

# STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

Sociology 666  
American Racism and the Black Community  
Fall 2006  
Call #6285

Professor  
Dr. H. D. Horton  
AS320  
442-4907

Office Hours  
M, T 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Class Meetings  
T 5:45-8:35 p.m.  
AS350

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“I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races--that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people, and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the black and white races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

-- *Abraham Lincoln, 1858.*

### Course Objectives:

The condition of African Americans in contemporary society is not simply a function of the *hierarchy of races* in the United States. To the contrary, the experience of blacks in American society has been and continues to be qualitatively distinct in terms of the level and nature of racism that impacts upon their everyday lives. Consequently, the purpose of this course is to examine American racism and its impact upon the black community. After an initial critique of the *failure* of sociology as a discipline to adequately address this phenomenon, the course focuses upon the manner in which racism is perpetrated and perpetuated against blacks via society's major institutions. A particular emphasis of the course will be the role of the federal government in fostering racism toward blacks historically and in contemporary times. Finally, the course examines the nature of the black community itself and its response to racism in the United States. The course concludes with an assessment of black community development as a viable means of addressing racism in America.

Texts: Billingsley, Andrew. 1999. Mighty Like A River: The Black Church and Social Reform

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo.2003. Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States.

Butler, John Sibley.2005. Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: A Reconsideration of Race and Economics.

DuBois, W.E.B. 1996 [1899]. The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study.

Hamer, Jennifer. 2001. What It Means to Be Daddy: Fatherhood for Black Men Living Away from Their Children.

Herring, Cedric, Verna Keith and Hayward Derrick Horton. 2004. Skin Deep: How Race and Complexion Matter in the Color-Blind Era.

Oliver, Melvin and Thomas Shapiro. 1995. Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality.

Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. 1999. Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Working Class

Ture, Kwame and Charles V. Hamilton. 1992. Black Power: The Politics of Liberation.

Washington, Robert E. and Donald Cunnigen (eds.) 2002. Confronting the American Dilemma of Race.

Course Requirements:

A. **Research Paper:** A paper on the topic of your choosing within the broad area of American racism and the black community is required. The paper must meet the following standards:

1. ASR format;
2. The paper must incorporate a considerable amount of the course readings (minimum of 50%);
3. A 2-3 page proposal must be submitted prior to beginning work on the paper. This proposal must detail the problem, theory and research methods of your proposed paper. **DEADLINE: September 12, 2006;**
4. 15-20 pages in length (excluding references, tables and figures);
5. **DEADLINE FOR PAPER: Tuesday, November 14, 2006.**

B. **Group Presentations:** Students will be organized into groups for the purpose of presenting and leading discussions on the assigned books.

C. **Paper Presentation:** Each student will be responsible for making an oral presentation of her/his research paper.

D. **Weekly Write-up:** Students will write a 2-3 page summary of their weekly readings. These must be placed on WebCT *prior* to each class meeting for credit.

**Prerequisites:** This is a Ph.D.-level special topics course in sociology. Consequently, it is expected that students have already taken, at a minimum, one graduate course in race and ethnicity. This background is not only expected, it is *absolutely necessary* to gain full benefit of what this course has to offer. Students without this background should consult with the professor as to the advisability of their remaining in the course.

Grading

Research Paper	25%
Group Presentation	25%
Paper Presentation	25%
Weekly Write-up	25%

## Course Outline

### **I. The Roots of Racism in American Society**

#### A. A Critical Look at Racism in the Field of Sociology Washington and Cunnigen (in its entirety)

Horton "Toward A Critical Demography of Race and Ethnicity: Introduction of the "R" Word" (class handout)

#### B. Racism and the Social Structure, Part I

Dubois, The Philadelphia Negro (in its entirety)

Herring, "Skin Deep: Race and Complexion in the 'Color-Blind' Era," Chapter 1 in Skin Deep.

Horton and Sykes, "Toward a Critical Demography of Neo-Mulattoes: Structural Change and Diversity Within the Black Population," Chapter 8 in Skin Deep.

#### C. Racism and the Social Structure, Part II.

Ture, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation (in its entirety)

Bonilla-Silva, "From Bi-Racial to Tri-Racial: The Emergence of a New Racial Stratification System in the United States," Chapter 11 in Skin Deep.

Bowman et al. "Skin Tone, Class and Racial Attitudes Among African Americans," Chapter 7 in Skin Deep.

### **II. Racism and the Everyday Lives of Black Americans**

#### A. Lifestyles, Life Chances and Racism

Patillo-McCoy. Black Picket Fences (in its entirety)

Hunter, "Light Bright and Almost White: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Light Skin," Chapter 2 in Skin Deep.

Thompson and Keith, "Copper Brown and Blue Black: Colorism and Self Evaluation," Chapter 3 in Skin Deep.

## B. Racism and the Access to Wealth

Butler, Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans (in its entirety)

Oliver and Shapiro, Black Wealth/White Wealth (in its entirety)

Edwards, et al., “For Richer, For Poorer, Whether Dark or Light: Skin Tone, Marital Status, and Spouse’s Earnings,” Skin Deep.

## III. The Black Family and the Black Church

Hamer, What it Means to be Daddy (in its entirety)

Dalmage, “Mama, Are You Brown? Multiracial Families and the Color Line,” Chapter 5 in Skin Deep.

Billingsley, Mighty Like a River (in its entirety)

## V. Contemporary Issues in Racism

Bonilla-Silva, Racism without Racists (in its entirety)

Ebert, “Demystifying Color-Blind Ideology: Denying Race, Ignoring Racial Inequalities,” Chapter 9 in Skin Deep.

Rockquemore and Brusma. “Beyond Black? The Reflexivity of Appearances in Racial Identification Among Black/White Biracials,” Chapter 6 in Skin Deep.

Penha-Lopes, “Race South of the Equator: Reexamining the Intersection of Color and Class in Brazil,” Chapter 10 in Skin Deep.

Horton, “A Sociological Approach to Black Community Development: Presentation of the Black Organizational Autonomy Model.” [www.albany.edu/~hdh](http://www.albany.edu/~hdh).

## VI. Student Paper Presentations