

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Course Number:** SW 360K/AFR 374/ WGS 340

**Instructor:** Dr. Dorie Gilbert

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**Semester:** Spring 2012

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**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES**

**I. Course Description**

This course is designed to provide an overview of historical and contemporary issues facing African American families and children. Social service delivery to African American families and communities is emphasized. This course is an upper-division, social science elective and is open to BSW students as well as other majors. Topics include:

- \* African Heritage and Cultural History
- \* Africentric Social Work Practice & Theories
- \* Gender, Sexuality and Relationships
- \* Family Patterns and Parenting
- \* Socialization in African American Families
- \* Adolescent Development & Racial Identity
- \* Impact of Racism & Oppression
- \* Health and Mental Health Care & Disparities
- \* Faith-based and Community interventions
- \* Housing and Community Concerns
- \* Education and Employment
- \* Criminal Justice and Vulnerable Sub-populations

**II. Course Objectives**

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of African American family structures and dynamics from a social systems perspective.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical background of African American families and its impact on contemporary family life.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the psychosocial dimensions of African American families.
4. Identify specific social issues facing African American males and females, children, families & other subsets of the population
5. Identify and describe the variety of life styles among African Americans and the situational determinants of different family forms and patterns of adaptation.
6. Identify barriers facing specific African American populations, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, women, gays and lesbians.
7. Critique the treatment of African American families in American scholarship.
9. Demonstrate an awareness of value dilemmas and policy initiatives that differentially affect African American families and diverse social service providers.
10. Promote social justice by recognizing and identifying ways to address discrimination against African Americans and other oppressed populations.

**III. Teaching Methods**

Lectures, class discussion, reading assignments, small group discussions in class and via blogging and presentations will be utilized to achieve course objectives. Guest lecturers and films will provide supplementary learning resources. Lectures are designed to supplement readings. Students are expected to come prepared to each class and participate in discussions of assigned readings and of supplementary material presented in lectures.

**IV. Required Readings**

Social Work Practice with African American Families – Required reading packet.

Available at Speedway Copy Dobie Mall (512-478-3334). Two packets will be on reserve at the Social Work Learning Resource Center. First week of readings are posted Blackboard; option to have all readings posted to Blackboard.

## **V. Course Requirements**

### **A. REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **1. Attendance (10%)**

Students are expected to attend class, participate in class discussions and in assigned experiential or observational activities, and be present for quizzes and examinations as scheduled.

#### **2. Preparation, Brief Quizzes, Contribution, Reflection (15% of grade)**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and actively participate by raising questions and issues in all class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to choose one of the articles from the readings to summarize and present for discussion. See Blackboard for assignment description.

#### **3. Blogging (30%)**

This course involves a significant amount of required reading and classroom interaction. Each student will create a blog and make weekly entries that reference the readings, classroom discussions, and responses to relevant issues. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate understanding of course content as well as:

- a) Clarify students' thoughts and understanding of course content covered by the readings, videos, classroom activities and discussion;
- b) Examine the personal and professional use of self in ethical, culturally competent, and just social work practices; and
- c) Reflect on the impact of discrimination and oppression on public policy, institutional structure, service delivery, and one's own role in promoting social and economic justice.
- d) Extend the dialog outside the classroom in a reflective and thoughtful manner, using a variety of media to articulate your responses and reflections on issues related to social work with African American populations.

The professor may elect to provide specific questions related to the readings or class discussions for students to respond to in their blog posts. Blog posts can include photographs, video, and poetry, etc. as well as written reflections and responses to the readings. You are also required to comment on at least two blogs of fellow students each week. While blog posts are candid and honest portrayals of your reflections and experiences, they must be respectful and are not an arena for digression on unrelated issues or personal attacks. If you are referencing readings or data, cite sources using APA format (see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition).

#### **Criteria**

- Timely completion of the assignment.
- Address the key points from the readings/videos/classroom exercises
- Connection between themes discussed in readings/videos/classroom
- Comprehension, analysis and evaluation of themes discussed in readings/videos/classroom exercises
- Use of references and citations for all referenced material and data.

Blog posts are due every Saturday for the previous week. See Blackboard for "How to start blogging".

#### **4. Midterm Examination (30% of grade)**

Students complete in-class midterm. The exam will contain a combination of objective and essay questions.

#### **5. Service Learning Project (25% of grade)**

The purpose of this project is to engage students as active agents of change by addressing an area of concern or issue related to the African American population. Students can use a variety of methods, media and collaborations. Projects may be a photo essay or a video, a series of interviews, a survey, a film screening, forum, or community service. Students may use a number of ways to report on their project, such as a video or online venue. There is great deal of latitude; however, students must prepare a project proposal and meet with the professor to answer questions and provide details prior to approval. The approved proposal will serve as the specific criteria of the project. Students will submit updates throughout the semester that demonstrate progress towards achievement of the project as detailed in the proposal. Students will present their projects in class and provide a handout of their action plan and useful resources. A reference list of all sources and data used to create the project using APA format. See Project Description on Blackboard.

6. Mid-term and Final Reflection Paper (5% of grade). You will prepare and submit an assessment of your learning and a portfolio of work to support it. Your portfolio will include a selection of the work you've completed during the semester; ongoing observations about your learning, and an interpretation of the work that shows your development across five dimensions of learning: confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, use of prior and emerging experience, reflection, creativity and imagination.

Grading and Weighting of Assignments

Attendance	10%
Preparation, Brief Quizzes, Contribution, Reflection	10%
Blogging	20%
Midterm exam	30%
Research Project	25%
Final Reflection Paper	5 %
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Total	100%

**Grading Scale:**

100 - 94 = A	93 - 90 = A-	89 - 87 = B+	86 - 84 = B	83 - 80 = B-	79 - 77 = C+	76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-	69 - 67 = D+	66 - 64 = D	63 - 60 = D-	59 and below = F		

- A/A- SUPERIOR: Significantly exceeds assignments/performance expectations; demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment guidelines and exceptional integration of ideas and course material.
- B+/B/B- GOOD: Assignment/overall performance in course meets all the requirements with evidence of critical thinking and analysis.
- C+/C/C- AVERAGE: Assignments/performance meets the requirements or has minor gaps; lacks evidence of in-depth thinking and analysis
- D+/D/D- BELOW AVERAGE: Important gaps exist in meeting the requirements and evidence of critical thinking and analysis.

**VI. Class Policies**

1. **Attendance:** Attendance and prompt arrival to class is mandatory. Individual exceptions are made only in the event of *properly documented* extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control and prior notice of reason for absence and/or tardy. Poor attendance/participation will impact grade. Missing more than 2 classes or missing either of the last 2 class days will lower attendance grade because your peers count on you for your attention and support during their presentations. Students missing 5 or more classes will automatically fail the course.
2. **Late Assignments:** Assignments are due on date assigned. Three points per day will be deducted for late assignments.
3. **APA format:** We will use APA editorial style as the standard format for all written assignments. Details of the APA style are included in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*.
4. **Small group work:** Groups are expected to resolve challenges. The instructor serves as consultant on group dynamics and teamwork. Groups are not penalized in their grade for consulting with the instructor.
5. **Respect and Civility:** Cross-cultural group work can raise emotional issues and usually involves moderate to high processing of self and others. The instructor and classmates have the ethical responsibility to see that the class environment is maintained as a respectful and inviting place to grow together as we prepare to travel to Ghana. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.
6. **Technology in the classroom:** Laptops, phones and use of social media devices in class is strictly prohibited.
7. **Student feedback** is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours and at mid-term review.

## **OTHER POLICIES:**

### **The University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

### **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

### **Religious Holidays**

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

### **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

### **Use of Blackboard in Class**

In this class the professor uses Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES  
COURSE SCHEDULE SPRING 2012**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC AND READINGS</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>African American Families: African Heritage and History</b>
<b>Jan 17</b>	Course Overview Class Exercise: Editorial Response to Bob Herbert's "A New Civil Rights Movement"
<b>Jan 19</b>	<i>Film: Ethnic Notions: Black people in the minds of whites</i> First blog entry due
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>African American Family: Diversity and Commonality</b>
<b>Jan 24</b>	Topic: White Privilege-Then and Now Discussion: Interactive Exercise: Understanding race as a social construct  Wander & Martin (2005). The roots of racial classification from <i>Whiteness: The power of the past</i> in P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.). <u>White Privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism</u> . Worth Publishers, NY, NY. (on-line reading)  Barret & Roediger (2005). How white people became white from <i>Whiteness: The power of the past</i> in P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.). <u>White Privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism</u> . Worth Publishers, NY, NY. (on-line reading)  McIntosh, P. (2005). Unpacking the invisible knapsack. in P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.). <u>White Privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism</u> . Worth Publishers, NY, NY. (on-line reading)
<b>Jan 26</b>	<i>Film, White Privilege and its Consequences for Racial Equity &amp; Justice (Tim Wise)</i>  Pharr, S. (1988). The common elements of oppression. Chardon Press. (on-line reading)
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>African American Family: Family Development and Intervention Theories</b>
<b>Jan 31</b>	Browne, C & Mills, C. (2001). Theoretical frameworks: Ecological Model, Strengths Perspective, and Empowerment Theory. In R. Fong & S. Furuto (Eds.). <u>Culturally competent practice; Skills, Interventions, and Evaluations</u> . Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA.  ♦ ♦ Karenga, M & Karenga, (2007). The Nguzo Saba and the Black family: Principles and practice of well-being and flourishing. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), <u>Black families</u> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition (pp. 7-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
<b>Feb 2</b>	<i>Critical Analysis of Theory: Film: CNN-Black in America, South Africa Program</i>  ♦ ♦ Harvey, A. & Hill, R. (2004). Africentric youth and family rites of passage program: Promoting resilience among at-risk African American youths. <u>Social Work</u> , 49 (1).  Watson, J. E. (1996). A dynamic duo: (An example of Africentric family values). <u>Amsterdam News</u> , 6/29/05, Vol 96, Issue 24
<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>African American Families: Historical and Current Demographics &amp; Helping Traditions</b>
<b>Feb 7</b>	♦ Franklin, J. H. (2007). African American families: A historical note. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), <u>Black families</u> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition (pp. 3-6). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (on-line reading)

◆ Graham, L. O. (1999, February 15). Living in a class apart: The separate world of America's Black elite. *U.S. News & World Report*, 48-52.

◆ ◆ Hill, R. B. (2007). The impact of welfare reform on Black families. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (pp. 328-338). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

◆ ◆ Wright, K. (2008). The subprime swindle: How the mortgage industry stole Black America's hard-earned wealth. *The Nation*, July 14, 2008.

**Feb 9**

◆ ◆ Offner, P. (2002). What's love got to do with it?: Disparity between black men and women. *The Washington Monthly*, 34 (3), 15-19.

◆ ◆ Eckholm, E. (2006). Plight deepens for black males: Studies sound alarm. *New York Times*, 03/20/06,

Raspberry, W. (2002). Successful women who are childless. *The Washington Post*, 04/29/02, P. A11

Edwards, A. (2002). Bring me home a black girl. *Essence*, 33 (3), p. 176.

McLarin, C. (2006). Race wasn't an issue for him, which was an issue for me. *NYT*, 09/03/2006

Evans, E. (01-12-09). Dark and lovely, Michelle. *The Root* www.theroot.com

**WEEK 5**

#### **African American Relationships: Gender, Race, Class & Sexual Identity**

**Feb 14**

◆ ◆ Chapman, A. B. (2007). In search of love and commitment: Dealing with the challenging odds of finding romance. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Black families*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (pp. 285-296). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

◆ ◆ Bethea, P., D. (1995). African American women and the male-female relationship dilemma: A counseling perspective. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 23 (2). 87-96.

**Feb 16**

Richardson, B.L. & Wade, B. (2001). *What mama couldn't teach us about love*. Readings on Anti-intimacy Beliefs. *On-line Handout*

◆ ◆ Hammond, W. P. (2005). Being a man about it: Manhood meaning among African American men. *Psychology of men and masculinity*, 6 (2), pp.114-126.

**WEEK 6**

#### **African American Relationships: Gender, Race, Class & Sexual Identity**

**Feb 21**

◆ ◆ Freeman, C. T. (2006). Counseling Black men: A misunderstood population. *New Jersey Journal of Professional Counseling* (58). 72-84.

◆ ◆ DeFrancisco, V. L. & Chatham-Carpenter, A. (2001). Self in community: African American women's views of self-esteem. *Howard Journal of Communication*, 11(20), 73-92.

◆ ◆ Thomas, A. J. (2001). African American women's spiritual beliefs: Treatment guide. *Women & Therapy*, 23(4), 1-11.

**Feb 23**

◆ Found: 85, 000 Black gay households. *Essay by Alain Dang & Somjen Grazer*.

Pitts, L (1998) The choice to be gay and Watson, J (2004). Strange Bedfellows ( two 1-page editorials)

◆◆ McCready, L. T. (2004). Understanding the marginalization of gay and gender non-conforming black male students. Theory into Practice, 43 (2).

Sroyum, C. (2007). At least I'm not gay: Heterosexual identity-making among poor teens. ABSTRACT

**WEEK 7**

**African American Relationships: Gender, Race, Class & Sexual Identity**

**Feb 28**

◆◆ Gilbert, D. J. and Williams, L. (2007). Deconstructing the down-low: A systems-ecological perspective on African American men who have sex with men. Human Behavior in the Social Environment: An African American Perspective. 501-517

◆ Fullilove, M. & Fullilove, R. Homosexuality and the African American Church: The Paradox of the "Open Closet".

*Film: A different kind of black man.*

**March 1**

*Guest Speaker/Film*

**WEEK 8**

**Midterm Review and Midterm**

**March 6**

Group Project Meeting

**Mar 8**

Midterm

-----**SPRING BREAK**-----  
**Mar 12-16**

**WEEK 9**

**African American Family Constellation and Parenting**

**Mar 20**

◆ Nobles, W. (2007). African American family life: An instrument of culture. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), Black families, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (pp. 69-78). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*Barack Obama on Fatherhood [by W. Parker from About.com]*.

◆ Ochberg, B. (2005). When Fathers and Sons Spend Time Together. University of Michigan School of Public Health, Spring, p 27-31.

**Mar 22**

◆◆ Cain, D.S. & Combs-Orme, T. (2005). Family structure effects on parenting stress and practices in the African American family. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 32(2). 19-40.

◆◆ Cox, C. (2002). Empowering African American custodial grandparents. Social Work, 47 (1)..45-54.

**WEEK 10**

**Socialization and Identity in African American Early and Late Adolescents**

**Mar 27**

◆◆ Tatum, B. D. (2004). Family life and school experiences: Factors in the racial identity development of black youth in white communities Journal of Social Issues, 60 (1),117-135.

**Mar 29**

*Film/TBA*

**WEEK 11**

**Education: African American Children & Adolescents**

**April 3**

*Film: Boys of Baraka*

<b>April 5</b>	<i>Barack Obama on Education [from Education.com]</i>  ♦ Steptoe, S. (2004). Closing the gap. <u>Time</u> 164(22), p54-56  ♦ Pluviose, D. (2006). Study: “Acting White” accusations has damaging legacy for black students. <u>Diverse Issues in Higher Education</u> , V23 (4), 8-8.
<b>WEEK 12</b>	<b>Youth, Media and Development</b>
<b>April 10</b>	<i>Film: Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats &amp; Rhymes.</i>
<b>April 12</b>	♦ Watts, R., Abdul-Adil, J., & Pratt, T. (2002). Enhancing critical consciousness in young African American men.. <u>Psychology of Men and Masculinity</u> , 3(1), 41-50.  ♦ ♦ Peterson, Wingwood, DiClemente, Harrington, & Davies (2007). Images of sexual stereotypes in rap videos and health of African American female adolescents. <u>Journal of Women’s Health</u> , 15 (8), 1157-1166.
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Community, Health , Mental Health &amp; Social Justice Disparities among African Americans</b>
<b>April 17</b>	♦ ♦ Brunson, R. (2007). Police don’t like black people: African American Young men’s accumulated police experiences. <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> , 6(1) 71-101.  ♦ ♦ Joe, S. (2006). Implications for National Suicide Trends for social work practice with Black youth. <u>Child and Adolescent Social Work</u> , 23(4), 458-468.
<b>April 19</b>	♦ ♦ Snowden, L. (2003). Bias in mental health assessment and intervention theory and evidence. <u>American Journal of Public Health</u> , 33 (2), 239-242.  <u>African American Mental Health Fact Sheet</u>  ♦ Gadson, S. (2006). The Third World Health Status of Black American Males. <u>National Medical Association</u> , Vol 98 (4), p 488-491.  Survey suggests link between racism, high blood pressure in African Americans. <u>Black Issues in Higher Education</u> ,10 /25/01 18(18), p14.
<b>April 24</b>	<i>Film, TBA</i> ♦ Gilbert, D. J. & Goddard, L. (2007). HIV prevention targeting African American women: An African-Centered Behavior Change Model Perspective. <u>Family and Community Health</u> , 30 (1S), 109-114.
<b>WEEK 14</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>April 26</b>	Panel Discussions
<b>WEEK 15</b>	<b>Presentations, Course Wrap-Up and Course Evaluations</b>
<b>May 1</b>	Panel Discussions
<b>May 3</b>	Panel Discussions