African and African American Studies, Spring Quarter 2004

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African and African American Studies Program
Spring Quarter 2004
Newsletter

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WRITINGS WORTHY OF CRITIQUE

Among the writings I found most interesting and worthy of critique this time is one that was published in the January 29, 2004 edition of Black Issues In Higher Education. It is titled—“African Americans Should Oppose Racial Preferences.” Written by Roger Clegg, general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Sterling, Virginia, this crafty and intriguing article tries to persuade African Americans to oppose “special preferences” because they supposedly harm Black people instead of helping them. After putting forth a few cunningly developed examples of how “preferences” allegedly damage Black people, Clegg concludes his discussion with the assertion that . . . “preferences hurt others . . . who happen not to be Black.” He warns that because non-blacks are also hurt by “preferences” we “must add to the costs of affirmative action borne exclusively by Black people . . . the costs borne by society in general when we have widespread racial double standards; the unfairness, the divisiveness, the resentment, the hypocrisies, the slippery slopes to other discrimination.”

Although Clegg never identifies who in “society in general” is bearing these costs, we know exactly to whom he is referring. Playing his GAME of nuancing, he too will not identify any specific people. We also will not lift up the well-documented myriad examples of who the real beneficiaries of “preferences” have been and continue to be in this “society in general.”

What we will say is one thing. In an era when many are quick to rise up and challenge African Americans “to get over it” (for the uninitiated, meaning to stop talking about race and racism) or try to convince them that “diversity” (called “pluralism” 30 years ago) is for real and the sure panacea for all of our lingering race problems, the priority of these egalitarians ought to be to read counselor Clegg carefully. Scrutinize his words so that they can see for themselves what he really represents: Yet another instance of how intellectual ideologues continue to write and promote ideas that are craftily guised so as to accomplish two mean tasks—

1. Denigrate Black men and women as strangely different from and inferior to all others and, 

2. Keep the fires of separation, mistrust, and anger burning between Whites and Blacks.

And they continue to blame it all on Black people.

Professor Paul R. Griffin
AFS Spring Quarter Courses:


AFS 499-01/REL 330-01 The Idea of Race and Racism in America 1870-present T,TH (2:15-3:55) 028 Millett Hall—Griffin - This course traces the history of the ideas of race and racism in America from the end of the Civil War to the present. It gives special study to the roles some white male liberals and feminists have played in promoting those ideas. Course satisfies the African American Religion requirement.

COM 102 Essentials of Interpersonal Communication various days, various times — Introduction to intrapersonal and interpersonal communication processes as they affect communication style and competence. Emphasis on a holistic approach to communication by understanding concepts, analyzing experiences, and practicing new skills.

ENG 205-01 Afro-American Literature T,TH (10:25-12:05) 401 Millett Hall — Jones — Readings in African American literature: for example, Phyllis Wheatley to the present, nineteenth-century freedom literature, twentieth-century black novel, and the female African-American tradition. Prerequisite: ENG 102

ENG 440-01/ENG 640-01 Studies in Ethnic and Regional Literature T,TH (12:20-2:00) 210 Fawcett Hall —Dobson — Intensive study of literature from different regions of America, reflecting the experiences of different ethnic groups. Intended to develop an understanding of race, region, and ethnicity as important both to literature and to its critical appreciation. Prerequisite: ENG 255/256 or ENG 251; At least one of the ENG 350-359 sequence

HST 490-01 Topics In African-American History M,W,F (11:00-12:05) 341 Oelman Hall—B. Green - Examines topics drawing from the African American experience; may include black ideology and leadership, racial tension in urban society, and the civil rights movement. Topics vary. (Topic: Civil Rights Movement) Prerequisite: HST 211-212 or HST 214-215

MUS 197-01/MUS 397 Paul Laurence Dunbar Chorale T,TH (4:10-5:40) M152 CA — Ellis — A chorale ensemble for students who desire to explore the musical style of gospel music and its roots and various forms. Includes performances of a body of literature associated with the African American church to the university and surrounding communities. Note: Enrollment by instructor permission only—audition required

MUS 290-01 African American Music: America and Beyond T,TH (12:20-2:00) M152 CA—Ellis Survey of the development of African American music from a historical, sociological, and cultural perspective. Included will be an analysis of the genres, influences, and impact on American and world culture.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction... The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength To Love, 1963.
PLS 325-01/PLS 525 African American Politics M.W., F (1:30-2:35) 286 Millett Hall—Snipe — Explores what makes African American politics distinctive from American politics and discusses the prerequisites for effective political and economic leadership in the black community. A major theme of the course is the notion of black power.

RST 271-02/04 Regional Studies: Africa T/TH (6:05-9:25) 301 Millett Hall/103 Oelman—Eguaroje: RST 271-01 M, W, F (11:00-12:00) 067 Rike Hall—Snipe: RST 271-03 T, TH (1:20-2:00) 286 Millett Hall—Kannan—Introduction to African environment; diversity of cultural heritages; changes due to modernization; colonialism, slavery, and independence; a brief survey of the relations of Africa to other non-western regions; and the contribution of Africa to world civilization.

SOC 341-01 Social Inequality T, TH (2:15-3:55) 103 Oelman Hall—Shepelak—Structures, theories, and consequences of social inequality with special emphasis on the United States. Prerequisites: SOC 200 or 201

SOC 442-01 Race and Minority Relations T, TH (2:15-3:55) 103 Oelman Hall—Bergdahl—Study of intergroup, racial, and ethnic group relations including the processes and consequences of conflict, prejudice, and discrimination. Note: Open to Juniors and Seniors only. Prerequisite: SOC 200 or 201


"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction...The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength To Love, 1963.
FACULTY REFLECTIONS

BARRIERS TO STUDENTS' LEARNING

Jeanne Ballantine, Ph.D. Professor, Sociology

At a recent conference two professors from the University of Akron presented preliminary findings on a study they had just completed on obstacles to student learning, especially for students of color. I listen to the results with interest: I, too, have been asking students questions on this topic. We agreed to possible collaboration on a study concerning barriers to students of color, using survey questions for students and teachers, and focus groups.

Success in college is related to many factors. The University of Akron asked students to identify their "three most central barriers to learning." The Akron study divided these responses into five categories: student issues, conflicts, teacher issues, environmental issues, and course and classroom issues. The following listing shows the responses given in each category:

Student Issues

Time, money, tuition, interest, stress, learning disabilities, being tired, being ill-prepared, not doing homework, getting behind, do not like to read, laziness, procrastination, poor time management, difficulty focusing/not paying attention, not enough sleep, driving time.

Conflicts

Sick relatives, sick children, work, personal life, romance, family responsibilities, socializing, recreation, sports, distractions (TV, video games).

Teacher Issues

Poor teachers, impersonal professors, inaccessible faculty, foreign instructors, teaching styles, teachers who are unwilling to be wrong, teachers who won't answer questions, students who ask too many questions, long lectures.

Environmental Issues

Uncomfortable chairs, noise level in class, temperature in classroom, parking.

Course and Classroom Issues

Tests/exams poorly constructed, only one method of evaluation (test), other students (too many, etc.), classes scheduled at inconvenient times, stressful tests, internet, multiple assignments due at the same time, work load of classes, fast pace of classes, boring books, group projects, uneven ability of students in class.

Class attendance was an

other issue addressed by the study. About 15 percent of the students indicated that they never skip class. Close to 60 percent miss class 1 to 5 times in a semester, 13 percent 5 to 10 times, and 8 percent 10 to 15 times. The most frequent reasons for missing classes were illness, followed by studying for other classes, attendance not required, and "teacher is boring."

Informal study beginnings at WSU indicate that parking, housing, and the atmosphere are also important issues. As data is collected at WSU, we can collaborate with the University of Akron and develop a deeper understanding of the students barriers to learning. The next step will be to determine what issues are most problematic at WSU and whether steps can be taken to alleviate those issues for students. Anyone interested in being involved, please contact Jeanne Ballantine, Sociology, x2442 or email jeanne.ballantine@wright.edu.

Please Save The Date:

Second Annual African and African American Studies Conference

Judge Adele Riley Visiting Professor, African and African American Studies/Political Science

May 6, 2004, Professor Lani Guinier will be featured at the second annual African and African American Studies Conference. Professor Guinier will speak to the topic, "Defining Affirmative Action Today."

Internationally known, Guinier, is a lawyer, civil rights activist, and currently professor of law at Harvard University. A brilliant, thought-provoking speaker, Guinier came to public attention when she was nominated by President Bill Clinton in 1993 to head the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, only to have her name withdrawn without a confirmation hearing.

May 6, 2004 1:30 p.m.
Student Union Multipurpose Room
In celebration of Black history month, is it safe to ask, "How well do African American youth understand slavery and its lasting effects?"

In 1619 when Africans landed on U.S. soil, they became first and foremost the property of a slave master. As one renowned Bible scholar articulated, "Today's African American youth don't know much about their culture; they don't know anything about their past. African Americans were purposely stripped of [their] culture. The only thing they know is the culture they were born into, so our ancestors have grown up with that and have passed it on to future generations."

During slavery, the African American family structure was so fragmented and disjointed that African Americans were only seen as a commercial commodity for the slave master. At the whim of slave masters, they would break up a slave family by selling a wife, a husband, a mother, a father, a son, or a daughter at the thump of a heartbeat, and family was all African Americans had. As a result of this practice, bloodlines were lost, and ancestries were difficult to trace. Consequently, the continuation of the familial lineage was never consummated for the masses of African Americans. Due to these factors, as a stranger in a strange land, no education, no command of the language, and no culture of their own to practice, African Americans lost the very essence of family and family ties. For 250 years, these conditions existed and still exist for many African Americans who are trapped in urban America. Therefore, the Black family and its social structure arose in shambles and still exist in shambles today in many Black communities throughout the United States.

When African Americans were physically emancipated from slavery, they were unleashed into a cold and hostile world of commerce. There was no public effort to educate them and no public effort to help them become a self-determined people. Instead there was much hindrance to keep them economically enslaved and Jim Crow laws helped to ensure this enslavement. With no skills except to raise cotton, sugar cane, and tobacco, African Americans had no land to call their own. When African Americans had difficulty carving out a livelihood for themselves and their families, they had to go back from whence they came, to serve their slaveholders as a so-called freed servant. By design, the former slaveholders created a system that would keep African Americans dependent on them and an unjust economic system. Under these circumstances, African Americans would have difficulty economically determining their destiny and would spend the rest of their lives (from generation to generation) fighting for equality, justice, and economic fairness. With this said, we need to ask, "How well does anyone understand slavery and its pronounced stigmatizing effects?"
Wake Up ... Somebody

Catherine Crosby, MPA
Department of Urban Affairs

In a time when unacceptable behavior is being accepted, when breasts are being exposed on television, when "bitch" is being used on the radio, we must "wake up". We must debate and discuss daily decisions that are being made on our behalf. We must acknowledge the consequences of objectionable behavior. We must realize that just as easily a pencil mark can be erased from a piece of paper, legislation can be passed regulating behavior and limiting our rights. The only way to prevent this from happening is to read, listen, and learn about the issues being put on the table and the policies being created to address those issues.

The rights that Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X died for, that Rosa Parks sat for, that so many marched to Washington for are at risk of being watered down or even taken away from us. Why do we allow policies to be implemented that will compare our youths' ability to learn, with other youth who have resources that put them at an advantage - Proficiency Testing? Why don't we hold legislators accountable for passing mandates that are "supposedly" created to help our children succeed, but do not provide funding to implement the programs that would make this possible - No Child Left Behind? Why do we allow legislation to be passed that is supposed to protect consumers against predatory lenders, but does a better job of protecting the practices of lending institutions putting us at risk of losing our homes and hopes for economic self-sufficiency - House Bill 386? Why do we allow officials to be elected without questioning their ability to address our needs? Why do we allow spending habits that will create deficits that will decrease the amount of financial aid available for us to attend universities/colleges of our choice? We're spending $87 billion dollars in Iraq and offering tax cuts that benefit the wealthy, but we are cutting education spending and many students don't have enough financial aid to attend the universities of their choice. Why do we allow affirmative action to be discussed without enough of us at the table to discuss its validity? How can so many of us give up when our children will reap what we sow, good or bad?

We can no longer blame elected officials or anyone else for our situation. We have the right and ability to change it. Our vote and our actions count. It is our responsibility to make the difference. We cannot wait on a Savior, because no one can save us but ourselves. We must create economic, political and social empowerment. It will not be done for us. How can it be done for us when no one else experiences life as we do, when no one else can understand the obstacles we face and what we need to overcome those obstacles? We must narrow the generational gap between the youth, community leaders and public servants. We must narrow the digital divide. We must narrow the gap between white homeowners and black homeowners. We must become scared for our children's future, so scared that it will motivate us to make a difference. How do we do this? We can do this. We are a strong, innovative and creative people.

Wake Up.... SOMEBODY

Student Reflections

Why AFS is Important to me

With Black History Month upon us, we take the time to remember and reflect on the numerous contributions African Americans have made to this country. It is difficult to consider what our world would be like had shiploads of Africans not been brought to the New World so many centuries ago.

WSU's African and African American Studies Club has been created to encourage a realization and a valuation of the continued influence and involvement of Africans and descendents of Africans in our nation's development in every aspect of American society, now and since before this country's birth. Education and forbearance have helped me begin to understand and appreciate cultures and societies outside my own. I hope through the AFS Club, others will begin to do the same with the African and African American experience.

Ife Shafeek
African and African American Studies Major

Announcing the newly formed African and African-American Studies Club

Join us in celebrating the experience of the African and African-American community!

For more information reply to ife.shafeek@wright.edu or scroggins.4@wright.edu
MALCOLM X ESSAY CONTEST

Sponsored by
African and African American Studies and
Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center

Topic: Please reflect on this topic as you consider the Civil Rights legacy of Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik El Shabazz). This is to commemorate the birthday of Malcolm X, on May 19th, 2004. Please address the significance of one or both of these quotations by Malcolm X:

1. “Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research.”

2. “Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

Rules: Essays may not exceed 1,000 words, and must be typed, double-spaced. Entrants must be currently registered Wright State University - Main Campus or Lake Campus students. Essays must be written solely by the entrants. Students, however, are encouraged to contact the Writing Center at (937) 775-2158 for help.

A separate information page must be stapled to your essay listing your name, major, classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student, or non-degree), college/school, home address, and telephone number. Do not identify yourself anywhere on the essay. Please also type the following statement on the information page along with your signature and the date you submitted your essay:

“I am submitting my essay in response to the African and African American Studies/Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center Contest. I attest that I have written this essay in my own words. I agree to have my essay reproduced or distributed, in print or electronic form, to the University and Dayton communities, and beyond. The University reserves the right to revoke the prize if the essay is not written solely by me.

Please submit the essay, along with the information page to:
Malcolm X Essay Contest
C/O AFS/Bolinga Center
140 Millett Hall
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked no later than April 2, 2004

Awards:
First Prize  $100.00
Second Prize  $50.00
Third Prize  $25.00

Winners will be notified the week of April 16, 2004, and prizes will be awarded at the Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center Awards and Recognition Banquet on May 19, 2004.

More Information: For more information about the essay contest, please contact the Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center at (937) 775-5645.
African and African American Studies
Spring Quarter 2004

FACULTY PARTICIPATING IN THE
AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

- Dr. Marjorie Baker
  Associate Professor, Social Work
  270 Millett Hall - x3431
- Dr. Jeanne Ballantine
  Professor, Sociology
  270 Millett Hall - x2442
- Dr. Joseph Coleman
  Associate Professor, MIS
  212Q Rike Hall - x2648
- Dr. Frank Dobson
  Associate Professor of English;
  Director, Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center
  145 Millett Hall - x5645
- Dr. Marlese Durr
  Associate Professor, Sociology;
  Director, Women's Studies
  270 Millett Hall - x2275
- Dr. Barbara Green
  Associate Professor, History
  370 Millett Hall - x3636
- Dr. December Green
  Associate Professor of Political Science;
  Director, International Studies
  325 Millett Hall - x4817
- Dr. Paul Griffin
  Director, African and African American Studies; Professor, Religion
  144 Millett Hall - x5532
- Dr. Lillie Howard
  Vice President for Curriculum and Instruction, Dean of University College and Professor, English
  240 University Hall - x2097
- Dr. Sharon Jones
  Assistant Professor, English
  481 Millett Hall - x3397
- Dr. Carol Hathanson
  Associate Professor, Art History
  A335 Creative Arts Center - x2896
- Dr. Randall Paul
  Associate Professor, Music;
  Coordinator of Woodwinds & Music Department Scholarships
  M244 Creative Arts Center - x2508
- Dr. Dr. Mary Rucker
  Assistant Professor, Communications
  425 Millett Hall - x2631
- Dr. Alpana Sharma
  Associate Professor, English
  457 Millett Hall - x2070
- Dr. Tracy Snipe
  Associate Professor, Political Science
  325 Millett Hall - x3767
- Dr. Jennifer Subban
  Assistant Professor, Urban Affairs
  225 Millett Hall - x3650

VISITING SCHOLARS

- William Gillispie
  Visiting Instructor, AFS/Urban Affairs
  225 Millett Hall - x2941
- Judge Adele Riley
  Visiting Professor, AFS/Political Science
  141 Millett Hall - x5571

UPCOMING EVENTS

African and African American Studies Conference
  Thursday, May 6, 2004, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Student Union Multipurpose Room
  Keynote Speaker: Lani Guinier
  Free and Open to the Public

Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center
  Black History Month Celebration
  Tuesday, February 24, 2004, 6 p.m., Student Union Multipurpose Room
  Speaker Series: Lerone Bennett
  Free and Open to the Public

Annual Recognitions and Awards Celebration
  Wednesday, May 19, 2004, 6 p.m., Student Union Multipurpose Room

4 Women From Birmingham
  Thursday, March 11, 5:30-7 p.m., Medical Sciences Auditorium
  Free and Open to the Public

Dance Concert
  Thursday, March 11, 8 p.m. Creative Arts Center
  Ode to Birmingham (one piece of the concert)
  Tickets - $10 adults; $7 students and seniors

Brown vs. Board of Education
  Tuesday and Wednesday, May 11-12, 2004, Time and Location TBA
  Keynote Speaker: Julian Bond

Quest Conference
  Friday, April 16, 2004, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Student Union