



Sociology 307: African American Social Thought

Fall 2004

Dr Scott Schaffer

Class Meetings: Mon/Wed 430pm to 545pm, McComsey 303

Office Hours: MTWTh 1230pm to 2pm or by appointment

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Caveat: You should note that *this course is not designed to be a lecture course*. My teaching philosophy, described in fuller detail below, is one that asks you to meet me halfway – to come to class having read the material thoroughly (not just turning the pages, but having thought about the materials), developed ideas and questions about the readings, and being ready to discuss these materials at more than a surface level. If you do that, I will provide you with everything you will need to succeed in the course. *But if you are looking for a course that is just lecture-based, where all you do is memorize and regurgitate, this is not the course for you.*

Course Description:

This course is designed to serve as an exploration of the history of African-American social thought since the establishment of the American Republic. As most of you know (and the rest will find out soon enough), one of the major criticisms of the history – and the present – of the United States is its entrenched institutional racism, which appears in a number of guises, ranging from slavery and segregation in the past, to discrimination and hate crimes in the present. Much of African-American social thought represents different attempts to grapple with the fact of American institutional racism and its changing face, and the diversity of viewpoints and perspectives we will encounter here will reflect the diverse manifestations of this racism.

There will be a variety of ways in which we will embark on this exploration. The first, of course, is to examine those texts that could be called “social theory” that have been written by African-Americans, and most classes might go no further. Given the history of African-Americans in the US, though, this would be a nearly impossible task; African-American sociology did not appear as sociology until the late 1890s and early 1900s, which would leave nearly 120 years of this field unexamined. Because of this, we will explore *theoretically motivated writings* by African-Americans, and in particular, we will look at the relationships between these theoretical writings and the different social movements that arose to counter American institutional racism.

This class represents a kind of “social theory from below” – an examination of the development of theoretical understandings of the world from a subaltern or subordinate position in the world. The course has two fundamental premises, with which your continued attendance in the course represents an agreement: first, that institutional racism exists in a variety of guises and requires a variety of responses in both social-theoretical and practical ways; and second, that the experiences and insights of the people on the short end of the American stick are as instructive as those of dominant groups in our society. Given these premises, this course is dedicated not to whether or not these theorists and participants in social movements are “right” or “wrong” in

some kind of objective sense, but instead is dedicated to understanding the importance of changing the American social structure to bring about new forms of social justice, and to understanding the relationship between social theory and social praxis.

On occasion, this course may be difficult for some of you, either because of the intensity of the readings, what the readings say about your understanding of American society in the past or present, or because of the discussions that may occur in class. However, I firmly believe that your continued participation in and dedication to this course will benefit all of us. America's history still plays out today, and we help play it out - better to understand that as best we can than to ignore the state of affairs today.

Course Readings:

The following books are required readings, and can be purchased at the campus bookstore, or online at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, or another reputable online bookseller. Please make sure that you purchase them in order, and get the specified edition, which is listed below.

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave & Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (abbreviated NLFD or ILSG, depending on which one we're reading)

Wilson Jeremiah Moses (ed.), *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey* (abbreviated CBN)

Howard Brotz (ed.), *African-American Social & Political Thought, 1850-1920* (abbreviated AASPT)

William L Van Deburg (ed.), *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (abbreviated MBN)

Recommended: Herb Boyd (ed.), *Autobiography of a People* (abbreviated AP)

There will also be a number of journal articles and other documents available that will be required reading. These will be placed on eReserve and/or the Blackboard web site for your downloading convenience. When assigned, you must complete these, regardless of where they are put.

Course Assignments:

There will be five different types of assignments required for this course. **Failure to complete all assignments in the timeframe allotted will result in your failure in the course.**

BlackBoard Discussion: Starting in the second week of the course, you will participate in online discussions with your classmates through the Blackboard system. This system will enable you to post discussion questions and responses to others' questions and responses at any time. You are required each week to post *two discussion questions* and *two responses to others' questions or responses to posted questions*. You are also strongly encouraged to respond to the responses your question gets - after all, it is discussion. You must post *one* discussion question prior to the Mon class session, and another prior to Weds' class; the responses to the posted questions will go through the entire week. The questions that are posted will be used as the basis for discussion in Weds class sessions. Each question you post will receive either an "A" or "F": if it produced a discussion germane to the course issues, it receives an A; if it didn't... Likewise, each response you make to another's question or response should be germane and utilize course readings (with citations, if possible); if it is, it will receive an A... Also, **failure to post the two required questions and two required responses will result in an F for the week.**

Examinations: There will be two examinations in this course: a midterm examination in week 8, and a final examination during the regularly scheduled exam period. Both exams will be essay-based, and preparatory questions will be given to you a week in advance of the examination date. The final examination will be cumulative.

Research Project: There will be a semester-long research project required of you during the semester. The assignment for this project will be given out in week 3, and the paper itself will be due in week 14. The paper will require you to pursue outside research, and certain elements of the project will be submitted during the semester to keep you on task.

Pop Quizzes: During the term, I reserve the right to give you up to four (4) pop quizzes. These quizzes, which will cover the readings up to and including the class session in which they're given, will be short-answer based and ask you to discuss certain elements of the readings. In general, these will be given after a class session that does not "go well," i.e., in which the class participates very little in discussion. You have it in your ability to stave off these quizzes; following the recommendations in the syllabus can ensure that this happens.

Course Participation. As always, your participation in this course is crucial to your success here. I take "participation" as *anything that indicates your desire to succeed in the course*. On some days, that may be simply showing up to class, taking notes, and asking questions; on other days, that might involve leading discussion on the readings assigned for that day. It can also involve posing questions in class, during office hours, or via email - in other words, all of the things you're supposed to be doing anyway. My teaching philosophy is such that the success and enjoyment of this course is incumbent on you doing your "job" - coming to class having read the assigned materials, thinking about the readings, and preparing germane and interesting things to say during discussions and questions you have on the materials. If you are unwilling to do that, you will want to find another course to take.

Grade Breakdown:

Please note that I do not grade on a "points" basis; all grades for this course will be letter grades with +/- modifiers, and will be converted into GPA equivalents and weighted for the purposes of figuring out your final grade in the course.

Midterm Examination	10%
Research Project	30%
Pop Quizzes	10%
Blackboard Discussion	15%
Final Examination	20%
Course Participation	15%

Course Policies:

Attendance and Preparation: Your attendance in each class session is mandatory - you cannot expect to do well in this course, or any other university course, without being in class. Not only are you expected and required to be in class every day, you are also expected to have read the material, to have thought about the readings, and to be ready to discuss the readings and pose questions. If you are unable to attend on a particular day, you *must* let me know via email before the class begins, *especially when something is due*. **No makeup pop quizzes will be given in any case; no makeup exams will be given without prior discussion and approval at least 24hr in**

advance of the exam date; and no late work will be accepted unless I am informed in advance and evidence can be provided.

Timeliness: As you know, the tempo of the semester system does not allow one to fall behind, and everything in this course builds to the final research paper and final examination. As such, you are requested and required to submit all assignments on the time and date announced. Except in the case of a severe, catastrophic, and well-documented misfortune that befalls you (such as your departure from this mortal coil), **no late papers will be accepted**; in the event of a catastrophe, you must contact me by phone or e-mail as early as possible. Papers must be submitted to the instructor in person at the time and date due, to the Sociology Department office prior to the deadline, or by e-mail to me before the deadline (this is dependent on the time I receive the email). **No makeup exams will be given without prior discussion and approval at least 24hr in advance of the exam date.**

Presentation: The writing you will undertake in this course will represent a significant portion of your time this quarter and are intended to get you to think about the nature of the society in which you find yourselves. The expectation is that you will pursue these assignments with vigor and a clear intent to do well in the development of your analytic and critical thinking skills. As such, **you are required to proofread and spell- and grammar-check all work submitted during this course.** There is no excuse for submitting shoddy work in a time when any decent word processing program can polish your work. Any paper submitted with copious errors will automatically lose *two full letter grades* (with no appeal), and may be returned for editing. If a second paper is submitted without being proofread, that paper – and any future unproofed paper – will automatically receive a zero (0).

Academic Dishonesty: Absolutely **NO** form of academic dishonesty (defined as the use of prohibited materials during an examination, any kind of communication with another person other than the professor or an exam proctor during an examination, the representation of another's work as your own whether that work was purchased or freely offered) will be tolerated in this course. As it is contrary to both the mission of the university and to MU policies, any act of academic dishonesty will be met with an immediate failure on the assignment at minimum, and failure in the course and referral to Student Affairs for judicial board proceedings at most. Just don't even think about it – it robs us all of the learning experience.

Grading: I do my best to ensure that my evaluation of your work is as impartial as possible and reflects the quality of what you submit at the due date and time. If you have issues with my evaluation of your work, you may submit a one-page statement of how it is you think I misunderstood what you presented in your work (and only what appears in the work submitted) *no sooner than 24 hours after I return the work to you.* We will then meet to discuss the issue. Please note that I reserve the right to elevate your grade, maintain the grade applied, or to lower the grade depending on that re-evaluation.

Other Issues: My teaching philosophy is such that I see you as being primarily responsible for your success in the course. I do not teach in a “spoon-feeding” manner; my job is to provide you with the tools to enable your own education, and I will do that to the best of my abilities during the semester. Should you not wish to take a course like this that requires that you commit yourself to doing your best by your own motivation, it would be best for you to find another course. I also work to respond to issues that come up in class, either during the semester or on a daily basis. To that end, I reserve the right to change, adapt, or amend this syllabus, the reading schedule, and other policy issues at any time in order to make possible the improvement of the course; *however, I will only do so with the consent of and input from the class as a whole.* Finally, any issues that you feel are impacting on your ability to do well in the course, whether they are issues inside or outside the classroom, should be brought to me as soon as possible. If the issue is not

adequately resolved through the discussion with me, proper university protocol requires that you speak with Dr Glazier, the Sociology/Anthropology department chair. I take what goes on in this course very seriously and personally; I hope you will as well.

My expectations of you during the semester

As should be clear by now, I take what I do in this course very seriously, and I expect the same from you. This is not the kind of course that allows you to be irresponsible with regard to your work, your attitude, your comportment, or your behavior in the classroom or while interacting with other classmates. To make perfectly clear what these expectations are, I submit the following; you will be asked to sign a contract signifying your consent to these “rules of the game,” and your failure to abide by them will result in your failure in the course:

- Adequate preparation for class sessions: Below, you will find the full and complete reading schedule for the semester. It may slow down a bit at points, and may need to be adjusted to account for the depths to which we are addressing the material. However, it is provided to you *in advance, and you have no excuse for not knowing what reading is due in what week*. The way I teach is such that I rely on your preparation to make the course work. If you don't do that, the course suffers, not just for me, but for you and all your classmates. It is your responsibility to have read the material before the first class session of each week, to have prepared your ideas about and questions on the materials, to post discussion questions and responses when required, and to contact me in person or via email when you have problems with the material.
- Ask questions: The first class session of each week will be motivated by your questions and ideas on the readings *for the entire week*, and will be run following the Socratic method – in other words, I will ask you questions, call on people randomly, and expect that you will provide responses other than “Um...”. The second class session will be focused on filling in the gaps from the first session's discussion and will be a bit more lecture-oriented. However, the first 10-15 minutes of each class session are set aside for your questions on materials, assignments, etc. Which leads me to...
- Know that you're all in the same boat: For most people in the room with you, this will be either one of the first university courses you've taken, or one of the first sociology courses you've been in. It will most likely be the first time you've addressed the issues and concepts we'll be using during the semester. Therefore, I would expect that none of you will “know it all,” which means that no one will look like a fool or look stupid for asking questions, saying you don't know something, or expressing confusion about what we're discussing. Any question that any of you will pose during this term will most likely be one that most, if not all, of your classmates has. They will thank you for it.
- Show some respect: The people who are sitting around you in this course come from different backgrounds, have different beliefs, and come up with different ideas. They are at MU for the same reason you are – to learn about the world around them. They deserve your respect; and while some good-natured ribbing should be expected, absolutely no disrespect will be tolerated.
- “Schaffer makes this look easy...”: At times, you will say to yourself, “Schaffer, we're not at your level,” or you'll think that I'm intentionally pitching the materials and ideas over your head. Remember: It's my job to know this material, to know it well, and to present it to you in a way that challenges you to rise to the level that it's at. I've dealt with these materials a number of times in different ways (though I'm still learning about it, in large

part because the stuff we'll talk about this semester is currently going on all around you and changing your world), so for me, it *is* easy. I don't expect the same from you. If you feel like what I'm saying or what you're reading is going over your head, there's a very simple solution: *Tell me*. I rely on your questions, both on Blackboard and in class, to know where you're at with the materials and ideas we're discussing. If I don't get questions, I can only assume that all of you understand the material and are ready to deal with it in the ways that I'm asking you to. If you're not ready for that, just ask - I'll help you be ready to do this.

- Do your best work: I do not expect perfection from any of you. Chances are that none of you will give me perfect work, and I'm not looking for that in any case. The issues we will discuss here are difficult and will most likely be new to you, and the assignments and questions I will pose to you will be challenging (and probably ones you've never been asked before). What I am looking for is a good faith sign that you are doing the best work you are capable of doing. I will take this and push on it; I will challenge you to do even better work; and I will help you achieve your potential in this course. But I can't do that if you're not trying your hardest in the course.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

Please note that you are expected to have completed the readings listed for each week by the first class session of the week. The first session will focus primarily on dealing with your questions about the materials and the discussion questions you've posted on Blackboard; the second session will work to fill in the gaps in our discussion, either with further discussion or with lecture. While my lectures, when they happen, will touch on issues raised in the readings, you should not presume that they are a substitute for actually doing the readings or vice versa. Please ensure you have read and thought about the readings prior to each class session, and come prepared with something to say about them. You should, at the very least, be ready to discuss these five things:

- What the readings were about (in other words, a brief summary)
- Responses to appropriate discussion questions
- One interesting thing about each of the readings
- One question you had about the readings
- One thing that made you angry, changed your mind about something, or made you rethink something you thought you knew.

I would also recommend the purchase of "sticky note" flags (available in the MU bookstore, next to the books for this course). These should be used to flag places in the readings that are important, either because they have sparked an idea or because you have a question on them. I would suggest flagging places in the texts that you have questions on with a *red* flag; answered questions with a *green* flag; and key points in the readings with a *blue* flag. Regardless of the code you use, you should flag the readings in addition to taking notes on them. It will be a great help come exam and paper time.

Week 1 - Introduction to the Course

Week 1 - Read *AP*, pp. 1-40, and Young and Deskins, "Early Traditions in African-American Sociological Thought" (available on course web site and Blackboard)

M Aug 30 - Introduction to the Course: Mechanics

W Sep 2 - Introduction to the Course: Themes, Issues, and Analytic Tools; discussion on Young and Deskins, "Early Traditions in African-American Sociological Thought," and *AP*, pp. 1-40

Weeks 2-8 - The Slavery System, Slave Narratives, and Social Theory "From Below"

Week 2 - Read *CBN*, pp. 1-44; recommended - read *AASPT*, pp. 37-100, *AP*, pp. 41-60, and Ogunleye, "Dr. Martin Robison Delany, 19th Century Africana Womanists" (available on Blackboard)

M Sep 6 - **No class: Labor Day.**

W Sep 8 - Discussion and fill-in lecture on *CBN*, pp. 1-44

Week 3 - Read *NFLD*, pp. 1-63, *CBN*, pp. 45-67, and Adeleke, "Afro-Americans and Moral Suasion: The Debate in the 1830s" (available on Blackboard); recommended - read *AP*, pp. 61-80

➤ **W Sep 15 - Term Project Assignment handed out and discussed**

M Sep 13 - Discussion on *NFLD* and *CBN*

W Sep 15 - Fill-in lecture and discussion on *NFLD* and *CBN*

➤ **Term Project Assignment handed out and discussed**

Week 4 - Read *NFLD*, pp. 64-114, *CBN*, pp. 68-100, 135-141, and Sekora, "Mr. Editor, If You Please" (available on Blackboard); recommended - read *AP*, pp. 81-112

M Sep 20 - Discussion on *NFLD* and *CBN*

W Sep 22 - Fill-in lecture and discussion on *NFLD* and *CBN*

Week 5 - Read *ILSG*, pp. 115-230, *CBN*, pp. 101-134, and Ellingson, "Understanding the Dialectic of Discourse and Collective Action: Public Debate and Rioting in Antebellum Cincinnati" (available on Blackboard); recommended - read *AP*, pp. 113-138

M Sep 27 - Discussion on *ILSG* and *CBN*

W Sep 29 - Fill-in lecture and discussion on *ILSG* and *CBN*

Week 6 - Read *ILSG*, pp. 231-353; recommended - read *AP*, pp. 139-154

➤ **W Oct 6 - Midterm Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

M Oct 4 - Discussion on *ILSG*

W Oct 6 - Fill-in lecture and discussion on *ILSG*

➤ **Midterm Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

Week 7 – Midterm Preparation

M Oct 11 – **No class: Fall Recess.**

W Oct 13 – Midterm Examination Prep Session – This session will be motivated entirely by your questions, so *come prepared*.

Weeks 8-12 – New Forms of and New Responses to Institutional Racism

Week 8 – Read *AASPT*, pp. 126-170, and Tate, “Free Black Resistance in the Antebellum Era, 1830 to 1860” (available on Blackboard)

➤ M Oct 18 – Midterm Examination.

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W Oct 20 – Discussion and fill-in lecture on *AASPT*

Week 9 – Read *AASPT*, pp. 199-212, 226-283, 307-327, 332-350, and Fine, “John Brown’s Body” (available on Blackboard); recommended – read *AP*, pp. 155-184

M Oct 25 – Discussion on *AASPT*

W Oct 27 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *AASPT*

Week 10 – Read *AASPT*, pp. 351-372, 379-422, 434-482, and Rudwick, “Race Leadership Struggle: Background of the Boston Riot of 1903” (available on Blackboard); recommended – read *AP*, pp. 185-222, and Hill, “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma” (available on Blackboard)

M Nov 1 – Discussion on *AASPT*

W Nov 3 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *AASPT*

Week 11 – Read *AASPT*, pp. 483-552, *MBN*, pp. 40-50, and Reid, “Negro Movements and Messiahs, 1900-1949” (available on Blackboard)

M Nov 8 – Discussion on *AASPT* and *MBN*

W Nov 10 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *AASPT* and *MBN*

Week 12 – Read *AASPT*, pp. 553-577, *CBN*, pp. 241-250, *MBN*, pp. 23-31, and Akpan, “Liberia and the Universal Negro Improvement Association” (available on Blackboard); recommended – read *AP*, pp. 223-250

M Nov 15 – Discussion on *AASPT*, *CBN*, and *MBN*

W Nov 17 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *AASPT*, *CBN*, and *MBN*

Week 13 – Research Project Preparation

M Nov 22 – **Paper Prep Session:** This session will be motivated entirely by your questions on the research project, so *come prepared*.

W Nov 24 – **No class: Thanksgiving Recess.**

Weeks 14-15 - "No forty acres and no mule": Modern black nationalism and contemporary racism

Week 14 - Read MBN, pp. 51-96, and AP, pp. 251-294

- **M Nov 29 - Term project due at the start of class (430pm EST)**

M Nov 29 - Guest lecture: Dr Patrick Bernard (English, Franklin & Marshall College)

- **Term project due at the start of class (430pm EST)**

W Dec 1 - Discussion and fill-in lecture on *MBN*

Week 15 - Read MBN, pp. 97-119 and Watson, "Social Structure and Social Movements: The Black Muslims in the USA and the Ras-Tafarians in Jamaica" (available on Blackboard), as well as assigned sections of MBN, pp. 120-374 (divided by groups); recommended - read AP, pp. 369-388 and 421-454

- **M Dec 6 - Final Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

M Dec 6 - Group presentations and discussions on *MBN* - Group 1: pp. 119-132, 136-174;
Group 2: pp. 175-214, 240-274

- **Final Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

W Dec 8 - Group presentations and discussions on *MBN* - Group 3: pp. 275-327; Group 4: pp. 328-374

Finals Week - Closure discussion and examination

- **Sa Dec 18, 1015am - Final Examination**

M Dec 13 - **Closure discussion, final examination prep session:** This session will be motivated entirely by your questions, *so come prepared.*

Sa Dec 18, 1015am to 1215pm - Final Examination in McComsey 303

Summing Up - Due Dates

Every Mon (or first session of week) - Entire set of readings for the entire week
Every Mon and Weds, 9am - Discussion questions posted on Blackboard

W Sep 15 - Term Project handed out and discussed

W Oct 6 - Midterm Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed

M Oct 18 - Midterm Examination

M Nov 29 - Term Project DUE

M Dec 6 - Final Examination Prep Sheet handed out and discussed

Sa Dec 18, 1015am to 1215pm - Final Examination

Paper and Exam Essay Evaluation Guidelines:

More information on these guidelines and examples of what I expect is available in the "How to Write a 'Schaffer Paper'" handout, which is available on the course web site. These, though, are the overall guidelines *in order of importance*. The grading rubric, included as the last page of this syllabus, is designed to make clear how it is your work is being evaluated and how well you've succeeded in achieving the goals of each assignment.

1. Strength and clarity of response to the paper topic's main question. Each paper assignment will ask you to respond directly to an argumentative question, and you should ensure that your paper contains a direct and clear response to this question.

2. Strength and cohesiveness of the argument. The papers you will write in this class are argument-based – it isn't enough to deliver a simple one-sentence statement that answers the question. Instead, you need to take the time to show me how it is you came to that response – the thought process you went through, the references you drew from in order to figure out your position, and how you put everything together. In algebra, it was called "showing your steps"; here, it's just good argumentation.

3. Accuracy in presentation and understanding of materials. While most of this course is devoted to the development of your own perspective on these thinkers and the world, there are some minimum "correct" and "incorrect" understandings of what the authors said. You need to be sure that you accurately represent what each author says, that you accurately and adequately cite any reference to the original text(s), and that you explain any unorthodox presentation of the authors' works.

4. Presentation – spelling, grammar, tone, and the actual submitted paper. As it's become ridiculously easy to ensure that your work is cleanly presented, you must ensure that your paper is spell- and grammar-checked prior to submitting it for evaluation. You should also endeavor to ensure that it's proofread, either by you, a discussion group member, or someone else – and this proofreading should be both for the technical matters *and* for clarity of argument. Otherwise, you're paper will appear bad, even iff its the most brilliant thing ever written.

Deductions: The following are automatic deductions without appeal:

- Not reaching minimum page count: 1/3 letter grade per page the paper is short;
- Not utilizing minimum number of texts or sources: 1/3 letter grade per text the paper is short;
- Not proofreading the paper: two full letter grades the first time, with revisions possible *at my discretion*; the second time, your paper will receive a zero (0);
- Not citing all references to outside texts: one full letter grade;
- Not including a bibliography when required by the assignment: one full letter grade (incomplete bibliography: -2/3 letter grade).

Also, note that I grade on a letter grade with +/- additions, so there should be no dallying around with the math.

In general, grades on papers indicate the following (and note that failing to meet these criteria will generally result in a failing grade):

- "A" – directly answers the assigned question; well-argued in a logical order, making clear how the evidence presented is utilized

- “B” – evades answering the assigned question; fairly well-argued, but reasoning process or analysis of the evidence weak
- “C” – no clear answer to assigned question; paper reads more like a book report than an analysis; evidence presumed to make argument on its face.

I consider work that receives a grade below a C to be failing work. This would include work that is presented poorly, is not thought out well, and that includes no attempt to address the assigned question.

Course Evaluation Criteria:

I know that on occasion, it’s difficult to figure out what a professor expects of you in order to pass the course or to receive a particular grade. In order to assuage that concern, here is the set of expectations I have of you during this term; please note that they are *not* listed in order of importance:

- Consistent attendance in class sessions, with you having read the materials, come prepared to discuss the materials, and come prepared to pose any questions that you have, either verbally or as a “blind question”;
- Attendance in my office hours whenever you have a question or need help in understanding the materials or issues under discussion;
- Thoughtful reflection on the course materials and issues prior to coming to class, and thoughtful discussion of these materials and issues during class sessions;
- Careful attention to and implementation of all of the principles that motivate this course and the study of this material;
- The diligent pursuit of all assignments, with you committed to doing your best work on each one;
- And, overall, your commitment to doing your best work in every class session and on every assignment.

I know that you have other responsibilities or interests you have to attend to, and I am sympathetic to the various pulls on your time. However, you should note that I take very seriously what you do in this course, and I expect that your continued presence in this course will mean that you too take that seriously. If you’re not interested in doing your best – or even better than you think your best might be – in the course, withdraw now. Presuming that you do take your work in here seriously, and you do your best to meet the expectations as listed above, you will pass the course. Failure to attend to your responsibilities in this course will result in your failure in this course.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Discuss the basic tenets of social theory as it pertains to grasping the relationship between individual experience and institutional structures;
- Explain the notion of “social theory from below” and its similarities and differences from other types of sociological and social theory;
- Understand the ways in which African American social theorists have examined and explained the nature of institutionalized racism in the United States;
- Examine the ways in which different social-theoretical understandings of institutionalized racism yield different prescriptive solutions to racism and racist social structures;
- Engage in debates regarding the appropriateness and beneficence of different understandings of and approaches to institutionalized racism;
- Analyze the relationship between social theory and social practice oriented to changing societal structures;
- Explore the ways in which the varieties of African American social theory relate to, inspire, and draw from other approaches and reactions to institutionalized racism throughout the African diaspora;
- And develop your own social-theoretical understanding of and response to the American social structure as it currently exists.

Essay/Paper Evaluation Form

Name _____

Your task on receiving this is to revisit your paper, identify the elements of what you wrote that merited these comments and criticisms, and figure out how to improve on them.

Strength and clarity of response to question.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How directly did the paper respond to the assigned question ("TBQ")? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 2. How well-argued was the response? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 3. Did the logic/structure make sense? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 4. Did the writer seem sure about what they were saying? | S | E | G | F | P |

Use of evidence in support of response.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. How well did the paper use evidence from the readings in developing the response? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 6. Did the writer cite all evidence they utilized? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 7. Was the evidence that was utilized used correctly (i.e., in accordance with usual understandings of the authors)? | S | E | G | F | P |

Explanation of how evidence supports response.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. How well did the writer show <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> their evidence supported what they were saying? | S | E | G | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Development of analytic framework and criteria for recognizing concepts.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. How clearly did the writer define their analytic framework and/or concepts and show how they would recognize them? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 10. Other "intangibles" (writing style, clarity, etc.). | S | E | G | F | P |

Deductions: _____

Essay/Paper Grade: _____

[Key: S = Superior; E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor]