Fulbright Zulu Module

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Course Description

The Psychology of African Americans class (AFS – 5700) is taught over the course of a 15-week semester during the fall and winter semesters. The course is available to all students who have completed their second year of undergraduate studies. AFS 5700 is offered by the Department of African American Studies at Wayne State University and cross-listed with the Department of Psychology. The course is designed to introduce students to the major issues in African (Black)/African American Psychology. The course examines classic and contemporary theories and methods that describe and explain the social and psychological experiences of people of African descent. The class includes an examination of the methodological approaches, theories, and paradigms employed within the discipline of psychology to research and treat African (Black) /African American behavior and personality development. The course is a survey of the field of Black (African/African American) Psychology with an emphasis on African Psychology as an evolution within the field of Black Psychology. This module includes an introduction to the Indigenous (African) Knowledge systems, Bantu Philosophy, and Mbuntu as theoretical tools for conducting research, and the development of treatment modalities designed to promote and facilitate wellness among people of African descent and their communities. This module is designed to enhance the AFS – 5700 by incorporating the concepts of indigenous knowledge systems, Bantu Philosophy, and Mbuntu as essential components of traditional healing and wellness.

Learning Objectives

- Students will obtain an understanding of the African worldview and its relevance to African American culture.
- Students will obtain an understanding of the Zulu culture and worldview.
- Students will obtain tools for assessing the degrees to which traditional African culture was retained and/or diminished by people of African descent (Continental and Diasporic) due to enslavement and colonialism.
- Students will obtain an understanding of the field of Black (African/African American) Psychology.
- Students will obtain an understanding of Bantu philosophy and Mbuntu as effective philosophical underpinnings of the field of African Psychology.
- Students will obtain an understanding of the various schools of thought, models, and methodologies that are associated with Black (African/African American) Psychology.
- Students will examine the work of scholars that have contributed to the development and evolution of the field of Black (African/African American) Psychology.

- Students will examine the works of the founding members of four schools of thought associated with Black (African/African American) Psychology i.e., the Traditional School, the Reformist School, the Radical School, and African Psychology.

Assigned Readings & Sources

Assigned During Week 1

White, Joseph, *The Psychology of Blacks: An Afro-American Perspective*, Prentice Hall, 1984

The Seven Elements of Culture Handout.

Head Surgery (YouTube Video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp6-wUQHMnQ&rco=1

Assigned During Week 2

Jahn, Janheinz, *Muntu: African Culture and the Western World* (Assigned During Week 3)

Nobles, Wade et al. African/Black Psychology
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHMPic7q0Pk&t=10s

Assigned During Week 3

Mlungisi Ngcobo, Mlungisi Towards the Africanisation of medicine practice using indigenous medicine (PowerPoint)

Jacob Rugare Mugumbate, Rodreck Mupedziswa, Janestic M. Twikirize, Edmos Mthethwa, Ajanaw Alemie Desta & Oluwagbemiga Oyinlola (2024) "Understanding Ubuntu and its contribution to social work education in Africa and other regions of the world, Social Work Education", 43:4, 1123-1139, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2023.2168638 (Assigned during week 3)

Assigned During Week 4

Washington, Kevin (Mwata Kairi), (2010) "Zulu Traditional Healing, Afrikan Worldview and the Practice of Ubuntu: Deep Thought for Afrikan/Black Psychology" The Journal of Pan African Studies, vol.3, no.8, June 2010 (Assigned during Week 4)

Tapala, Katlego, Ukuthwasa as repair and restoration for mental well-being (PowerPoint).

The above readings will introduce students to the concepts of worldview and the seven elements of culture as tools to understand African and African American cultures. Bantu Philosophy as an interpretation of traditional African cosmology, ontology, axiology, and epistemology. The preceding includes an introduction to the African and Afro-American Worldviews. The Mugumbate and Washington articles examine Mbuntu as a treatment and healing modality within the fields of social work and African Psychology.

The preceding slide presentation provides an examination of theoretical and practical approaches to conducting research, knowledge production, and the traditional Zulu concepts of healing and wellness as practised by Zulu Sangoma (Shaman) and Iyanga (herbalist). Dr. Mlungisi's slide presentation examines Mbuntu and its implications for use within Western medicine practices.

Videos

Head Surgery (YouTube Video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp6-wUQHMnQ&rco=1

This video, which documents a traditional African medical procedure, supports the idea that indigenous Knowledge systems, i.e., effective medical practices, were not only effective but existed among African people prior to contact with European prior to the eras of enslavement and/or colonialism.

Mkhize, Nhlanhla "Reflecting on African-centered Psychology with Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zg4VS0I2_6g

Dr. Mkhize provides a brief yet thorough overview of the discipline of African Psychology.

Nobles, Wade et al. African/Black Psychology
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHMPic7q0Pk&t=10s

This African psychology video provides an overview of African psychology from the perspective of key trailblazers and contributors to the field. These include Dr. Wade Nobles, Joseph White, Kobi Kambone, and others.

The Seven Elements of Culture

All people are born into a culture which they inherit and first learn within their families/extended families. A people's culture teaches them ways of thinking, believing, and behaving. Culture which is passed from generation to generation.

Social Organizations – All cultures have a social structure which is comprised of smaller units within the culture. These social organizations are created to help the people within the culture meet their basic needs. Marriage, family, and schools are examples of social organizations.

Customs and Traditions – Customs and traditions are rules of behavior within a culture that are designed to sustain order among its members. Examples of these would be the shaking of hands (right hand) when men meet, the removal of shoes upon entering someone's home, etc.

Language – Language is essential to communication within a culture. Language is also the main vehicle for teaching culture to its members and transmitting the culture across generations.

Art & Literature – Art & Literature is creative production that emanates from a people's imagination. Art & Literature includes music, dance, storytelling, orature, craft, and all forms of creative production.

Religion/ Cosmology – Religion/Cosmology helps a people explain the universe and their existence within the universe. These aspects help its members uphold the values they deem important and help them to answer questions regarding the meaning and purpose of life.

Economic Systems – People create economic systems to use their resources to meet their wants and needs. To meet their needs, economic systems address questions such as what natural resources and finished goods should be processed and produced, how they will be produced, and who they should be produced for. Economic systems also address the generation of wealth and how the wealth of a culture will be distributed.

Forms of Government – All people create governments to meet their common needs, i.e., safety, education, and to sustain order within their cultures. Different cultures form different types of governments to govern themselves.

Assignments/ Exercises

Week 1 Lecture: The Two-Cradle Theory, human civilization, culture formation, and the African Worldview

Assignment 1

Comparative African/African Culture Essay

Assigned Week 2

The African/African American culture paper requires that students write a nine-paragraph research paper that comparatively examines Zulu and African American Cultures. Please use the 7 elements of culture as a template to examine both cultures. The minimum required length is 9 paragraphs. The paper should include two paragraphs: one for the introduction and one for the conclusion, and one paragraph for each of the elements of both cultures. To make your work concise, you should focus on one key aspect of each element of culture. Examples of the preceding would be Social Organizations, i.e., **family structure** or **social class,** one particular art form for Arts & Literature, etc. Your work should examine traditional Zulu culture prior to the Zulus' contact with European settlers, colonialism, or Apartheid. The paper should be written in either MLA or APA format using Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced with a 1-inch margin. Your paper should be supported with sources (i.e., in-text citations, footnotes, endnotes). Your paper should also include a work-cited page or bibliography.

This comparative essay will introduce students to Zulu culture and knowledge and grounding within "African American culture". This grounding will improve students' understanding of the key assumptions that undergird Black (African and African American) psychology, i.e., the African worldview, the Two Cradle Theory, historic memory, and cultural continuity. This essay will be assigned to the second week of class. Students will have two weeks to complete and submit this assignment.

Annotated Bibliography (Midterm)

The focus of the annotated bibliography is Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Bantu philosophy, Mbuntu, and African Psychology. The annotated bibliography reflects a process that prepares one to write a scholarly paper. Please review your notes from the annotated bibliography lecture and the included link to obtain a full understanding of an annotated bibliography and the purpose that it serves (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.htmlLinks to an external site.)The annotated bibliography should include a 1- page introduction which explains what you accomplished in the process of conducting research and writing the annotated bibliography. Examples of such would include the number and type of sources you reviewed, and the emergent and consistent themes reflected within the literature. The introduction should be followed by 15 sources and annotations. The sources/annotations

should be organized using the same format as a standard MLA or APA bibliography/work cited page. However, each source should include an annotation, which is a brief description (summary or evaluation) of the book or journal article**.** Only academic books or academic journal articles are to be included in the annotated bibliography. Although e-books are allowed, neither the books from class nor websites are to be included in the annotated bibliography.

This assignment is midterm and will help the professor to assess the students' understanding of the knowledge covered during the first seven weeks of the class, i.e., Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Bantu philosophy, Mbuntu, and Black (African/African) psychology. This paper also prepares students for their final papers. The assignment will be assigned in the seventh week of class. Students will have one week to complete and submit this assignment.

Assignment/ Exercise 3

Final Paper & Oral Presentation

The final paper is a persuasive paper that advocates for or opposes the incorporation of Bantu Philosophy and Mbuntu Psychology in your research methods and/or your development of treatment strategies. The paper is required to be 8-10 pages in length and should include a clearly stated thesis, a brief discussion of your perspective, a brief discussion of the opposing position, evidence that supports your position, a summary of your argument, and a conclusion.

A brief PowerPoint that reflects the argument you presented in your final research paper is also required. The PowerPoint is required to support your position taken in your argumentative paper. Each student will have 15 minutes for their PowerPoint presentation.

This assignment will examine the degree to which students have obtained an understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Bantu philosophy, Mbuntu and Black (African/African American) psychology, the effectiveness of psychological healing practices and research. Students' ability to formulate cogent arguments regarding the use of Mbuntu in the field of psychology allows for an assessment of the students' understanding of the arguments that support and oppose Mbuntu as an effective paradigm within the discipline of Black (African/African American) Psychology. This assignment will be due in the fifteenth week, on the last day of class.

Conclusion

The assigned readings, sources, videos, and assignments that comprise this module, along with the worldview models and the seven elements of culture, provide a lens that facilitates cultural grounding within the Zulu and African worldviews and the African cultural perspectives. This grounding and the comparative essay will enhance the students' knowledge and respect for their culture and that of the Zulu people. This enhanced knowledge and respect result in an increased level of cultural awareness that contributes to the students becoming "better citizens."

Black (African/African American) psychology has evolved from a discipline grounded in Western research methods, theories and paradigms to a discipline grounded in traditional African, culturally based methods, theories, and paradigms. This evolution is undergirded by African people's (continental and diasporic) quest for "liberation, freedom, and social justice." The various contributors to the discipline of Black (African and African American) Psychology understood the need to decolonize and recenter the African mind. A free mind is essential to people obtaining their liberation, freedom, and social justice.