

AFAS G4080y: Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience

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Seminar Location: 758 Schermerhorn Extension

Seminar Day/Time: Mondays, 2:10 to 4:00pm

Credits: 4 hours/points

▪ **Course Overview**

This seminar integrates historical and sociological approaches to examine the experiences of African Americans in U.S. juvenile justice systems, both as *subjects* and *agents* of juvenile social control, from the mid-19th century to the present. The focus of the seminar is juvenile justice administration, with an emphasis on delinquency case processing, but not delinquent behavior itself. Consequently, major emphasis is given to the conceptual institutional evolution of "juvenile justice," and its application in the handling of black children and within black community contexts more generally. We will explore several developments in this history, including: the early "child-saving" movement and exclusion of black children from its rehabilitative initiatives, the role of African Americans in the development and transformation of U.S. juvenile justice systems, and the radical reorganization of juvenile justice in the last half of the 20th century. The course will critically engage theoretical texts on race and social organization, punishment and social control, and social change, which may collectively inform our understanding of juvenile justice in the black experience.

The seminar is organized in four thematic sections. We begin (Section I) with an introductory discussion of key issues and concerns related to juvenile justice in the black experience, with an emphasis on interpretive frameworks and strategies which may prove helpful in critically assessing this social and institutional history. Students should remain engaged with these paradigms throughout the seminar, both employing and challenging them in the course of reading the assigned materials, participating in class discussions, and completing assignments. Remaining sections of the seminar roughly correspond to specific temporal phases in the history of juvenile justice. Section II focuses on early phases of juvenile justice (1825 thru 1930s); Section III examines middle phases (1940s thru the 1970s), with a focus on New York City; and Section IV considers modern phases (1980 through present) of juvenile justice. The primary objective of the seminar is to facilitate a more nuanced historical and social organizational appreciation of racial inequality in juvenile justice administration, viewed through the black experience.

▪ **General Requirements**

Students participating in the seminar will be expected to attend class regularly and substantially contribute to class discussions. This requires 1) reading the assigned materials, and 2) preparing questions and/or comments about the major themes of the week's readings before class. The vitality and success of the seminar will depend on your commitment to studying assigned materials on your own, critically engaging them in class discussion, and applying their insights in the completion of assignments.

▪ Evaluation

Grading will be based on your **participation** in the seminar and completion of **three projects**. Each of these components, described below, accounts for **25 percent** of your final grade. Projects will be due at the beginning of class on the designated date. Unexcused late projects will be penalized 5 points per day. If you require an extension, please do not wait until the last minute to talk with me about it. Extensions will not be granted at, or after, the project deadline.

Participation

Students will be expected to attend class regularly and to have read assigned materials. In advance of each meeting, students should prepare at least 2 questions and/or issues for discussion which emerged for them in doing the week's assigned readings and/or project. The ideal discussion question would explore parallels and links with other materials read and/or discussed in prior meetings. Questions should be written down, and may be collected periodically at the beginning of class. Attendance will be recorded.

Project 1: Deconstructing Images of Race, Juvenile Crime, and Justice (Due: February 18, 2002)

Of central concern in this seminar is how the ideas and institutions which shape juvenile justice systems are racialized, or, inscribed with specific racial meanings and hierarchies. This process is especially apparent in how we think about the basic idea of "childhood" as a stage of human development, and the relative malleability and developmental potential of racialized human beings.

The first project requires students to creatively explore the relationship between race, juvenile crime, and justice, by examining visual and/or other media representations of black youth. This is a purposefully subjective exercise, and students are encouraged to be creative and exploratory in their selection and deconstruction of images. The project may be completed in one of several ways (or in combination):

- 1) The first method is to select from **existing images** of black youth (i.e. drawings, paintings, or photographs) obtained from books, magazines, newspapers, or other sources. After locating one or more images, you write a **short commentary (3-5 typed pages)** on the way in which black children/youth are represented, and the relevance/implications of this representation for the racialization of juvenile crime and justice. Consider the source of the image, how it is presented to the viewer, and the larger context in which it appears. Discuss why you selected the image and how it might influence thinking about the nexus of race, juvenile crime and justice, support for rehabilitation vs. punishment, disparities in the handling of black juvenile offenders, and/or social change. Please attach the image (original or duplicate) to your paper.
- 2) The second method is to generate **your own** image(s) of black youth. This can be in the form of drawings, paintings, photographs, poster collages, or whatever you decide. Once you have created the image(s), you must write a short commentary (3-5 typed pages) about the image and, again, its relevance to the nexus of race, juvenile crime, and justice. Your commentary should include an explanation of why you actually chose to represent black youth in the way in which you did. The image (original or duplicate) should accompany your commentary.
- 3) Finally, you may also deconstruct images from **other media** sources including, for example, news articles (print or digital), music lyrics, or video (music or film). Here again, the short commentary (3-5 pages) and supporting materials (i.e. actual news clippings) are required.

Project 2: Analytic Book Review (Due: March 11, 2002)

The second project calls for an analytical book review, or case-study, of Albert French's novel, *Billy*. Within **7 to 10 typed, double-spaced pages** (excluding references), your review should *interpret* the general societal reaction and/or formal justice system response to Billy's case, drawing on other historical insights and sociological frameworks we explore in the first half of the seminar.

You should not simply write a review or summary of the novel. Rather, the specific task is to *analyze* Billy's ordeal (and the community within which it takes shape), by interpreting it through the lens of racial theory and the court community paradigm, and/or by positioning his case on the broader socio-historical continuum of juvenile justice in the black experience. Students are free to focus on as wide or narrow a range of developments/scenes from the novel as they choose, so long as this focus can support an in-depth and analytical treatment of Billy's ordeal at the intersection of race, juvenile crime, and justice. Be sure to use, and properly cite, specific examples from the novel in your review.

Project 3: Original Research Paper (Due: 4pm on May 10, 2002)

For the final project you are required to produce an original research paper on the general topic of juvenile justice in the black experience, with an emphasis on the city of New York. Because this project entails both original research and a longer paper, it will require more planning and preparation on your part, and should be initiated as soon as possible. For this project, **students must have proposed topics and preliminary outlines approved in advance by the instructor (see course schedule for dates)**. As additional details and instructions for this project will be provided separately, only basic overviews of the research and writing components of Project 3 are offered here.

Research Component, Project 3

Your challenge in this project is to produce a final paper that not only synthesizes central issues and problems raised in the seminar readings and discussions, but which draws upon *original research* to illustrate, further develop, and/or critique a particular angle among these emerging themes. This research component may employ archival materials or oral history (other methods may also be permitted) to explore issue related to the social and/or institutional history of juvenile justice in the black experience, in the specific context of New York City.

Archival Research

Using this method, you utilize the archives of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (or another archive) to identify and examine original documents which may yield insight into the topic of race, juvenile crime, and justice in NYC. The Schomburg Center houses several collections of direct and indirect relevance to this topic. A list of suggested Schomburg collections to explore will be provided.

Oral History

Using this method, you conduct a recorded interview with an adult or youth whose perspective can yield insight into the topic of race, juvenile crime, and justice in NYC. Possible respondents include juvenile justice system practitioners, community activists, community residents, and juveniles (or adults) who are currently or were formerly institutionalized (as delinquents). Assistance will be provided with interview strategies and techniques, however, students will be responsible for identifying respondents, scheduling, and conducting interviews.

Writing Component, Project 3

Given time limitations, you are not expected to produce an exhaustive analysis and comprehensive research paper. Rather, the purpose of Project 3 is to familiarize the student with strategies for conducting innovative research on the social organization of race and justice, and to generate new (if preliminary) insights on juvenile justice in the black experience. As this is a vastly under-researched topic, your papers will ideally reveal promising new trails of inquiry on a wide-open analytic frontier.

To this end, the writing component of Project 3 involves producing a final paper that synthesizes central issues and problems raised in the seminar, while shedding additional light on these themes through insight gained from your original research. In the paper, you should use your research findings to illustrate, further develop, and/or critique one or more of the emerging themes most interesting to you in this course.

This final paper must be **between 10 and 15 typed, double-spaced pages** (excluding references). Your paper should begin with a detailed overview of the specific theme(s) you intend to address. The remainder of the paper should provide details about the research method you employed (including information about the specific archival material or interview subject you chose to work with, and specific angles of inquiry), a discussion of your findings, and a summary and conclusion. In addition to restating your thematic concerns and research findings, the conclusion may reflect on the implications of your work for future research and policy on racial inequality in juvenile justice administration.

Your paper must reference **at least ten sources, half or more from the syllabus**. More references are encouraged. You are encouraged to reference sources not included in the syllabus (i.e. books and articles on African American communities in New York city), however, these cannot be used as a substitute for the original data source (i.e. archival/oral history) requirement.

▪ Seminar Readings

The seminar makes use of several **books** and a **course pack** containing book chapters and articles. All listed readings are required and can be found at Butler Reserves. The course pack is available for purchase at CopyQuick (1211 Amsterdam b/w 119th & 120th). An asterisk "*" denotes coursepack readings. Books have been ordered for purchase through Labyrinth Books and the Columbia Bookstore.

Required books are as follows:

Butterfield, Fox (1995). All God's Children: The Boskett Family and the American Tradition of Violence. New York: Avon Books.

French, Albert (1995). Billy: A Novel. New York: Penguin.

Markowitz G. E. and D. Rosner (1996). Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Omi M. and H. Winant (1994). Racial formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s. NY: Routledge.

Platt, Anthony (1997). The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency (2nd Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

White, Deborah G. (1999). Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994. New York: W.W. Norton.

▪ **Course Schedule**

PART I. Reading Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience: What, Why, and How?

Week 1 (1/28/02). Seminar Introduction and Overview

No Readings

Week 2 (2/4/02). Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience: A Social-Historical Approach

Read: Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Problem of the Twentieth Century" *

Butterfield, Fox. All God's Children. (Chapter 1)

French, Albert. Billy (Chapters 1-4)

Howell, James. "Juvenile Reform Movements." *

Clark, Kenneth B. "Haryou: An Experiment." *

Smith, Robert. "The Elephant in my Living Room." *

Lieber, Michael J. "Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC) of Youth." *

Week 3 (2/11/02). Interpreting the "Black Experience": The Racialization of Justice Administration

Read: Omi and Winant. Racial Formation (Introduction and Chapters 1-4)

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "Rethinking Racism." *

French, Albert. Billy (Chapters 5-8)

Week 4 (2/18/02). Interpreting Juvenile Justice Administration: The "Court Community" Paradigm

Deadline: Project #1 Due in Class Today

Read: Eisenstein et al., "The Criminal Court Community." *

Garland, David. Punishment and Modern Society. (Chapters 11 and 12) *

French, Albert. Billy. (Chapters 9-12)

PART II. Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience: Early Phase (1825-1940s)

Week 5 (2/25/02). Inventing Juvenile Justice: The Child Saving Movement

Read: Clement, Priscilla. "The Incurable Child." *

Platt, Anthony. The Child Savers (Introduction to Second Edition, Chapters 2-4, and 7)
Shelden and Osborne. "For Their Own Good." *

Week 6 (3/4/02). Invisible Children: The Exclusion of Black Youth from Rehabilitative Ideals

Read: King, Wilma. Stolen Childhood. (Introduction and Chapter 1) *
Platt, Anthony. The Child Savers. (Appendix)

Sanders, Wiley. Negro Child Welfare in North Carolina. (Chapters 11-13) *

Young, Vernetta. "Punishment and Social Conditions." *
Shelden, Randall. "From Slave to Caste Society." *

Week 7 (3/11/02). Uplifting the Delinquent: The Black Child Savers, Part 1

Deadline: Project #2 Due in Class Today

Read: Grey-White, Deborah. Too Heavy a Load. (Chapters 1-3)

Johnson, Joan. "The Colors of Social Welfare in the New South." *

Morris, Aldon. "Political consciousness and collective action." *

Washington, Josephine. "Child Saving in Alabama." *

McCrae, Lee. "Birmingham's Probation Plan for the Little Negro." *

Kelley, Florence. "Burglar of Four Years Old in the Memphis Court." *

Hammond, L. H. "Negro Boys Make Good." *

Aery, William. "Helping Wayward Girls." *

Ludlow, Helen. "Virginia's Negro Reform School." *

-----**SPRING BREAK: March 18 to 22**-----

Week 8 (3/25/02). A Shifting Terrain: The Black Child Savers, Part 2

Read: Grey-White, Deborah. Too Heavy a Load. (Chapters 4-6)

Klandersman, Bert. "The social construction of protest and multiorganizational fields." *

Du Bois, W.E.B. "Christian Virginia v. Virginia Christian." *

Ellis, Elaine. "Our Delinquent Children." *

White, Walter. "A Race Discrimination Amendment." *

Clarke, John Henrik. "The Early Years of Adam Powell." *

Mays, Benjamin. "The Role of the Negro Community in Delinquency Prevention." *

PART III. Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience: Transitional Phase (1950s-1970s)

Week 9 (4/1/02). The Metamorphosis: Race and Advanced Marginality in Juvenile Justice

Deadline: Project #3 Topic and Outline Draft Due

Read: Butterfield, Fox. All God's Children. (Chapters 8-11)

U.S. Supreme Court, "School Desegregation." *

Manella, Raymond. "Racially Integrating a State's Training Schools." *

Krisberg et al., "The Incarceration of Minority Youth." *

Wacquant, Loic. "Redrawing the Urban Color Line." *

Week 10 (4/8/02). Race, Juvenile Crime, and Justice in NYC: Harlem World, Part 1

Read: Markowitz and Rosner. Children, Race, and Power. (Chapters 1-3)

Blanshard, Paul. "Negro Delinquency in New York." *

Platt, Anthony. The Child Savers. (Ch. 6 and Postscript)

Week 11 (4/15/02). A Closer Look at the Juvenile Court Community: Harlem World, Part 2

Deadline: Project #3 Final Outline Due

Read: Markowitz and Rosner. Children, Race, and Power. (Chapters 4-7)

PART IV. Juvenile Justice in the Black Experience: Modern Phase (1980-2000)

Week 12 (4/22/02). The Accountability Ideal and the New Juvenile Justice: Is Responsibility Racialized?

Read: Regnery, Alfred. "Getting Away with Murder." *
Fuentes, Annette. "Cracking Down on Kids." *

Zimring, Franklin. American Youth Violence. (Chapters 1 and 4) *
Forst and Blomquist. "Punishment, Accountability, and the New Juvenile Justice." *
Blomquist and Forst. "Moral and Practical Problems with Redefining the Goal..." *

Feld, Barry. "A funny thing happened on the way to the centenary." *
Kemp-Leonard and Peterson. "Expanding Realms of the New Penology." *

Ward, Geoff K. "Race and Professional Orientations in Juvenile Justice" (in class)

Week 13 (4/29/02). "Thugged Out": Processes and Consequences in the Criminalization of Black Youth

Read: Chambliss, William. "The Saints and the Roughnecks." *
Chambliss, William. "Crime Control and Ethnic Minorities." *

Rose, Tricia. "Prophets of Rage." *
Davis, Angela Y. "Nappy Happy." *
Giroux, Henry. "Substituting Prisons for Schools." *

Bridges and Steen. "Racial Disparities in Official Assessments of Juvenile Offenders." *
Bortner et al., "Race and Transfer." *

Week 14 (5/6/02). What is to be done?

Deadline: Project #3 Final Papers Due by 4pm on Friday, May 10, in 758 Schermerhorn.

Read: Davis, Angela Y. "Race and Criminalization." *
The Sentencing Project, "Losing the Vote." *
Gordon, Avery F. "Globalism and the Prison Industrial Complex." *

Howell, James. "Conclusion: Return to Rationality." *
Bazemore and Umbreit. "Rethinking the Sanctioning Function in Juvenile Court." *