

**Department:** PSYC (Crosslisted with AFAM)

**Course No.:** 3106/W [270/W]

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Black Psychology

**Contact:** John Rickards

**Content Area:** CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

**Diversity:** CA4 Non-International

**WQ:** W

**Catalog Copy:** PSYC 270/W, Black Psychology, Fall Semester, 3 credits, PSYC 133/135 prerequisite and Consent of Instructor required. Empirical and theoretical literature on the psychological experiences of African Americans. Impact of race, culture, and ethnicity on psychological development.

**Course Information:**

**A.** This course is designed to provide students with a broad and general overview of the research and psychological experiences of people of African descent. It will explore psychological research, theoretical perspectives, and contemporary experiences within socio-cultural and historical contexts. It will also examine the impact of race, culture, gender, and sexuality on the experiences of Black people as well as cross-cultural and intergroup relations.

**B.** (1) Critical Analysis Papers (65% of grade)--The course requires 3 critical analysis papers. For each topic covered, several readings will be assigned and specific essay questions provided. The essay questions will prompt students to incorporate the readings, videos, and class discussions into a thoughtful, critical, and cogent position paper. The papers should be 5-6 pages in length. Feedback will be provided for each paper in the following areas (a) grammar and syntax, (b) organization and structure, and (c) clarity and quality of analysis. Students have the option of revising and resubmitting each of papers but will be required to revise and resubmit two of the three papers. (2) Final Exam (12% of grade)--The final exam is cumulative and consists of short answer essay questions. (3) Presentation and Annotated Bibliography(12% of grade)--Each student will be required to participate in a group project and presentation. The presentation should be accompanied by a 5-8 page annotated bibliography for the group. (4)Homework Assignments(6% of grade)--For each topic area, students are expected to generate a set of issues, concerns, or insights prompted by each of the readings. They will be required to turn in their insights at the beginning of each new topic area. In addition to the insights, several additional homework assignments will be given throughout the semester. (5) Class Participation(5% of grade)-- In class assignments, class discussions, and group projects will be presented. Students will also have an opportunity to participate through the use of WebCT.

C. The themes and topics covered in the course include historical representations of African Americans in psychology, theoretical models and critiques, racial and ethnic identity, socio-cultural factors, cross-cultural interactions, the experiences of people of African descent in the US versus the Caribbean and South America, and gender and sexuality issues.

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed.**: (1) Become articulate: Students will be given several opportunities to demonstrate articulate communication. First, they will be expected to demonstrate clear, cogent, and articulate writing in their critical analysis papers and weekly insight papers. Secondly, they will be expected to engage in articulate verbal expression through class discussions, group exercises, a group research project, and class presentation.

(2) Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility: Students will be exposed to a number of theories, models, and empirical research about the psychological experiences of African Americans that are not typically covered in most psychology courses. In addition, students will be expected to critique and critically evaluate both traditional psychological models and contemporary models as they pertain to people of African descent.

(3) Acquire critical judgment: Students will engage in critical thinking through the use of critical analysis papers, class discussions, group projects, and in class exercises. Students will also learn to distinguish between personal opinions and cogent positions.

(4) Acquire moral sensitivity: Students will be encouraged to engage in open, honest, and respectful dialogue. Because this course addresses issues such as race, class, and gender, students often make inappropriate and insensitive comments. In many cases, re-framing or challenging students to critically evaluate their opinions can produce new learning experiences. At all times, however, students are expected to provide a safe and respectful environment for their classmates and the instructor.

(5) Acquire awareness of their era and society and

(6) Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: Students will be exposed to historical information and contemporary socio-cultural contexts. They will also gain awareness and exposure to the social construction of race in South and Central America as well as regional differences in the United States.

**CA4 Criteria**: -(1) Emphasize that there are varieties of human experience, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity: Students will be exposed to various models, theories, and concepts related to race, culture, and individual differences and how these theories impact the psychological experiences of African Americans.

(2) Emphasize that interpretive systems and/or social structures are cultural creations: Students will be exposed to biological, evolutionary, social, and developmental theories or race, ethnicity, and culture. The course will focus primarily on the meaning of race and culture for people of African descent and the consequences of such models for African Americans and non-African Americans.

(3) Consider the similarities that may exist among diverse groups: Students will be expected to think critically about issues of race and culture. Students will be exposed to general models of racism and oppression as well as model specific to the experiences of African Americans. Through critical analysis papers, class discussion, and class presentations, students will be expected to discuss the implications of race, culture, and racism for African Americans.

(4) Develop and understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration: Students will be exposed to cultural and ethnic differences in the legacy of slavery for people of African descent in the United States, Caribbean, and South America as well as intergenerational differences.

(5) Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power in the context of any of the above four items: The course will focus on systems of oppression where race, gender, sexuality, and social class are discussed in the context of African American psychology. In addition to models of Black identity, White racial identity, multiracial experiences, and inter-group versus intra-group racial experiences will be discussed. The course will emphasize group differences as well as individual differences between and among African Americans and non-African Americans.

**International:** (1) The course focuses on issues of diversity/multiculturalism outside the United States: The course will discuss and compare the experiences of people of African descent in the United States with those in the Caribbean and South America.

(2) The course focuses on cultural continuities and transformations over time and place: The course will discuss the legacy of slavery, the social construction of race, and the meaning of Blackness for African Americans compared to people of African descent in South and Central America.

**W Criteria:** (1) The course requires 3 critical analysis papers that will account for 65% of the course grade. Students will be informed on the syllabus that they must pass the writing portion of the course in order to receive a passing grade for the course. For each topic covered, several readings will be assigned and specific essay questions provided. The essay questions will prompt students to incorporate the readings, videos, and class discussions into a thoughtful, critical, and cogent position paper. The papers should be 5-6 pages in length. The course will also include other writing assignments such as homework assignments, an annotated bibliography, and an essay final exam. Although all writing assignments will be graded on writing quality, the most substantive feedback will be given for the critical analysis papers.

(2) Students will be given a detailed format for writing critical analysis papers. Sample papers will be made available as well as a list of writing guides. Students will receive written feedback in two ways. First, comments will be placed directly on each student's paper with grammatical errors highlighted. Second, specific feedback will be provided in the following areas for each paper: (a) grammar and syntax, (b) organization and structure, and (c) clarity and quality of analysis. Specific errors will be identified and corrective feedback given. Students can also schedule individual appoints to discuss their papers both conceptually and structurally.

(3) Although students have the option of revising and resubmitting all three papers, they will be required to revise and resubmit at least two of the three papers for re-grading. The revised grade will replace the original grade. Students will have one week to revise their papers for resubmission.

**Role of Grad Students:** A graduate student assistant is not required for this course. However, a graduate student assistant may be assigned in order to gain experience teaching a diversity related course as well as a course with a writing requirement. If a graduate student is assigned to the course, he or she will be expected to attend a training workshop at the W Learning Center. His or her role will be to assist students in the conceptualization of their papers, improve writing quality, and incorporate the feedback given by the instructor. Other duties include keeping weekly office hours, grading homework assignments and class participation, and potentially lecturing for one or two topics. The graduate student will not be responsible for grading the critical analysis papers or the final exam.