Social Development of Urban Children:
African-American Perspectives

EPSY 420
Spring, 1996
Monday 5:00-8:00 pm, BSB 161

Instructor: Dr. Theresa A. Thorkildsen
Office: ECSW 3549, Hours: Mon 3:00-4:30 and by appointment
Phone: 996-8138 (office), E-mail: thork@uic.edu

Purpose
The course will focus on African-American children's social development. The majority of the authors whose work we will be reading are African-Americans who have conducted studies on relevant topics. Many of the readings, however, will also review/critique mainstream social development literature. Students will hopefully develop a greater understanding of the kinds of questions that have been posed by child development researchers, critique the resulting work, and propose new questions that might help educators generalize from this work to develop a better awareness of the urban child's perspective.

Readings
The following is a list of books that we will be discussing throughout the course. Also, I will collect a $10 copy fee to cover the costs of other articles over the course of the semester.


Assignments
Attached is a list of readings for each week, to be distributed in class or taken from these books. These are to be read before coming to class so that the ideas in them may be discussed. There will be some weeks in which you will not be required to read all the readings, but will read one of the assigned articles and help present it to the group. The most important criteria for grades will involve the extent to which you participate in class discussions and contribute to our struggle to understand the lives of urban children. As you will see, the available literature raises only a smattering of the issues we need to understand. We will have to rely on one another to fill in the gaps and ask important questions.

Thought papers (unstructured writing assignments) will be assigned at various points in the semester. These will replace exams. Instructions for each assignment will be given in class.

Each student will also complete a final project. Early in the semester everyone will be asked to propose a possible topic and format for their project. In the past, the most common project has involved interviewing African-American children about some of the issues raised in this course. However, students have also done things like review movies to explore the ways in which urban life and African American children are portrayed. Others have taken this as an opportunity to review a relevant body of literature that they have been anxious to read.

We will spend part of several class periods talking about these projects and helping one another with this work. Throughout the course, therefore, it is each students' responsibility to volunteer information about how their project is going, ask for assistance from the group, and give us an indication of interesting experiences and findings they might have.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Suggested Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 8th</td>
<td>Sense of context</td>
<td>Brown or Kotlowitz or Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 15th</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>MLK Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 22nd</td>
<td>Orienting issues</td>
<td>McLoyd and Randolph, or McLoyd and Washington, or Slaughter-Defoe et al., or Tatum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 29th</td>
<td>Ethnic identity formation</td>
<td>Cross chaps 1,2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 5th</td>
<td>Nigrescence</td>
<td>Cross chaps 5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12th</td>
<td>Self-determination</td>
<td>Johnson and Spencer &amp; Markstom-Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 19th</td>
<td>Identity and race</td>
<td>Delpit and Fordham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 26th</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>McLoyd or McCloskey et al. or Foster or Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 4th</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Wilson or Harrison et al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 11th</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 18th</td>
<td>Gangs and friendship</td>
<td>Bing or Jankowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 25th</td>
<td>Peer relations and violence</td>
<td>DuBois &amp; Hirsch or Hudley &amp; Graham or Graham et al., or Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1st</td>
<td>Achievement motivation</td>
<td>Graham, or Grubb &amp; Dozier or Jagers or Pollard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 8th</td>
<td>AERA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 15th</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 22nd</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 29th</td>
<td>Final papers due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Social Development of Urban Children: African-American Perspectives

Developing a Sense of Context


How Valid is the Research?


The Child's Sense of Self

*Ethnic Identity Formation*


**Ego Development**


**Racial Attitudes**


**Aggression**


**Children and Their Parents**

*The Impact of Economic and Sociological Factors on Development*


**Parenting Strategies and Discipline**


Children and Their Peers

Gang Life


Friendship


Children and Their School

Achievement Motivation


**Discipline**


Achievement


Children and Society


Other Materials

Newspaper Articles & Book Reviews


Gregory, S. S. (1992). The hidden hurdle: Talent black students find that one of the most insidious obstacles to achievement comes from a surprising source: their own peers. *Time*, March 16, 44-46.


**Materials for Children**


**Maps**

Street Gangs (for law enforcement use only) published by the City of Chicago in the name of Mayor Richard Daley, Superintendent of police, Leroy Martin, Chief of special functions, Sherwood S. Williams, and Commander of the Gang Crime Section, Robert, W. Dart.

**Other Books Impacting Class Discussions**


