[Student Taught Course Full Application](#_Week_4_of) Spring 2011

**Point (1) Value**

My course is about the history and sociology impact of African American hair. In this course students will first learn what makes African American hair different from others as a base of basic background to later explain and make contextual the different process of treating African American hair to fit within society, in addition the course will not only fixate on social impact from a psychological point of view, but that of media and business.

The value of the course to students is the learning of the sociology behind African American hair and how hair began as the symbol of integration and evolved into a sense of expression. In addition the course is meant to “demystify” the concept of African American hair by allocating time to build a background between the differences of African American hair, Caucasian, and Asian as a means of building blocks to later understand the ways African Americans have learned to modify their hair first to fit into the majority’s version of acceptable appearance in society.

 My relationship to the topic is that I am an African American female who has experienced comments and questions on a regular basis about why my hair texture and care differ to that of the majority (Caucasians, Asians, etc.), as well as experienced and participated within the debate of how African American hair, to that groups culture, has come to define them to a great extent.

 My goals of teaching the course is to first bring basic information to my students about the why African American hair is so different in both texture and care, but to then use that as a launching point to understand and explore the social impact of hair in society and the history behind African American actions of today (such as braiding, or chemical treatments) to fit within the “acceptable appearance” category, and later on as an important mode of self expression.

**Point 2 Syllabus**

***Weeks labeled as numbers and ideas as sub points***

1. First will be the introduction to the class of the main points to be covered, such as social, psychological, and historical impact.

Second will be the basic knowledge of the difference between African American hair, and other races. This will include the extension of hair care that is vastly different from the “norm” which sets the stage for future discussion.

Last show a short clip that features the road map of the class:

 <http://noolmusic.com/aol_videos/my_nappy_roots_a_journey_through_black_hair-itage_-_dir_regina_kimbell_movies.php>

Applying the knowledge of how hair was taken care of, pull in the social aspects in trying to fit into White America (referencing appearance to the treatment of those who more closely resembled whites, and those of a darker skin tone) (clips from Tyra show and

1. Begins “evolution of hair” Segment with Reference to Combining the history of hair by Karsten Ivey:
	1. 1444: Europeans trade on the West Coast of Africa with people wearing elaborate hairstyles, including locks, plaits and twists.

	1619: First slaves brought to Jamestown; African language, culture and grooming tradition begin to disappear.
		1. Then begins the discussion of different types of natural hair styles and cultural impact
2. 1700s: Calling black hair "wool," many whites dehumanize slaves. The more elaborate African hairstyles cannot be retained.

1800s: Without the combs and herbal treatments used in Africa, slaves rely on bacon grease, butter and kerosene as hair conditioners and cleaners. Lighter-skinned, straight-haired slaves command higher prices at auction than darker, more kinky-haired ones. Internalizing color consciousness, blacks promote the idea that blacks with dark skin and kinky hair are less attractive and worth less.
	1. Begins discussion of the tie between the “high yellow” and darker toned black person to hair texture
3. 1865: Slavery ends, but whites look upon black women who style their hair like white women as well-adjusted. "Good" hair becomes a prerequisite for entering certain schools, churches, social groups and business networks.
	1. Image of the Black Woman in America: Stereo types and the application of White beauty standards to black women to “uh-black” them.
	2. This is a discussion day. What is good hair? Find out the opinions of students thus far.
4. 1880: Metal hot combs, invented in 1845 by the French, are readily available in the United States. The comb is heated and used to press and temporarily straighten kinky hair.

1900s: Madame C.J. Walker develops a range of hair-care products for black hair. She popularizes the press-and-curl style. Some criticize her for encouraging black women to look white.
	1. This opens up the “good hair” to not only those whom have it naturally via genetics, but those who can afford to look whiter.
5. 1910: Walker is featured in the Guinness Book of Records as the first American female self-made millionaire.

1998: Carson Inc., creator of Dark & Lovely and Magic Shave for black men, acquires black-owned beauty company Johnson Products of Chicago in 1998. L'Oreal purchases Carson two years later and merges it with Soft Sheen.

* 1. Focus on the billion dollar business of black hair
		1. State facts that most of the hair care businesses aimed at blacks are not owned by blacks as of present
1. 1920s: Marcus Garvey, a black nationalist, urges followers to embrace their natural hair and reclaim an African aesthetic.
	1. The beginning of the flow back to natural hair being considered beautiful
	2. This is later followed in history when:
		1. 1963: Actress Cicely Tyson wears cornrows on the television drama "East Side/West Side."

		1966: Model Pat Evans defies both black and white standards of beauty and shaves her head.

		1968: Actress Diahann Carroll is the first black woman to star in a television network series, "Julia." She is a darker version of the all-American girl, with straightened, curled hair.

		1970: Angela Davis becomes an icon of Black Power with her large Afro.
	3. This opens up the topic of media influence such as Blaxploitation movies, where clips of black hair styles and the attached stereotype are discussed.
2. 1954: George E. Johnson launches the Johnson Products Company with Ultra Wave Hair Culture, a "permanent" hair straightener for men that can be applied at home. A women's chemical straightener follows.

1977: The Jheri curl explodes on the black hair scene. Billed as a curly perm for blacks, the ultra moist hairstyle lasts through the 1980s.

* 1. Opens up the use of relaxers and the beginning of the popular hairstyle now worn by many black women and the ushering in of chemical use to alter hair
1. 1971: Melba Tolliver is fired from the ABC affiliate in New York for wearing an Afro while covering Tricia Nixon's wedding.
	1. Group Discussion. Why was she fired, references to past lectures expected.
2. 1979: Braids and beads cross the color line when Bo Derek appears with cornrows in the movie "10."

1980: Model-actress Grace Jones sports her trademark flattop fade.

1988: Spike Lee exposes the good hair/bad hair light-skinned/dark-skinned schism in black America in his movie "School Daze."

1990: "Sisters love the weave," Essence magazine declares. A variety of natural styles and locks also become more accepted.

1997: Singer Erykah Badu poses on the cover of her debut album "Baduizm" with her head wrapped, ushering in an eclectic brand of Afrocentrism.

1999: People magazine names lock-topped Grammy award-winning artist Lauryn Hill one of its 50 Most Beautiful People.

* 1. This opens up the discussion of social impact of black people tied to their hair, and the first times they are open to the public and not kept silent, showing the greater diminishing of self hate and shame
1. 2001: Rapper Lil' Kim wears a platinum blonde weave, while singer Macy Gray sports a new-school Afro. Some black women perm, some press, others go with natural twists, braids and locks.
	1. Discussion. How did this come to pass from the shameful “wool” hair to the multifaceted way black women wear their hair
	2. Introduce the Hair Show completion concept.
2. Watch “Good Hair” documentary for first 40min.
3. Watch “Good Hair” documentary for 40min.
4. Finish “Good Hair” and discuss impressions.
	1. Wrap up: what have we learned?
	2. Ask questions for clarity
	3. Pose main point of class: Black Hair has devolved and re-evolved to be a means of Black expression, whether that is the expression or the desire to belong, or the fascination to stand out. So the next time you ask to touch “it”, you’ll realize how much weight that “it” holds, and ask instead of touch.

**Point 3 Description**

This class will cover the history of Black Hair in America and shed light on the social, psychological, and economic impact Black women’s hair.

**Point 4 Possible Books Used**

**Possible Books that I will take excerpts from to add to lecture points and references**

1. African Americans In the South: Issues of Race, Class, and Gender: (Edited by Hans A. Baer and Yvonne Jones) This volume reflects a new commitment by American anthropologists to engage in what has been called the anthropology of racism: the analysis of systems of inequality based on biological differences. Comprising nine papers and related commentary, African Americans in the South examines racism, class stratification, and sexism as they bear on the African American struggle for social justice, equality, and cultural identity in the South.
2. The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities: (Edited by Isidore Okpewho, Carole Davis and Ali Mazrui) this book examines the character of New World black cultures and their relationships with the plural societies within which they function.
3. Black Hair: Art, Style, and Culture: (ed., Ima Ebog) “From head to toe, no other physical attribute for a black woman is as culturally, socially, or politically charged as her hair. Black Hair celebrates the diversity and creativity of black women’s hairstyles, from traditional and ceremonial styles to the urban twists and turns of modern styling.” Inside cover
4. Black Woman’s Guide to Beautiful Hair: (Lisa Akbari) “Today there are many sisters who do not respect, appreciate, or understand their own hair in its natural state. Therefore, we abuse, misuse, bully, and try to change our hair in a misguided effort to control or manage it. We spend tons of money, time, and energy on weaving, waving, straightening, blow-drying, and curling, as we solon hop to find a way to have better hair.” Introduction
5. Happy to Be Nappy: (bell hooks& Chris Naschka) An exuberant, rhythmic read-aloud celebration about the joy and beauty of “nappy” hair.
6. On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker: (A’Lelia Bundles) “In black America, hair is the personal and political all rolled up in one. In choosing hair care as a domain, Madam C.J. Walker seized the social power behind these seemingly trivial tendrils and became a pioneer of American enterprise whose story should be studied in every business school. Who better to tell her story, and with such grace and feeling, than her namesake and great-great-granddaughter.” Farai Chideya/back cover
7. Stylin’: African American Expressive Culture from its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit: (Shane White and Graham White) Focusing on such variegated indicators of black style as dress, hair, body language, and dance, the authors reveal an evolving semiotics of black self-creating that has been designed from its very outset to impose a degree of individuality on the numbing uniformity bred of slavery, poverty, Jim Crow laws, and white racism.

Source: <http://www.uky.edu/AS/AASRP/videos_and_books/books.html>

**Point 5 Budget**

The only expected expense is to buy a movie and printing for papers (excerpts):

 Good Hair – Approx. $16.00

 Papers – not to exceed the remaining amount of money (up to the $50 limit).

**Point 6 Contact Info**

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**Point 7 outside Time**

Gather as a group to watch a movie about Hair Shows to further see the impact of hair on black women.

Also possible is a type of discussion forum with black women/ student who will answer student’s questions on black hair

**Point 8 Agreement**

Catherine E. Clack Asst. Dean for Student Life and Director of Multicultural Affairs