

African and African American Studies Program Newsletter

Volume 13, Issue 1

Winter Quarter 2009

Inside this issue:

Director's Corner	1
AFS Winter Quarter Courses	2-3
Director's Corner (continuation)	4
Student Reflection	5
Faculty Reflections	6-7
AFS Faculty and Staff	8

Director: Dr. Paul R. Griffin

Administrative Specialist: Gladys Williams
Office: 425 Millett Hall
Telephone: 775-5532
paul.griffin@wright.edu
gladys.williams@wright.edu

DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

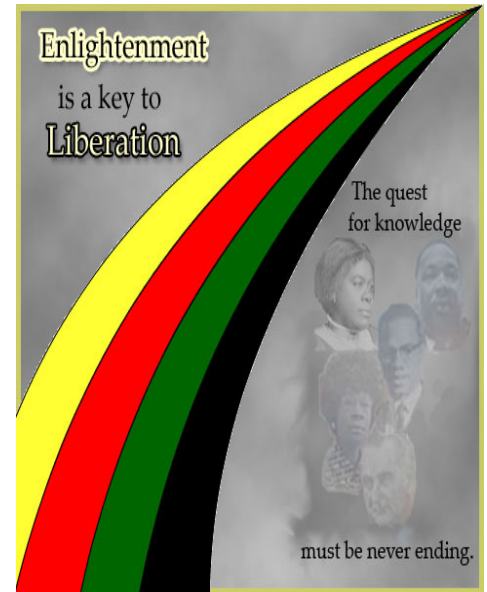
First of all, let

me say "Welcome Back" to all returning AFS majors and minors. I also wish to offer greetings to all who may read this Newsletter. I would also like to **welcome Dr. Dana Murray Patterson, PhD, as the new director of the Bolinga Black Cultural Resources Center. The AFS Program offers our support and we look forward to working with Dr. Patterson in the future.**

Since I last wrote from this corner, I have read three interesting writings. The first is a book by Juan Williams, *Enough: The Phony Leaders, Dead-End Movements, and Culture of Failure That Are Undermining Black America—and What We Can Do About It* (Random House, 2006). The other two are syndicated newspaper articles by Leonard Pitts, Jr., "Blacks Must Stop Equating

Skin Color With Innocence" (2008) and "Who Died and Made Al Sharpton President?" (2008). Williams' book focuses on how present day Black leaders, specifically the Reverends Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, have become nothing more than what he calls "racial hucksters" and "corporate blackmail[ers] whose delight is to engage in "boycotts [and] naked shakedowns" that only benefit themselves and not the African American masses.

Pitts' one article looks at how Blacks in Detroit, Michigan supported their African American mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, despite concrete evidence that he blatantly and defiantly committed numerous felonious crimes. His second writing, as the title suggests, takes on Sharpton's claim to be a Black leader and also how he has exploited the



Black community for his own benefit

It is clear that Williams and Pitts have serious issues with how the Reverends Jackson and Sharpton and Mayor Kilpatrick have served as leaders. What is not as clear to me as a historian is: Why have they waited until now to raise these concerns?

Over the past two decades various media have reported several scandalous acts involving Jackson and Sharpton. Moreover, when they first put themselves up as leaders--Jackson shortly following Martin King's assassination and Sharpton in the early 1980s--it was almost universally known that their qualifications to serve were at best questionable. Let's be straightforward here.

Coming out of the Black preacher tradition, Jackson and Sharpton, as well as

To be continued on pg.4

AFS Winter Quarter Courses:

African and African American Studies Program

Wright State University
425 Millett Hall
(937) 775-5532

A minor brings beginning knowledge
A major offers greater understanding
Choose one **TODAY!**



Mary McLeod-Bethune



Malcolm X



Zora Neale Hurston



W.E.B. Dubois



Barbara Jordan



Martin Luther King

AFS 200—What is the African and African American Experience? Dr. Jones T/TH 10:25-12:05

A historical and methodological analysis of both African histories and cultures and the history of the diaspora struggles of persons of African descent to create a life and distinct culture among world civilizations.

AFS 401—Senior Research Project Dr. Paul Griffin

Divided over two quarters, this course allows students to bring their study in the major to completion through major research project that focuses on one specific aspect of African or African American life.

AFS 402—Ideas of Race, 1619-1865 Dr. Paul Griffin T/TH 2:15-3:55 (WI)

This course studies the religious ideas that defined and sustained anti-black practices from 1619 to 1865.

AFS 499/PLS 430(2)—Struggle for Civil Rights Sean Wilson M/W/F 9:45-10:50

Selected topics relevant to historical and current issues in African and African American studies. Course may be repeated for up to four credit hours.

ATH 447—Peoples and Cultures of Africa Geoffrey Owens M/W/F 2:45-3:50

Survey of the peoples and socio-cultural systems of Africa with emphasis on sub-Saharan ecological and bio-cultural relationships.

COM 104—Introduction to Human Communication Martha Antolik M/W/F 11:00-11:50

This course surveys major concepts, theories, and research approaches in the study of human communication. The course assists students in developing requisite knowledge and skills in the development of their own communication competence.

HST 215—African American History Since 1877 Barbara L. Green M/W/F 12:15-1:20

Survey of Black people in American society from Reconstruction to the present.

"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.

MUS 290 (01) African American Music: America/Beyond

Brenda Ellis, MWF 11:00—12:05

Survey of the development of African American Music from a historical, so-
ciological, and cultural perspective.

MUS 290 (02) African American Music: America/Beyond

**Brenda Ellis, T/TR 10:25—12:05 (Course description same
as above)**

**PLS 399—Moot Court: Appellate Advocacy John P. Feld-
meier T/TR 12:00—2:00**

Problems, approaches, and topics in the field of political science. Topics
vary.

PLS 451—Contemporary African Politics December Green

M/W/F 12:15-1:20

Political processes and governmental institutions of sub-Saharan Africa; spe-
cial attention to dynamics of political development and social and economic
change. Comparative analysis of selected African political systems

PLS 451—Contemporary African Politics December Green

M/W/F 12:15-1:20

Political processes and governmental institutions of sub-Saharan Africa; spe-
cial attention to dynamics of political development and social and economic
change. Comparative analysis of selected African political systems

**PLS 408—Radical Black Thought Tracy Snipe T/TH 2:15-
3:55**

Examines radical black thought and philosophy from a Pan-Africanist per-
spective

**African and African
American
Studies Program**

Wright State University
425 Millett Hall
(937) 775-5532

A minor brings beginning
knowledge
A major offers greater
understanding
Choose one **TODAY!**



Mary McLeod-Bethune



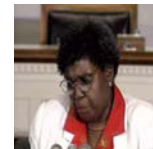
Malcolm X



Zora Neale Hurston



W.E.B. Dubois



Barbara Jordan



Martin Luther King

*The AFS staff members
wish Dr. Barbara Green
a speedy recovery. We all
look forward to her return
for Winter Quarter
2009.*

"Darkness cannot drive out dark-
ness; 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 descend-
ing spiral of destruction....The
chain reaction of evil--hate beget-
ting 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.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER (con't)

others who are not preachers, have meshed their leadership activities with a homiletic rhetoric that has long been consciously designed to sway and convict. All human histories--regardless of race, gender, etc.--have repeatedly shown that such rhetoric often has not applied to the rhetorician, especially if it involved the matter of up-

standing character. As insightful as the three writings are, they would have been even more laudable, if their authors have given them grounding in the distant past. Such a historical location would have opened a door to better understanding of why leadership in Black communities traditionally has been in the hands of Black males who are predominantly from the ranks of the clergy. There has long been a sanctity surrounding these "god-called" men that, in turn, has often made a critique of their humanity seen as blasphemy against God.

I must make one final point here. As I was reading their writings, I wondered why Williams and Pitts did not place Mr. Barack Obama under their microscope of questionable Black leadership. Unlike us historians who are restricted by historical methods and hence must always be concerned with "historical distance," both men are reporters\journalists and hence free to analyze and draw conclusions about the present.



Their analysis of this heretofore largely unknown candidate for the presidency could have entailed the following questions:

1. What has made Mr. Obama so acceptable to Americans across every demographic line?
2. What five unquestionable qualifications does he have to be president?
3. Does he differ from and is he more qualified than other Black leaders, past and present, who have put their names up for the presidency and if so, how?

4. Does he present a clear understanding of what it means to be Black in America?

5. Was he correct in not attending the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's march across the Pettis Street Bridge in Alabama?

6. Was he correct in not attending the National Baptist Convention?

7. Does his failure to attend national level Black meetings put him in the same class as White candidates who refuse to accept such invitations?

8. Does he seem to be another Bill Cosby in terms of his views of the Black community?

9. Does his refusal to

admit and discuss "race" in his campaign place him in the same category as Mr. Tiger Woods?

10. Does his many publicly stated admirations, indeed, love for Abraham Lincoln, his many writings on Lincoln, and his decision to announce his candidacy for the presidency in Lincoln's hometown suggest a lack of understanding of both American and African American histories\experiences?

11. Who PUT Obama UP to speak at the 2004 Democratic Convention, and why?

(Remember that he was not an elected United States Senator at this time.)

12. Who are his key advisors?

Let me cut to the quick here. It is very strange that few individuals in positions to ask these and other hard questions of Barack Obama have done so. Only time will tell what the significance of this neglect is.

In the meantime, I hope that my posing of these questions will at least stimulate you to engage in the same kind of critical analysis of Mr. Obama as ought to be given to all others--White, Black, male or female-- who would dare seek to be a leader, especially a United States president.



Student Reflection: As an AFS Major

Hello everyone. My

name is Ralph Davis, Jr., and I am a senior AFS major here at WSU. As my time at WSU comes closer to an end, I often find myself reflecting upon the experience that I have had here as a student and as an AFS major. At this point, I can honestly say that my experience has been a very enlightening, sometimes challenging, yet all in all valuable one that has helped shape my current ambitions and future goals, and prepared me mentally to live within this society and address issues that affect African Americans and society as a whole.

Within the AFS major, I have been able to explore many of the personal interests that I had prior to enrolling in college, and interests that I never saw or heard discussed at great length within the major social institutions in my life. These interests include African American history, social inequality, and racism. Aside from the occasional information I would come across or casual observances I would make on my own, much of the pertinent information I needed to know about these issues had remained hidden from me. However, the AFS major provided me with a program that encouraged and challenged me to actually learn about these issues in greater depth, and to do so in an intellectual manner. By doing so, I have been enabled to discern many examples of racism and discriminatory practices that still occur within our society, and even on our own WSU campus, much easier. Doing so has also allowed me to see how Blacks can be just as guilty of perpetuating these instances just as much as whites or any other group.

Also while within the AFS major, I have had the privilege of partici-

pating in two programs that have really helped formulate my present and future aspirations. These were the AFS program's own First Grade Academic Improvement Initiative (FGAII), and the Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers (IRT), a prestigious graduate school preparatory program for minorities located in Andover, Ma. Within the FGAII program, I had the opportunity to help tutor disadvantaged and mainly African American first grade students from the Dayton Public Schools in math, reading, and writing. This experience really exposed me to the struggle that many inner-city youths, especially African Americans, have within the American public system, and it also encouraged me to take a special interest in the education of African Americans and get involved with minority youth early on in their lives. Within the IRT, I was rigorously trained for graduate school, exposed to numerous theories and concepts about education and race, and counseled on how to write clearer and more effectively. Although that experience was tough at times, I was able to come out of it with a better understanding of graduate school and a strong desire to pursue a graduate degree in the area of education.

Currently, I am working on the last requirement I have to fulfill for the major, and that is my senior research paper. Within my paper, I have chosen to discuss why the Dayton Public School System should implement a required African American Studies course within all of its high schools and try to incorporate African American Studies within the course content of every subject within all of its schools. I am using the Philadelphia Public School District as a model, because in 2005 it became the first public school district in the nation to do just this. My intent is for this paper to represent the culmination of my experience here at WSU, reflect my current and future interests and ambitions, and provide

proof of my understanding of how theory can be put to practice. Though there are some things that I wish I could have learned more about, there are many valuable things that I did learn within the AFS major. These include the importance of research, how to think critically, that race is a social construction, that American racism is a very cunning and complex idea and practice, and to seek truth. Above all else, the AFS major has instilled within me the desire to combat the racism, discrimination, and negative behaviors that continue to plague African Americans, as well as any other form of oppression that exists in our society.

REMEMBER-

**The Future
Belongs to Those
Who Prepare for
it TODAY.**

Malcolm X

Faculty Reflections

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND
THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF ETIQUETTE AND EMOTIONAL LABOR
BY
MARLESE DURR AND ADIA HARVEY WINGFIELD *

Perhaps more than any other potential First Lady since Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama faces considerable pressure to transform, change, and adapt her persona to become more palatable to a broad spectrum of voters. She has been alternately cast as unpatriotic (See New Yorker Magazine Cover, July 21, 2008). Yet at the same time, she has been admired for her fashion sense while simultaneously being carefully scrutinized, and often perceived as too aggressive and pushy. While many of the same criticisms were applied to Hillary Clinton in 1992, intersections of gender and race create a particular and somewhat unique situation for Michelle Obama. Hillary Clinton was cast as an overbearing, emasculating feminist, but Michelle Obama faces gendered racial stereotypes of the “angry Black woman,” an image grounded in the Sapphire stereotype of Black women as domineering, vociferous, and curt. Like the image of the angry Black woman, Sapphire serves to reinforce ideas of Black women’s inherent lack of femininity and worth (Collins 2004). Thus, Michelle Obama has struggled to distance herself from these stereotypical images and behaviors in hopes of altering the way she is perceived.

Her challenge is familiar to many professional Black women, who like her, must transform or alter themselves to be welcomed and accepted in their workplaces. The nature of social relationships in the office is dictated by historical customs, which have been a traditionally white male citadel. Not until after Executive Order 11246 mandating Affirmative Action was implemented (Department of Labor, 1965) did employers actively seek ways to include women and racial minorities within organizations’ and agencies’ hierarchies. Men, the carriers of organizational culture and moral authority (Kanter, 1977; Acker; 1990) created this new bureaucratic arm of professional and managerial expansion, making decisions regarding acceptable behavior, communication, skin color, style and dress, (e.g., dark suits, conservative dresses, white shirts, low heels, and no flashy jewelry, hair, and make-up) concentrating on who their clients are and their cultural tastes. This has had implications for women of all races who become employed within this new-found bureaucratic configuration of organizational norms, but has had particular consequences for women of color, who do not fit either the gendered or racialized norms of these environments.

By establishing an implicitly gendered and racialized culture, obstacles remain for women. Acker (1990) and Kanter (1987) argue that organizations are not the gender-neutral bureaucracies they purport to be. Rather, they are gendered in ways that often locate women in dead-end jobs, with exposure to the organizational hierarchy as tokens. Yet this hierarchy is two-tiered. For women of color, especially those in professional posts, these disadvantages are further complicated by race. These women often explain that upon entering the labor market as professionals, they alter their behavior by changing their look, conversation content, and style to fit in, but also to be promoted (Jones and Shorter–Gooden, 2003). They often speak of performance weariness when describing their spoken and unspoken communicative interaction-exchanges with white colleagues. Many simply state that they feel they are in a “parade” where they are being judged for appearance, personal decorum, communication skills, and emotion management in addition to work productivity.

Senior professional women like Kenya counsel: *“that’s not professional. Remember they got the s[hit] that’ll get you bit! Keep your Negro in check! Don’t let it jump up and show anger, disapproval, or difference of opinion. They have to like you and think that you are as close to them as possible in thought, ideas, dress, and behavior.”* Her advice discloses the appropriate etiquette, behavior, and emotion management, but also instructs other Black women to blend manners, behavior, and reaction to fashion satisfactory workplace deportment. The counseling given to these women is directly linked to handling stress and alienation while balancing a need for survival and safety in the workplace or remaining employed without a row. Consequently, the challenges these women face involve doing the necessary work to fit in, and managing their feelings in an often inhospitable workplace in hopes of capturing some degree of professional success-promotion.

Many believe they continue to carry stereotypical and media-based depictions of them as domineering unaccomplished breeders, whores, welfare queens, as well as confrontational. Bebe reports an administrator at her school saying *“I am not afraid of aggressive women”*. So, “performance” becomes their safety mechanism. However for African American women, performance related to whites’ gendered expectations is rarely accounted for or described. We argue that this aperture in the literature lacks a definition of informal and/or formal race-based boundary maintenance in the workplace for Black women (and men). Etiquette and emotional labor for these women is defined as two-tiered personal deportment: (1) a generalized bureaucratic passive aggressive level; and (2) a race-based set of expectations grounded in survival strategies to cope with challenges they face in environments that are unwelcoming and possess concrete ceilings across organizations and occupations.

Gwendolyn Combs (2003) argues that although women in managerial careers have advanced and equalized their representation, status, and earning power as managers, Black women battle with the confluence of race and gender to gain organizational standing and advancement. Within the workplace, informal social networks are important for organizational socialization and career advancement, but African American women in managerial and executive positions are often members of the out-group. Thus,

Faculty Reflections (con't)

networks salient to advancement are less accessible, but possess alternate dimensions for Black women than for Black men and White women and men. These arguments are supported by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workplace Development (2002) which



argues that workplace milieus function in a different way for Blacks than for other racial/ethnic minority groups (e.g., Hispanics and Asians); in that African Americans, more than any other groups, are most likely to be treated unfairly in the areas of promotion and training opportunities, more significant in disengagement, and targets of workplace discrimination. But, these issues are rarely explored, even in media accounts about Black women's lives. So despite the spate of research on Black women's location in the labor market and scholars' contention that promotion is purposeful or, as stated by Baldi and Mc Brier (1997), a "strategic place" to investigate workplace racial inequality as a site where discrimination most likely resides and persists due to a lowered risk of litigation against employers, (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Nkomo and Cox, 1990) this argument has been and is publicly ignored.

CONTEXTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AT PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACES

For professional black women, the performances that they feel compelled to give are shaped by the ways intersections of race and gender isolate them and place them under greater scrutiny. As they take stock of their work environments and perceive colleagues' stereotypes, beliefs, and preconceptions, these women learn that, like Michelle Obama, they must repackage themselves in ways that are more palatable to their white co-workers. Black women professionals find themselves doing both surface acting and emotional labor in order to successfully integrate their work spaces (Hochschild 1983). Tandy states "I got my job as a manager because they had no black managers, but guess what I manage? I manage compensatory education staff and programs". Elizabeth says that "I do the same, but it's the only way to become a manager at ... this place does not care about their students, just the federal aid and visibility of their darkies. That's when they get them and if they stay. You are on for them all the time. But you take what you can get."

So, as they learn the verbal and body language of bureaucracy, they must negate values and styles of communication developed as a survival skill in their community. Most say they feel defenseless. Nevertheless, for many, negotiation within this environment in most cases occurs at a cost. Sharon reports, "you learn to remain quiet and speak when spoken to and never verbalize your thoughts on an issue or policy." Others, such as Rhonda, suggest that "you go with the flow, since you realize this may not be a battle you can win, despite the fact you may be correct in assumptions and remedies you have in mind." They smile on cue, remaining expressionless, unmoved by the content of conversation even if the subject is distressing or controversial, and carefully couching responses in the language of the workplace. Keena states, "but you have to endure this if you want to get ahead, regardless of where you might be promoted to." Charlotte, the only Black attorney at a mid-sized firm, states: "I'm upset about being a Black professional woman in this environment. It's very isolating. But as much as I'd like to be upset about it, I can't because it would come off the wrong way. So I have to be happy-go-lucky, everything's great, everything's wonderful, but it really sucks."

Our analysis reveals that social expectations shape individuals fit at work and in society, while prescribing the conditions and consequences for integration within employment and social communities while strengthening ethnic group solidarity. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in a professional community where interaction is close and constant, varied but integrated, but laced with a strong sense of propagandized social acceptance. In such communities, individuals learn more about themselves based on exchange relationships when a sense of "community" and "belonging" is initiated and achieved for most of its members through working to build the community. However, in some instances, becoming part of such a community, especially for persons of color, is a journey into remembering, as well as understanding, *who we are, what we are, where we fit, and how we are received* marks our continued journey.

I This excerpt is part of a paper being prepared for publication and will appear in the coming months.

No part of this paper should be cited without permission of the authors. Data for this paper was collected through participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews from 2005-2007.

2 Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) reports in her article "Black Women Making Shifts to Succeed" reported that 58% of 333 African American women surveyed reported that every so often they altered themselves behaviorally to gain White acceptance--meaning they changed their communication styles and choice of topics



African and African American
Studies Program
425 Millett Hall
3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy
Dayton, OH 45435

Phone: 937-775-5532
Fax: 937-775-2146
Email: paul.griffin@wright.edu
gladys.williams@wright.edu

**FACULTY PARTICIPATING IN THE
AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

Dr. Marjorie Baker

Associate Professor, Social Work
270 Millett Hall - x3431
marjorie.baker@wright.edu

Dr. Joseph Coleman

Associate Professor, MIS
212Q Rike Hall - x2648
joseph.coleman@wright.edu

Dr. Frank Eguaroje

Instructor of Sociology and
Anthropology
288 Millett Hall—x2072
frank.eguaraje@wright.edu

Dr. Brenda Ellis

Associate Professor, Music
M347 Creative Arts Center - x2072
brenda.ellis@wright.edu

Dr. Barbara Green

Associate Professor, History
359 Millett Hall - x3636
barbara.green@wright.edu

Dr. December Green

Professor, Political Science;
Director, International Studies
325 Millett Hall - x 4817
december.green@wright.edu

Dr. Paul Griffin

Director, African and African American
Studies, Professor of Religion, &
Special Asst to Provost for Commu-
nity Outreach-425 Millett Hall - x5532
paul.griffin@wright.edu

Dr. Edward Haas

Chair of History Department,
Professor, History
370 Millett Hall- X3342
edward.haas@wright.edu

Dr. Lillie Howard

Vice President for Curriculum and
Instruction, Dean of University
College and Professor, English
240 University Hall - x2097
lillie.howard@wright.edu

Dr. Sharon Lynette Jones

Associate Professor, English
481 Millett Hall - x3397
sharon.jones@wright.edu

Dr. Carol Nathanson

Associate Professor, Art History
A335 Creative Arts Center - x2896
carol.nathanson@wright.edu

Dr. Mary Rucker

Associate Professor, Communications
425 Millett Hall - x 2631
mary.rucker@wright.edu

Dr. Alpana Sharma

Associate Professor, English
457 Millett Hall - x2070
alpana.sharma@wright.edu

Dr. Tracy Snipe

Associate Professor, Political Science
325 Millett Hall - x3767
tracy.snipe@wright.edu

Dr. Jennifer Subban

Assistant Professor, Urban Affairs
225 Millett Hall - x 3650
jennifer.subban@wright.edu