politics, and are they different with Obama as president? What divides and unites the black community? This course answers these questions using insights from sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, economics, history, and related fields. By studying the social relations, political agency, and economic practices of African Americans and other black folk in the diaspora, we will develop a more complex understanding of the forces, opportunities, and constraints operating within black communities.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are Wednesdays, 2-6 pm in 5-111 Crowe Hall. Follow the link below and sign up for no more than 3 consecutive 15-minute slots, depending on your estimate of how much time we'll need. You will need to have, or to sign up for, a Google account to access this tool (sorry for forcing you into Google). If you need to cancel the appointment, you can only do so through cancelling it on your own calendar. No need to send me any confirmation of the appointment you make. I will not be holding office hours on Oct 5 and Nov 2, but will make them up on Friday Oct 7 and Nov 4, respectively. During Reading Week my office hours will be Monday, Nov 28, from 10am – 1pm.

[https://www.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUxzNEw2UWFqVkJ2fGRIZmF1bHR8MjNINDU1OTA3OWQ2MWM0YWM2N2VIZWQwOTNINDdkZWU](https://www.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUxzNEw2UWFqVkJ2fGRIZmF1bHR8MjNINDU1OTA3OWQ2MWM0YWM2N2VIZWQwOTNINTdkZWU)

### Requirements and Evaluation:

- **Three take home exams** (25% each = 75% of final grade): On the Thursdays noted in the Class Schedule below you will be given 3 questions about the readings and lectures. You will choose 2 of the 3. Answers to each question should be written as 3-page, double-spaced essays. Exams must be submitted via blackboard by 11:59pm on the Sunday immediately following distribution.
- **Class Attendance & Participation** (25% of grade): Attendance at each class session is required and will be documented with sign-in sheets. Students are held responsible for signing in to document this course requirement. Signing in for another student or asking another student to sign your name to the class roster will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Students are expected to attend sessions promptly, and be prepared to discuss the materials in an analytical and critical manner. The Teaching Assistant will keep records of class discussion.
- **Extra Credit** (5% boost, or .2 points on 4pt scale): Write a 1-pg response paper (summary of key points and critique) to the REQUIRED lecture by Randall Kennedy on Nov 1 (place TBA, see syllabus). Due Nov 4 by 11:59 via Blackboard.
- **Late assignments will be downgraded one step per day late, e.g., A- to B+.** **No exceptions.**
- **Academic Integrity.** You are responsible for reading and complying with Northwestern's policies on Academic Integrity, [wcas.northwestern.edu/advising/academic.html](http://wcas.northwestern.edu/advising/academic.html). Evidence of dishonesty will result in disciplinary action.

## Required Readings:

- Joseph, Peniel. 2010. *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama*. New York : BasicCivitas,
- May, Reuben. 2008. *Living through the Hoop: High School Basketball, Race, and the American Dream*. New York: New York University Press,
- Pattillo, Mary. 2007. *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shapiro, Thomas. 2004. *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Norton.

All books are available at Norris University Bookstore and on reserve in the Main Library.

All articles and book chapters listed below that are NOT part of the required books above are available on Blackboard.

## Course Schedule and Assignments:

### Week 1 (9/20, 9/22): Course Introduction and Theories

- 9/20 Nobles, Melissa. 2000. "With... time, they will be white: Brazilian Censuses and National Identity." Chapter 3 in *Shades of Citizenship*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. "Racial Formation." Chapter 4 in *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- 9/22 Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2007. "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm." *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (1): 63-79.
- Von Eschen, Penny. 2001. "The Making of the Politics of the African Diaspora." Chapter 1 in *Race against Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

### Week 2 (9/27, 9/29): Families

- 9/27 *More than Just Race* by William Julius Wilson. Chapter 4.
- The Hidden Cost of Being African American* by Thomas Shapiro. Chapter 3.
- 9/29 Burton, Linda M. and M. Belinda Tucker. "Romantic Unions in an Era of Uncertainty: A Post-Moynihan Perspective on African American Women and Marriage." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 621: 132-148.
- Cahill, Sean, Juan Battle and Doug Meyer. 2003. "Partnering, parenting and policy: family issues affecting Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people." *Race & Society* 6: 85-98.

Week 3 (10/4, 10/6): Gender and Sexuality

10/4 Collins, Patricia Hills. 1989. "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought." *Signs* 14:745-773.

*Living through the Hoop*, Chapter 5.

*More than Just Race*, Chapter 3.

10/6 Mignon R. Moore. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32: 113-139.

Neptune, Harvey. 2007. "From Barefooted Men to Saga Boys: Gender, Class, and Clothes in Occupied Trinidad." Chapter 4 in *Caliban and the Yankees*. Durham: UNC Press.

Week 4 (10/11, 10/13): Class

10/11 *Black on the Block*, Intro, Chapter 2

Mark Q. Sawyer and Tianna S. Pasche. 2007. "We Didn't Cross the Color Line, The Color Line Crossed Us." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* / Volume 4 / Issue 02, pp 303 - 315

10/13 Class Cancelled - Time made up in extended class hours on 10/27 and 11/1

**\*\*Take-home exam #1 distributed. Due by 11:59pm, 10/16, via Blackboard.\*\***

Week 5 (10/18, 10/20): Work and Wealth

10/18 Green, Laurie. 2004. "Race, Gender, and Labor in 1960s Memphis: 'I Am A Man' and The Meaning of Freedom." *Journal of Urban History* 30: 465-489.

Edin, Kathy and Laura Lein. 1993. "Why don't Welfare-Reliant Mothers Work?" Chapter 3 in *Making Ends Meet*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Western, Bruce and Becky Pettit. 2002. "Beyond Crime and Punishment: Prisons and Inequality." *Contexts* 1: 37-44.

10/20 *The Hidden Cost of Being African American*, Chapters 1, 2, and 6

Week 6 (10/25, 10/27): Place

10/25 *More than Just Race*, Chapter 2.

*Black on the Block*. Chapters 1 and 6

10/27 \*PLAN TO STAY UNTIL 5:30. Class held in conjunction with African American Studies Department Seminar Series. "The Social and Economic Organization of Black Communities" with William Darity (Professor, Public Policy, African and African American Studies and Economics, Duke) and Alford Young (Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Chair Sociology, University of Michigan).

Small, Mario Luis. 2008. "Four Reasons to Abandon the Idea of 'The Ghetto'." *City and Community* 7(4):389-98.

Young, Alford. 2006. "Unearthing Ignorance: Hurricane Katrina and the Re-Envisioning of the Urban Black Poor." *Du Bois Review* 3: 203-213.

#### Week 7 (11/1, 11/3): Politics

11/1 \*PLAN TO STAY UNTIL 6:00.

\*Class to move at 4:30 to attend Davis Lecture given by Randall Kennedy. – Write Extra Credit due Friday, Nov 4 by 11:59 via Blackboard.

*Dark Days, Bright Nights*, Chapters 1 and 2

11/3 *Dark Days, Bright Nights*, Chapters 3 and 4

**\*\*Take-home exam #2 distributed. Due by 11:59pm, 11/6, via Blackboard.\*\***

#### Week 8 (11/8, 11/10): Education and Schools

11/8 *The Hidden Cost of Being African American*, Chapter 7

Bell Derrick. 2001. "Bell, J., dissenting." In *What Brown vs. Board of Education Should Have Said: The Nation's Top Legal Experts Rewrite America's Landmark Civil Rights Decision*, ed. JM Balkin. New York: New York University Press

11/10 Carter, Prudence. 2006. "Straddling Boundaries: Identity, Culture, and School." *Sociology of Education* 79: 304–328.

Payne, Charles. 2008. "Sympathy, Knowledge, and Truth: Teaching Black Children." Chapter 4 in *So Much Reform, So Little Change*. Harvard: Harvard Education Press.

#### Week 9 (11/15, 11/17): Leisure

11/15 *Living through the Hoop*, Intro, Chapters 1, 4, 7.

11/17 Iton, Richard. 2008. "Round Trips on the Black Star Line." Chapter 6 in *In Search of the Black Fantastic*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brooks, Daphne. 2003. "It's Not Right But It's Okay", *Souls*, 5:1, 32-45

Week 10 (11/22): New Directions

11/22 Jackson, John. 2008. "DeCardio Racism: Hunting for Racial Wolves in Sheep's Clothing." Chapter 3 in *Racial Paranoia*. New York: Basic.

Cohen, Cathy. 2004. "Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1: pp 27-45.

Womack, Ytasha. 2010. "Identity Theft." Introduction in *Post Black: How a New Generation Is Redefining African American Identity*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

**\*\*Take-home exam #3 will be posted on Blackboard on Thursday, Dec 1. Due by 11:59pm, Monday, December 5, via Blackboard.\*\***

*HAPPY WINTER BREAK!*