

Fall 2019
 AAS 331/ Psychology 316
 World of the Black Child
 T, Th 11:30-1:00 pm
 B247 East Hall

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 Office: 2016 East Hall
 Office Hours: Thursday 10-11:00 am
 & by appt

WORLD OF THE BLACK CHILD

Course Content

This course has three objectives: (a) to introduce key areas of research and theory about the socialization and development of African American children; (b) to facilitate critical thinking about this body of literature; and (c) to consider research and theory about the socialization and development of African American children in relation to social policy and current issues in public discourse. The course focuses on the impact of economic, structural, cultural, and family factors on the development of poor and middle-class African American children. It reflects an emphasis on both problematic development and resilience, and gives attention to social policy and interventions that can potentially improve the lives of African American children and their families. The specific issues that we will address are identified in the syllabus for each week of the course, stated in the form of questions. The list of questions, the readings, and my lectures, are closely linked. These questions are intended to help you approach the readings in an active, systematic and deliberate way and to *inform you of the issues you should be able to address thoughtfully and critically as a result of taking this course.*

Course Readings

Readings are on Canvas. They consist primarily of three types: (a) book chapters, (b) review/conceptual papers (to give you a broad overview of the current knowledge base, issues, constructs, and research traditions characterizing a particular field of study), and (c) data-based papers representing different research methods (e.g., survey, interview, participant observation) (to give you a sense of how an investigation is actually conducted and written up). The authors of most papers are psychologists and sociologists.

Before you begin the readings for the week, review the questions that we will be discussing that week (shown on the syllabus). The questions will orient you to the readings and the key issues that they address. ***Read to understand, not to memorize!*** You should also reflect on, analyze, and critique the readings so that you are well-positioned to participate in class discussion.

Below are some questions that you may want to consider in your reflections on the readings:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the authors' work?
- What surprised you? Was anything presented in the readings unexpected or in conflict with your prior knowledge?
- What new ideas or insights did you gain from the readings?
- What points or ideas did you not understand?
- Are there points or ideas in the readings that you can apply to your activities or your life more generally?
- How do the issues addressed in the readings connect to your personal experiences or research/career interests?

- What ideas, if any, presented in the readings have implications for policies and practices?
- How do the ideas presented in the readings relate to controversial or salient issues in popular media? Do the readings resolve any of these issues in popular media?

I will make adjustments in the reading assignments as needed throughout the semester, though I expect that such changes will be minimal. Any changes will be announced as far in advance as possible. If you need to contact me by e-mail, ***please make sure to put “AAS 331/Psych 316” in the subject line.***

Class Format

On Tuesday, I will give a lecture that introduces each topic, providing background information and highlighting key issues and important research findings. In most cases, I will integrate some of the required readings as well as additional materials not on the reading list. Thursday will be devoted primarily to discussion and other activities (e.g., viewing videos, etc.). Several methods will be used to facilitate active engagement on both class days (e.g., writing a brief response to a video or article, preparing a question based on an article).

PowerPoint slides for my weekly lecture(s) can be downloaded from Canvas at least 24 hours before class. Please print them out and bring them to class, along with the required readings. You can then write notes on your hard copy as you process points made during lectures and discussions. Lecture slides will be posted on Canvas, but if you miss a class, you are responsible for getting from another student any notes or materials handed out in class but not posted on Canvas. Get to know your classmates so that they can be a resource for you and vice versa.

Classroom Decorum and Use of Laptops and Cell Phones

Please be courteous, show respect for the ideas, opinions, and experiences of others, and refrain from side conversations. ***USE OF LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES DURING CLASS IS NOT PERMITTED.*** My primary rationale for this policy is based on experimental research showing that (a) students who use laptops during class for note-taking (or other purposes), compared to those who use pen and paper for note-taking, have substantially worse understanding of lecture material and (b) the learning of students seated near a laptop user is also negatively affected. A short article summarizing this research, written by Susan Dynarski, Professor of Public Policy, Education and Economics at the University of Michigan, appeared in *The New York Times* on November 22, 2017. It is posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete three exams and a group project (which consists of 3 components—a proposal, paper, and group presentation, described below). You are also expected to attend class and participate in classroom discussion on a regular basis, both of which will count toward your grade. The maximum point value for each of these components is shown below **(maximum total = 300 points).**

(a) Exams (180 points—60%). Exams will cover course content presented in lectures, readings, videos, and discussions and each will be worth a maximum of 60 points. They will consist of a combination of multiple choice, and short-answer and/or essay questions. Exam #1 on **Thursday, September 26th** will cover course material in Modules 1-4. Exam #2 on **Tuesday, October 29th** will cover course material in Modules 5-8. Exam #3 on **Tuesday, December 17th (4-6 pm)**

(examination period) will cover course material in Modules 9-12. A week prior to the each exam, I will distribute a study guide to help you prepare for the exam.

(b) Group Project (75 points—25%). The group project must focus on some aspect of African American children's experiences and development. The goal is to expand your insight into the complexity of forces that influence African American children's development. You will sign up for a group (3-4 students) based on your topic of interest. Sample topics include (but are not limited to): disciplinary policies and enforcement in schools; parental use of physical punishment; physical health and child health behaviors; beauty, body image, and colorism; community violence and mental health; boarding schools for low-income African American children; transracial adoption; representations of Black youth in the media.

Your group may choose one of the following options (or propose additional options), though keep in mind that some options may be better suited for particular topics:

Option 1: Classroom Debate

The group selects a topic and presents ideas and perspectives on the topic in a debate format. The group presents both a pro perspective (e.g., advocate a position) and a con perspective (i.e., refute the position) (half can present the pro perspective; the other half the con perspective), while also noting important points of agreement and common ground. Debate groups are expected to present well-developed arguments that are supported by research and scholarly work. The debate *MUST* be based on more than your personal opinions.

Option 2: Community Involvement Project

The group designs a community project that provides a service or benefits an organization in southeast Michigan dedicated to serving African American youth and other youth of color, or whose prosocial mission focuses on issues that disproportionately affect African American youth, youth of color, or communities of color. The goal is to give students an opportunity to apply course material outside of the classroom in ways that may influence individuals' lives and communities. For example, students may design a workshop (based on goals and rationales grounded in an understanding of black child development and the organization's mission and principles), help with an upcoming event or fundraiser, or design promotional materials for an organization. Potential organizations include Peace Neighborhood Center (Ann Arbor), Black Girls Code (Detroit), Big Brothers/Big Sisters (Washtenaw County, Metropolitan Detroit), My Brother's Keeper (Washtenaw County, Detroit), and Black Lives Matter. After-school programs are also an option. The group should make sure that the project chosen is feasible and focused on children or adolescents.

Option 3: Technology-based Community Activism

The group uses a technology to explicate issues relevant to African American children/youth. The project must be well-developed (i.e., more than a videotaped skit), well-documented, and informed by available statistics AND relevant research and scholarship. It should go beyond personal opinions and bring together information in a format that is creative and compelling. As an example, a group might develop a brief (i.e., 15 minutes or so) documentary highlighting critical issues pertinent to the topic. Fair use permits limited use of copyrighted materials (e.g., existing video footage, photography, movie clips, archival content) without acquiring permission from the rights holders if it is used for nonprofit educational purposes.

Group Project Requirements:

1. **Proposal.** A 1-2 page proposal stating the project's topic, the option chosen, group members, and what the group plans to do is due in class on Thursday, October 10th. Each group should submit one proposal.
2. **Paper.** For all group options, *each group member* is required to write a 5-page paper (due on the day of the presentation) that describes lessons learned from the experience, and critically analyzes these lessons in relation to course materials (i.e., readings, lectures, video, etc). Note that what you learned from the experience may be consistent with or challenge (or both) material presented in readings, lectures, videos, etc. A strong paper will probe these issues and reflect on the meaning of both consistencies and inconsistencies **(50 out of 75 points)**
3. **Group Presentation.** Each group is required to do a 20-25 minute presentation that describes and analyzes their project (i.e., what was done, lessons learned, how project extended insight into processes that influence African American children's development). The presentation should be structured and carefully prepared, ideally supported by suitable media (e.g., PowerPoint, video) **(25 out of 75 points, 10 of which will be based on your group members' evaluations of your contributions).**

Start work on your project **early** to make sure you understand the assignment, can ask questions in class, and have time to make contacts and discuss your ideas with representatives of organizations if you choose Option 2. It is also important that you build in time to prepare and revise/polish your paper and presentation.

(c) Attendance and Classroom Participation (45 points—15%). Student attendance and active participation are expected (make sure to sign-in at the beginning of each class) and count toward your grade. Assessment of your participation will be based on a combination of class attendance, engagement in discussion (both quality and quantity), and involvement in other classroom activities throughout the semester. Regular attendance will give you additional exposure to course material and provide an opportunity to have your questions answered (and to hear the questions of others). Please complete the assigned readings for the week prior to coming to class on Tuesday.

Grading Policy. The course is not graded on a curve. Your final grade is based on the percentage of total points earned on the exams, group project, attendance, and class participation. The grading scale is as follows: **A+** = 97-100%; **A** = 93-96%; **A-** = 90-92%; **B+** = 87-89%; **B** = 83-86%; **B-** = 80-82%; **C+** = 77-79%; **C** = 73-76%; **C-** = 70-72%; **D+** = 67-69%; **D** = 63-66%; **D-** = 60-62%; **F** = below 60%.

I want everyone to do well in the course. To be successful, come to class, keep up with the readings, ask questions and contribute to discussion, and plan your time carefully so that you are well-prepared for exams and can hand in high-quality work on time. If you are having problems with the course material or if you did poorly on an exam, come to my office hours or make an appointment as soon as possible to discuss possible remedies. Don't wait until the end of semester!

Accommodations

If you require accommodations for a special need, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work out the necessary arrangements.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to abide by the University of Michigan Code of Academic Integrity. University guidelines with regard to plagiarism, cheating, and academic misconduct will be enforced. The consequences of academic misconduct are grave (e.g., failing grade for the test, the assignment, and possibly the course). Don't do it!

Policy Regarding Make-up Exams

Please read very carefully the following policy regarding make-up exams, as it has important implications for your grade in the course:

- (a) A make-up exam will be granted **only** in the event of an illness (yours) or an emergency (e.g., death/funeral of family member) that prevents completion of the exam on the date shown in the syllabus;
- (b) In the case of illness, you must have seen a doctor or nurse close to or on the date the exam was to be completed;
- (c) Your visit with a health professional must be **documented** (memo from health professional, etc.).
- (d) If you have an irresolvable (and legitimate!) scheduling conflict (e.g., death/funeral of family member) that prevents completion of your exam on the scheduled date (this too must be documented), let me know in **advance** of the exam and I will work with you to make arrangements to accommodate your needs.

If you do not follow these procedures, understand in advance that you will **not** be granted a make-up exam (by not taking the exam, you essentially fail the exam). All of us are under time pressures and have to juggle multiple demands. We must find ways to manage our time and activities in order to fulfill our commitments. The grade you receive for this course depends on the seriousness with which you take its requirements and how well you fulfill those requirements. As the instructor of this course, I am entrusted to hold everyone to the same standards and procedures. To do otherwise is unfair to students who meet their responsibilities.

Another reason that I grant makeup exams only in the event of an emergency is that giving them requires that I write an entirely **new** exam. A make-up exam will consist of different questions and, possibly, be written in a different format, than the regularly scheduled exam, although both will cover the same material. This is to ensure that individuals taking the makeup exam do not have an unfair advantage as a result of knowing the content of the regularly scheduled exam.

Overview of Important Dates and Deadlines

Thursday, September 26 – **Exam #1**

Thursday, October 10 – **Group Project Proposal Due**

Tuesday, October 15 – **No Class – Fall Break**

Thursday, October 31 – **Exam #2**

Tuesday, December 3 – **Project Paper and Group Presentation**

Thursday, December 5 – **Project Paper and Group Presentation**

Tuesday, December 10 – **Project Paper and Group Presentation**

Tuesday, December 17, 4-6 pm – **Exam #3**

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Module 1 – September 3, 5

The Ecological Context of Black Child Development

What is the nature of the ecological system within which all children develop? How does race shape processes at each level of the ecological system?

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2009). Ecological models of human development. In M. Gauvain & M. Cole (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children* (5th edition, pp. 14-19). New York: Worth Publishers.

McLoyd, V. C., Hardaway, C., & Jocson, R. (2019). African American parenting. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Social conditions and applied parenting* (Vol. 4, 3rd ed). New York: Routledge, pp. 57-61

Module 2 – September 10, 12

Economic Context and the Health Status of African American Children

What factors explain racial disparities in poverty, socioeconomic status, and wealth? What are the implications of these racial disparities for African American children's physical and psychological well-being?

Lee, T. (2019, August 18). The wealth gap: The 1619 Project. *New York Times Magazine*. p. 83.

Pew Research Center (Author). (2016, June 27). Demographic trends and economic well-being: Chapter 1, pp. 18-29. In *On views of race and inequality, Blacks and Whites are worlds apart*. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/>

Seith, D., & Kalof, C. (2011). *Who are America's poor children? Examining health disparities by race and ethnicity*. New York: Columbia University National Center for Children in Poverty.

Module 3 – September 17

Structural and Interpersonal Racism as a Context for Socialization and Development

What is the difference between structural racism and interpersonal racism? How do Blacks and Whites differ (a) in their perceptions of how Blacks are treated in the US and (b) in their explanations for racial inequality in economic well-being? Why do these perceptions and explanations matter?

Video: Prime Time Live – True Colors

Video: Field Experiment – Racial Bias in Hiring

Tatum, B. (1997). "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" *And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 1: Defining racism.

Pew Research Center (Author). (2016, June 27). *On views of race and inequality, Blacks and Whites are worlds apart*. Overview, pp. 4-12. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/>

Capital Ideas. (2003). *Racial bias in hiring: Are Emily and Brenda more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? Research by Marianne Bertrand*. Univ of Chicago Graduate School of Business, p. 1-4.

Module 4 – September 19, 24

Patterns of Racial Socialization among African American Parents

What do African American parents teach their children about what it means to be Black in America? Do they impart messages about both interpersonal racism and structural racism? What factors influence African American parents' racial socialization practices? Do these practices influence African American children's psychological development?

Tatum, B. (1997). "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" *And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 3: The early years: "Is my skin brown because I drink chocolate milk?"

Coard, S., & Sellers, R. (2005). African American families as a context for racial socialization. In V. C. McLoyd, Hill, N., & Dodge, K. (Eds.), *African American Family Life: Ecological and Cultural Diversity*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 264-284.

September 26 – EXAM #1

Module 5 – October 1, 3

Self Esteem and Racial Identity Development

When African American children show a preference for White over Black (e.g., dolls, hypothetical playmates), does that mean that they want to be White and how low self-esteem because they are Black? What is the relation between self-esteem and racial identity in African American children? Given the stigma associated with being Black, why is the self-esteem of African Americans so high? Are there negative consequences of strategies used to maintain high self-esteem?

Video: CNN: Color Bias in Children

Tatum, B. (1997). "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" *And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 4: Identity development in adolescence.

McAdoo, H. P. (2002). The village talks: Racial socialization of our children. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black children: Social, education, and parental environments* (pp. 47-55). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crocker, J., & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma. *Psychological Review*, 96, 608-630.

Module 6 – October 8, 10

Racial Gaps in Academic Performance: Peers, Parents, Teachers, and Schools

Does peer pressure against "acting White" contribute to school underachievement among African American children? If so, is this pressure rooted in African Americans' status as a "castelike" minority group? Is underachievement among African American students more the result of the burden of "being Black" than the burden of "acting White"?

Video: CNN—The Gap: 50 Years After the Brown Ruling

Kurtz-Costes, B., Swinton, A., & Skinner, O. (2013). Racial and ethnic gaps in the school performance of Latino, African American, and White Students. In F. Leong et al. (Eds.). *APA handbook of multicultural psychology* (Vol 1, pp. 231-244). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Diamond, J., & Huguley, J. (2011). Black/White disparities in educational outcomes: rethinking issues of race, culture, and context. In N. E. Hill, T. Mann, & H. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *African American children and mental health* (pp. 63-93). Santa Barbara: Praeger.

October 15 – NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Module 7 – October 17

Stereotype Threat and Academic Performance

How do negative stereotypes about the intellectual abilities of African Americans affect African Americans' performance on achievement tests? Why do some African American children increasingly disidentify with academic achievement as they progress through the grades?

Steele, C. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613-627.

Module 8 – October 22, 24

Parenting, Schooling, Achievement Ideology, and the Reproduction of Racial Inequality

What roles do schools and parents play in the reproduction of racial inequality? What are the psychological consequences of embracing the achievement ideology but failing to achieve one's occupational and educational aspirations? Does the more covert nature of structural inequality encourage African American youth to blame themselves for falling short of their aspirations?

Stephens, N., Markus, H., & Phillips, L. (2014). Social class culture cycles: How three gateway contexts shape selves and fuel inequality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 611-634.

McLoyd, V. C., Hardaway, C., & Jocoson, R. (2019). African American parenting. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Social conditions and applied parenting* (Vol. 4, 3rd ed). New York: Routledge (pp. 63-73, section on behavioral control).

October 29 -- EXAM #2

Module 9 – October 31, November 5

Neighborhoods and Middle-Class African American Youth Development: Why Race Still Matters

*Black middle-class neighborhoods are characterized by more poverty, higher crime, worse schools, and fewer services than White middle-class neighborhoods. Does racial inequality in neighborhood characteristics help explain why Black children born into middle-income families are twice as likely as middle-income White children to be **downwardly mobile**? In what ways does neighborhood*

quality influence how Black middle-class parents raise their children and how their children develop? What are the distinctive choices and challenges that black middle-class youth experience?

Pattillo, M. (2013). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the black middle class*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Introduction (pp. 1-12); Chapters 1, 5-6.

Eligon, J., & Gebeloff. (2016). Affluent and black, and still trapped by segregation. *New York Times*, Aug 20, Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/us/milwaukee-segregation-wealthy-black-families.html>. A link to this article is on Canvas under the “Announcement” tab.

Module 10 – November 7, 12

Development of Black Boys and Young Men: Special Challenges

*Why is the Black-White gap in **upward mobility** driven largely by differences in males’, not females’ outcomes? Do African American boys face unique challenges to school readiness and academic achievement? Is there something unique about the obstacles that Black boys and young men face?*

Badger, E., Miller, C., Pearce, A., & Quealy, K. (2018). Extensive data shows punishing reach of racism for Black boys. *New York Times*, March 19. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html>. A link to this article is on Canvas under the “Announcement” tab.

Barbarin, O., Murry, V., Tolan, P., & Graham, S. (2016). Development of boys and young men of color: Implications of developmental science for My Brother’s Keeper Initiative. *Social Policy Report*, 29(3), (pp. 1-11; skim pp. 1-4).

November 14 - PBS Video – American Promise

Module 11 – November 19, 21

Psychological and Academic Resilience among African American Children and Youth

How does the concept of resilience differ from the concept of positive development? How are risk, protective, and promotive factors defined? What experiences, attitudes, and beliefs distinguish African American children who achieve academic excellence and attain high levels of education despite immense hardships?

Werner, E. E. (1989, April). Children of the garden island. *Scientific American*, 260(4), 106-111.

Hrabowski, F., Maton, K., & Grief, G. (1998). *Beating the odds: Raising academically successful African American males*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1: Successful African American males and their families (esp. pp. 10-21); Chapter 3: Mother-son relationships: The mother’s voice.

Abelev, M. (2009). Advancing out of poverty: Social class worldview and its relation to resilience. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(1), 114-141.

Module 12 – November 26**Promoting Interracial Dialogue and Understanding of Structural Contributions to Racial Inequalities**

Why is understanding structural contributions to racial inequalities important? Can this understanding be fostered? What policies do analysts propose to address these inequalities?

Jaschik, S. (2018). “White kids.” Author discusses her new study [*White kids: Growing up with privilege in racially divided America*] of how White children develop ideas about race. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/08/28/author-discusses-her-new-book-how-white-children-develop-ideas-about-race>. A link to this article is on Canvas under the “Announcement” tab.

Gurin, P., Sorensen, N., Lopez, G., & Nagda, B. (2015). Intergroup dialogue: Race still matters. In R. Bangs & L. E. Davis (Eds.), *Race and social problems: Restructuring inequality*. New York: Springer.

December 3, 5, 10 – GROUP PRESENTATIONS**Tuesday, December 17 (4-6 pm) - EXAM #3**