

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom

History 464

Time: T 2:00-4:40pm.

Room: Rush Rhees 456

Instructor: Larry Hudson

Office: Rush Rhees 460

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00--1:00pm.

Tel: 585 275-4557

E-mail: Larry.hudson@rochester.edu

Course Outline:

Almost four hundred years of slavery and racial discrimination have taken a huge toll on the black family. Despite this the family, wrestling with the awful demands placed upon it, has enjoyed some visible success: the number of black millionaires grows rapidly, but the poverty rate in the black community expands. Advances and setbacks seem to have marked an increasingly fragile black family as it responds to a wave of societal challenges. The course will examine factors such as inter-racial and same-sex marriages, teenage pregnancy, declining healthcare, mass incarceration, and a debilitating education system, and evaluate the claim of leading scholars that "the very future of the black family in America is at risk."

Course Grading will be as follows: Five book Reports (40%); Presentations and Class Participation, (20%); and a Research Paper (40%). (Book Reports: Due Dates: Gutman, Jan 26; Blassingame Feb. 2; White Feb. 9; Stack Feb. 23; Jewell March 15; Research Paper April 26).

Regular class attendance is expected, and students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and their work-in-progress.

If you have a physical or mental disability that requires an accommodation or academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor at your earliest convenience.

Set Texts:

Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, published by the United States. Department of Labor. Office of Policy Planning and Research. (Copies available on Reserve)

Gutman, Herbert G., The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925

Blassingame, John W., The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South
Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South, [1995 edition]

Joy DeGruy Leary, A Dissertation on African American Male Youth Violence: "Trying to Kill the Part of You that isn't Loved," Portland State University 2001, (Available on Reserve)

Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community

K. Sue Jewell, Survival of the African American Family: The Institutional Impact of U.S. Social Policy

Course Outline

Week One Tuesday 19 January

Popular notions and images of the black family

Moynihan and the Moynihan Report

Week Two 26 January The Moynihan Report and its Critics

Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Reserve)

Gutman, Herbert G., The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925, Intro and Part One (On Reserve)

Week Three 2 February Black Historians take on Moynihan

John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South

Week Four 9 February Black Women on Moynihan

Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South

Week Five 16 Supporting Moynihan?

Joy DeGruy Leary, A Dissertation on African American Male Youth Violence: "Trying to Kill the Part of You that isn't Loved," Portland State University 2001, (Copies available on Reserve)

Bruce Sacerdote, "Slavery and Intergenerational Transmission," <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~bsacerdo/wpapers/Slavery3.pdf>

Week Six 23 February Saving the Black Male?

Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community

Week Seven 1 March Making Poverty Work

Stack, All Our Kin

Week Eight 8 March Social and Public Policy

Spring Break (Mon 7-14 March)

Week Nine 15 March

K. Sue Jewell, Survival of the African American Family: The Institutional Impact of U.S. Social Policy

Discussion and Research Topics

Week Ten 22 March The Media and the Black Family: From the Cosby Show to The Wire

Topic: Mass Incarceration

Week Eleven 29 March

Selecting a Research Project

Topics: 1] Education Gap 2] Wealth Gap 3] Health Gap

Week Twelve 5 April March

Research Project

1] Declining Black Marriages 2] Same Sex Marriage 3] Teen Pregnancy

Week Thirteen 12 April

Research Project (2)

Week Fourteen 19 April

Presentations (1)

Week Fifteen 26 April

Presentations (2)

Final Project Due (in class)