PSYCHOLOGY 008
African American Psychology
Fall Semester 2011

Instructor: Morenike Oshi-Ojuri, M.A.
Office: Sichel 103 A
Phone: 925.631.8267
E-mail: mfo1@stmarys-ca.edu
Class Time: T/TH 1:10 – 2:40 pm
Office Hours: Tues (2:40-4pm by appointment)
Thurs (11:30am-12:30pm; 2:45-4pm)
(Or simply email/call to make an appointment.)

Course Description: This elective course will examine current research on the diverse experiences, behavior, and identities of African Americans. The course will be taught in a seminar format and undergraduate students will be engaged in the discussions and analysis of the weekly topics. This course helps students to consider the social construction of ethnicity and race, as well as the values, assumptions, and biases we hold regarding race, ethnicity, and related issues. Students will also be exposed to the social inequities related to race and ethnicity and the interaction of such inequities with other reference group identities such as SES, gender, religion and spirituality, sexuality, and age. Successful completion of this class will require the student to think critically about the available empirical and theoretical literature of African Americans and their relevancy.

There are a few goals and competency we will reach by the end of this course.
- Students will acquire knowledge of the foundational concepts and guiding principles of scientific psychology.
- Students recognize, articulate, and reflect upon their own worldview, biases, values, and assumptions.
- Students demonstrate respectful appreciation for others’ cultures and worldviews.
- Students will actively attend to the dynamics of power, oppression, and privilege and integrate the promotion of social justice into their studies.
- Students behave professionally, as demonstrated through timeliness, punctuality, professional demeanor/presentation, respectfulness, responsibility, consistency, and reliability
- Students are flexible, engaged, and open-minded; they recognize their own limitations, seek consultation when appropriate, give and receive feedback appropriately, and are active participants in classroom and agency activities.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Students will develop an understanding of the major concepts and theories on the psychological experiences of African Americans.
2. Students will learn about the most current trends in psychological literature relevant to African Americans.

3. Students will examine the cultural, institutional, and historical influences that shape psychological issues among African Americans.

4. Students will contribute towards a supportive environment in which all students can discuss and explore diverse issues related to the psychology of African Americans. Students will be expected to engage in respectful dialogue around these issues with others in the course and address the value element of diversity as it affects the human person.

5. Students will consider and reflect upon the impact of their own values, biases, and assumptions and its relationship to the construction of African American identities. Students will be expected to develop and increase awareness and knowledge of these issues.

**Required Text:**


**Additional Required Readings:**


Jones, H. L., Cross, W. E., & DeFour, D. C. (2007). Race-related stress, racial identity attitudes, and


**Supplemental Readings:**


Requirements: A total of 400 points toward your final grade will be earned through the following:

Exams: Two exams will be given. All exams will consist of theoretical, conceptual, and historical event questions. The first exam will be a midterm October 11, 2011 (week 7) worth 50 points. The final exam will be cumulative given on week 16 worth 100 points.

Quizzes: There will be 5 quizzes, each worth 10 points. The quizzes will focus on daily readings and discussions. Each quiz will be given in the first 15 minutes of class. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the quarter.

Projects: You will be assigned projects throughout the course.

Images of African Americans – Due on October 27, 2011 (week 9)
Please bring at least 4-5 images from the popular media that portray African Americans. We will discuss and analyze the symbolism, meanings, and representations of these portrayals.

Identity Development: Due at the beginning of class September 29th (week 5)
Using the Identity development scale choose a character from a book or film and evaluate their journey through at least 2 stages of racial identity development (minimum of 3 pages).

I.e. For colored girls only, Precious, Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner, Training Day, Friday, Antoine Fischer, The Help, Akeela And the Bee, Malcolm X, Ali

Personal Reflection Paper - Due in class November 8, 2011 (week 11) 3-4 pages
Please use this paper as a place to demonstrate the integration of your personal reactions, growth, new learning, and academic insights related to this course. Reflections should include feelings and thoughts in response to one’s experiences throughout the course. Integrate course readings, films, and discussions. Please do not summarize readings, films or group discussions. Please note that this is not a personal journal or diary and the papers should stay focused on personal experiences and reflections related to African Americans psychology. Please be prepared to share and discuss these papers in class.

Group Research Paper and Presentation:
Intersectionality Group Project (50 pts)
This semester you will be required to work with a group of three to four people on topics focused on the special challenges in mental health and treatment for African Americans in the United States. The project will include the intersection between culture and mental health. Each member is required to participate in a class presentation of up to 35-40 mins in length. The project should include following:
A. The project shall target a specific population
B. Explore the challenges this population faces as it relates to their social identities and their position within one of the following components: Religion and Spirituality, Law, Education, Racism and Discrimination, Sexuality, SES, Family Systems.
C. The presentation should allow 5 minutes for questions and answers at the end.

D. Papers are due one week after the presentation date and should incorporate changes and additions related to the feedback during the presentation. The RESEARCH PAPER must include Academic sources or references from articles in peer-reviewed journals, empirically-based and evidenced-based articles, primary sources, and books. References must be contemporary (within the last 10-15 years). Valuable information may be found in informal or primarily internet-based articles, websites, and blogs and these sources may be used but must be included beyond the academic source requirement. Include at least five academic sources. At least 3 must be outside course readings. ALL papers must be double-spaced and 6-8 pages in length. Please email the paper as a WORD attachment by 11:59pm on the due date. Please label your attachments with your name and the type of paper (e.g., YOURNAMEresearchpaper.doc). No late project papers will be accepted.

Participation: There is a chance for you to earn easy points. Because your active participation is of direct benefit to you and your classmates, I will award up to 100 participation points throughout the semester. In order to earn these points, you must be fully prepared to engage in discussion and daily assigned discussion questions. This means that you must have completed the assigned reading before coming to class. You will also need to contribute to a positive and supportive class atmosphere in which everyone is encouraged to speak openly. Responding to comments made by your peers is more than acceptable. Successful seminars depend on students’ willingness to participate and critical examination of the topics at hand.

Key Concept and Speculative Questions – Due before each class

For each class, there will be a number of assigned readings. For each class, compose: (1) One key concept question per set of readings by any given. Key concept questions should be no more than 20 words and capture a basic or central point in the readings. Please include the answer to your key concept questions. These questions may appear on the final exam. (2) One overall speculative question. Speculative questions reach beyond the content to consider integrative links, interpretation and analysis, clinical applications, and personal reactions. Please e-mail these questions each week to the instructor before each class. Please embed them in the text of your email and DO NOT send them as attachments. Please label email subject heading clearly (i.e., “Key Concept and Speculative Question – Week 1: Class One”). Students may be asked to read or write their questions on the board to focus and direct our discussions.

Discretion: As frank discussion is an integral part of this course, students should only disclose material they feel comfortable sharing within a classroom context. Please maintain the integrity of your classmates’ communications by not exploiting knowledge they share about themselves. Integrity and ethics is an important part of your development in this course. Please do not post any information about other students on Facebook or any other electronic forum. Faculty make every attempt to maintain the integrity of student self-disclosures and do not share any information with other faculty unless it is necessary in the context of classroom evaluation and learning.

Reading Assignments, Practice Assignments, and Class Attendance: Reading assignments should be completed prior to attending class. My primary objective in class will be to clarify
and supplement the required literature. An effort will be made to focus on the difficult aspects of the material. I will also bring in outside examples to elaborate that provided by the text. What you gain from class will depend, to a large extent, on your own familiarity with the assigned readings. You should bring your assignments with you to class ahead of the due dates and should feel encouraged to ask about any difficult parts of the assignments during the class meetings or office hours.
Grading: The class will be for credit. The normal/average grading rubric will be applied.

Policy for Late Projects / Absence from Exams: Projects are due at the beginning of the class listed on the project description. Projects handed in after that time will automatically lose points. If you know you have a conflict with the due date for a project or for an exam, you may reschedule them only if (1) you have a legitimate excuse (according to my definition), and (2) you inform me of it at least one week before the date. Only a documented medical excuse or similar emergency will be accepted after the one-week deadline has expired. If such an emergency occurs, you will be expected to speak with me before the exam period unless the nature of the emergency makes contacting me impossible or extraordinarily difficult.

Academic Integrity: SMC has an academic honor code. The pledge reads as follows: As a student member of an academic community based in mutual trust and responsibility, I pledge: to do my own work at all times, without giving or receiving inappropriate aid: to avoid behaviors that unfairly impede the academic progress of other members of my community; and to take reasonable and responsible action in order to uphold my community’s academic integrity.” This course operates under the premises of the academic honor code, including the expectation that you will work to uphold high standards of integrity.

Disabilities: Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements, for individuals with qualifying disabilities, are extended through the office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Coordinator at (925) 631-4164 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary’s website: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html

Helpful Hints:

1. Read slowly. The material in your readings and text requires slower reading and more analytical reading than the average text book. Goals in this course include becoming more self-aware. Really soak up the material. Apply it to your daily life.

2. Keep up. Because the material is cumulative, if you fall behind in your reading or miss lectures, the later information or concepts will be seem more complicated to you. And it will become harder and harder to catch up and contribute to the group discussions.

3. Work especially intensely during the first half of the course. Understanding the historical content behind African American psychology will provide you with the foundations needed to succeed in the course and on examinations.

4. Ask a lot of questions. It is always hard to predict exactly what topics a person will have difficulties with. For some individuals in the course this will be the first in depth exposure to cultures outside one’s culture of origin. If you take the initiative and ask a lot of questions, the class (or office hour) will become ideally structured to helping you and your peers to develop
a better understanding of the impact diversity on current psychological research. Never let me move on to a new topic before you thoroughly understand the first.
*Course outline subject to change.

**COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Week 1:** Aug 30

**Welcome**
Syllabus: Rules of engagement and course expectations

**Sept 1**

*Topic:* What is African American Psychology?
Part I- African American History: a brief overview of slavery and the beginnings of socio-political events which promoted social justice for people of color

*Readings:* None!

**Week 2:** Sept 6

*Topic:* Part II- Discrimination and Racism
Terminology


**Sept 8**

*Topic:* Beginnings of African American Psychology
Racial Identity Development

*Readings:

Phinney, J. S. (1990)
Tatum, B.D. (2003): Chapter 3&4

**Week 3:** Sept 13

*Topic:* African American Access to Education
*Film clips:* segregation and education studies
&
Waiting For Superman

*Readings:* Goldstein & Ponterotto (1997)

**Sept 15**
**Topic:** African American Access to Education  
**Film Discussion Activity:** Waiting for Superman

**Readings:** TBA

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**Week 4:** Sept 20

**Topic:** Stereotypes

**Readings:**  
Staples: “Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space”  
Steele (1997)  

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**Sept 22**

**Topic:** Criminality and racial profiling  
**Film clip:** What would you do?

**Readings:**  
TBA

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**Week 5:** Sept 27

**Topic:** White Privilege

**Readings:**  
Silva, E.: “Race Without Racists”

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**Sept 29**

**Topic:** Microaggressions & Intersectionality: roots, impacts, and recent research

**Readings:**  
Collins on Intersectionality  
Sue, et al. (2007) SKIM  
Sue, et al. (2008)  
Sue, et al. (2009)  
Watkins, et al. (2008) SKIM handout

**Assignment Due:** Identity Development
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<tr>
<th>Week 6:</th>
<th>October 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Being an Ally &amp; Interrupting Oppression</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Paul Kivel: “What does an Ally Do?”</td>
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<td>Sue (2004): “Whiteness and ethnocentric monoculturalism: making the invisible, visible”</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment Due:</strong> submit brief description of title and topic intention for Intersectionality Group Project</td>
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| October 6 |
| **Topic:** Being an Ally & Interrupting Oppression, Cont... |
| **Readings:** | Tatum, B. D. (2003): Chapter 8 & 9 |

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<tr>
<th>Week 7:</th>
<th>Oct 11 (Mid Term Exam)</th>
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<td>Oct 13 (No Class- Midterm holiday)</td>
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<th>Week 8:</th>
<th>Oct 18</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Part III- Family Systems Relationships</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Akers, et al. (2011)</td>
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<td>Cooper (2009)</td>
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<td>Haynes (2000)</td>
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<td><strong>Oct 20</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Gender Roles and Differences</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Cole &amp; Zucker (2007)</td>
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<td>Jones, et al. (2007)</td>
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<td>Senn, et al. (2009)</td>
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<th>Week 9:</th>
<th>Oct 25</th>
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<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Parenting style</td>
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Readings: 
*TBA*
Simons, et al. (2006)

**Oct 27**

*Topic: Media and Sexuality*

Readings: 
Gordon (2008)
Turner (2011)

**Assignment Due: Images of African Americans**

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**Week 10: Nov 1**

*Topic: Sexuality*

Readings: 
Cornel West: “Black Sexuality: The taboo Subject”
Carolyn M. Brown: Black and Gay in America (handout)
Fukuyama: LGBT people of color

Nov 3

*Topic: Trauma, Violence, Substance Abuse*

Readings: 
Lewin, et al. (2011)

**Williams, K. C. (1994)**

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**Week 11: Nov 8**

*Topic: Religion and Spirituality*
Readings: Davidson: “Religion and Spirituality”
Griffin-Fennel & Williams (2006)

Assignment Due: Personal Reflection Paper
Class exercise

Nov 10

Topic: “Embracing a Cross Racial Dialogue”
Film: The Color of Fear


_____________________________________________________________________

Week 12:

Nov 15

Topic: Ageing, Health, Illness, & Disability


Film: Healthcare system and discrimination

Nov 17

Topic: Treatment, Theory, and Practice

Readings: Goldstein (2008) Skim
Williams (2003)
Williams (2000)

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Week 13: Nov 22

Intersectionality Group Project:
1) ___________________ 2) ___________________ 3) ___________________ 4) ___________________

Intersectionality Group Project:
Nov 24 (No class)

Week 14: Nov 29

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Dec 1

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Week 15: Dec 6

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Intersectionality Group Project:

1) ____________ 2) ____________ 3) ____________ 4) ____________

Dec 8 (Last day of class)

Final Exam Review

Week 16: Finals Week