WORLD OF THE BLACK CHILD

This course has two objectives. They are, first, to introduce key areas of research and theory related to the socialization of African-American children and second, to facilitate critical thinking regarding this body of research and theory. The course will focus on cultural and situational forces which affect the lives of African-American lower- and middle-class children in the United States. In order to highlight the factors which contribute to the social conditions of the African-American child, a section of the course will look at the lives of specific individuals through their personal accounts and will compare the converging and diverging features of the socialization of African-American children and South African children. Topics to be discussed will include (1) family, peers, and community socialization, (2) the development of a sense of self and racial identification, (3) portrayal of African-Americans in books for children, (4) school achievement and intellectual development, (5) language development, (6) teenage pregnancy, and (7) welfare, poverty, and father absence.

BOOKS AND ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL

You are required to purchase the following two paperbacks:


These books have been ordered through the local bookstores. You are also required to purchase a course-pack from Albert's Copy Center.

EXAMS

You will be required to complete two take-home essay exams, each of which will count equally towards your grade. For each exam, you will probably be asked to prepare a three page answer for each of two or three essay questions. I will hand out the mid-term exam on Thursday, October 29 and your prepared answers will be due the following Tuesday, November 3. I will hold special office hours during the week of the exam to consult with any students who have questions. If your exam is late, the maximum score you can receive on the exam will drop automatically 5 points for each day the exam is late. For example, if you handed in your exam on Wednesday, one day after the exam was due and made a perfect score of 50, you would receive only 45 points. If you handed in your exam on Thursday, two days after the exam was due and made a perfect score of 50, you would receive only 40 points. Obviously, it is to
your advantage to hand in your exam by the announced deadline. Extensions without this penalty will not be made under any circumstances.

Your exams must be typed and I expect them to be well-prepared in a grammatical sense, as well as reflect an in-depth understanding of the course readings and lectures. Papers that are poorly prepared (e.g. full of misspelled words, typographical errors, incomplete sentences) and superficial in their analyses will result in a low grade.

In addition, you are required to write a 10-12 page paper on development, social policy, or social issues as they relate to Black children. You must talk with me prior to preparation of the paper. I may be able to help you narrow your topic, provide references, make suggestions about the organization of the paper, etc. In terms of preparing your paper and even your exams, you are encouraged to contact the writing workshop of the Comprehensive Studies Program, 1018 Angell Hall, if you believe you need help with your writing. Finally, you are expected to be prepared to discuss, challenge, and evaluate the reading materials assigned for each class period. Discussion which draws on your personal experiences and your understanding of the readings will make for an interesting, stimulating, and intellectually rewarding course.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Introduction

September 15, 17


II. The Determinants of Childrearing Practices in Afro-American Families: The Interplay of Economic Stress, Racism, and Culture

September 22, 24

A. Overview


September 29, October 1

B. The Socialization of Black Girls


October 6, 8

C. The Socialization of Black Boys


October 13, 15

D. Critique of Existing Research on Black Child Socialization


October 20, 22

E. The Etiology and Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy in the Black Community


October 27, 29

F. Poverty, Welfare, and Black Child Socialization


MID TERM DUE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3

November 3, 5


November 10, 12

H. Growing Up in an Afro-American Versus American Society: Points of Convergence and Divergence

Film: LAST GRAVE IN DIMBAZA


November 17

I. Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and the Portrayal of Blacks in Books for Children


III. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

November 19, 24

J. A Macro-Structural and Cultural Analysis of Black Underachievement.


Also review Ogbu's chapter, "A Cultural Ecology of Competence Among Inner-City Blacks," especially pp. 54-66. (See p. 2 of syllabus)