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The Politics of Prejudice in Psychology: A Syllabus and Bibliography

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This course was created to examine institutionalized prejudice in the field of psychology. Psychology, as a discipline, has been an arena for examining the structure and etiology of prejudice (Duckitt; Myers). Coetaneously, psychology has been rife with institutionalized prejudice in terms of theories, especially Freud's theory (see Kittay; Westerlund; the investigation of intelligence (e.g., Gould; Zuckerman and Brody) sex differences (e.g., Baumeister; Gould), and racial differences (e.g., Fairchild; Gould), and in diagnostic criteria and categorization (e.g., Franks; Tavris; Wright et al.). This course was designed to examine these issues and to look for ways in which we might contribute to more objective research, teaching, and service in psychology and allied disciplines. This overview focuses primarily on prejudice in the areas of psychometry and diagnostics.

Prejudice and intelligence testing

Duckitt reports that prejudice did not emerge as an area of study until the 1920s, because until then the scientific community viewed blacks as inferior to whites. Thus, in the early 1900s, rather than examining prejudice, notions of white superiority were used by psychologists and others to rationalize slavery and other discrimination against blacks. However, by the late 1920s and early 1930s, most psychologists had stopped viewing race differences as inevitable or as an adequate reason for prejudice and discrimination. Psychologists then started to view prejudice as irrational and unjustified and began to study its etiology and expression (Duckitt).

Nonetheless, racism and sexism had already become firmly entrenched in some facets of Western psychology (Gould). Early psychometry, which consisted primarily of methods like craniometry (measuring skulls), was rife with racist and sexist assumptions. Both Agassiz and Morton, early "psychometricians," viewed those of African descent, Caucasians, and Native Americans as different species. They assumed that Caucasians were superior to those of African and Native American descent in several respects, including intelligence (Gould). Many craniometrists also assumed that males were of superior intellect, which was not difficult to "prove," as males almost invariably have larger skulls than females. Galton and Broca, two of the last craniometrists, both thought that men were innately more intelligent than women. Gould found that several early "psychometricians," including Morton and Broca, either finagled data or used it selectively to support their sexist and/or racist assumptions.

To his credit, Alfred Binet, who created the first successful IQ test, did not promote a racist or sexist agenda in regard to intelligence. And he abandoned craniometry after he found that he was highly suggestible and would unconsciously increase or decrease head size measurements based on what he knew about the subjects (Gould). Binet designed the IQ test to identify retarded and learning-disabled students, not to rank normal children. However, he rightly feared that his test could be misused to constrain some children rather than to help them. In fact, Lewis Terman, who adapted the Binet for use in the U.S., believed that some ethnic groups were defective and assembled test data to provide scientific validation to legislate immigration restrictions based on these views (Gould).

Most current intelligence testing is performed using either a revised version of Terman's Stanford-Binet or one of

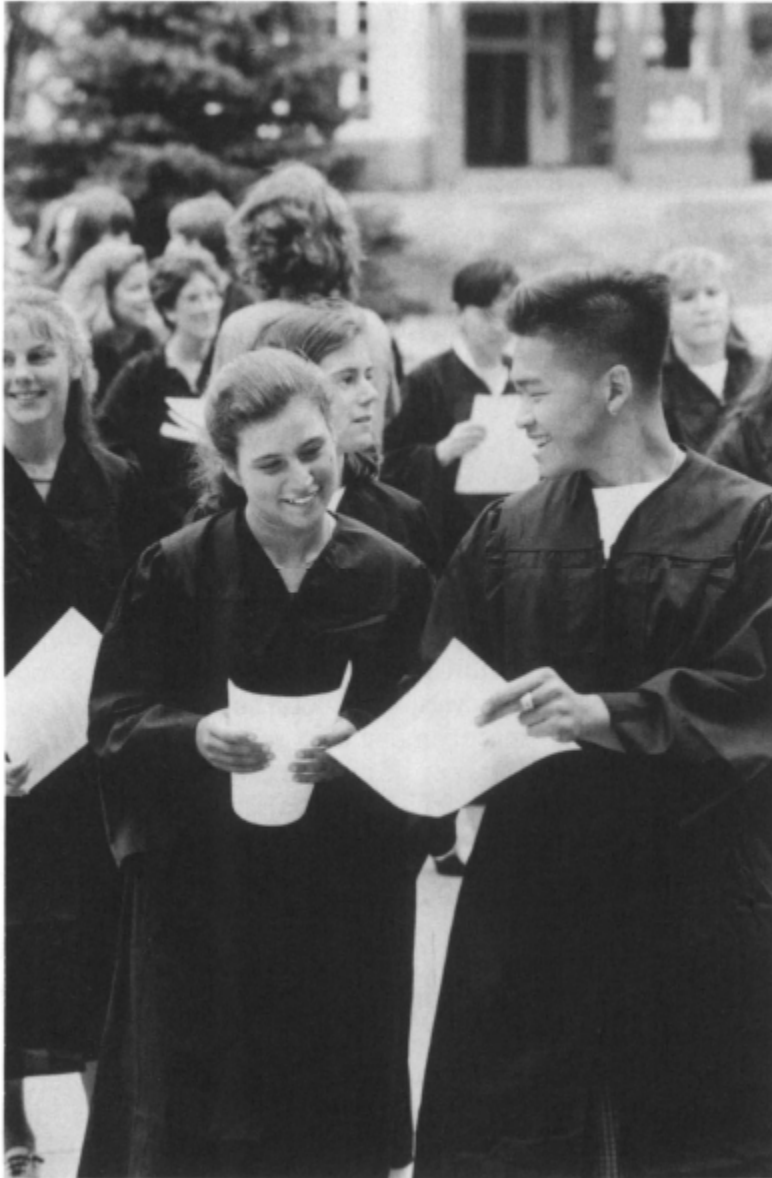
the IQ tests designed by David Wechsler. In designing his IQ scales, Wechsler attempted to minimize the influence of cultural factors, but significant differences still exist in the performance of children from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., Duncan et al.). Subsequently, although most psychologists attribute differences in IQ scores to sociocultural factors, psychologists such as Rushton and Jensen (cited in Gould) claim that there are inherent differences in intelligence that are linked with race.

Prejudice in abnormal psychology

According to Landrine, the stereotype of the heterosexual white male is used as a standard for mental health. Subsequently, behavior that does not conform to this standard has traditionally been viewed as atypical or abnormal. Since women are enculturated to follow female gendertyped patterns of behavior, women who rigidly conform to society's feminine ideal do not meet society's standards for mental health (Franks; Landrine). On the other hand, women who behave in a stereotypically masculine fashion are also viewed as abnormal, since they deviate from the feminine standard. Similar factors are also at work in creating racist views of mental health. Basically, if the stereotype of the heterosexual white male is used as the norm, then groups of people who either deviate from that norm or are stereotyped as deviating from it will subsequently be viewed as abnormal. Therefore, women, African Americans, and the like are by default seen as nonnormative. But, this is a "catch-22" situation-if the individuals in disenfranchised groups behave in non-role-typed ways, then their behavior is viewed negatively and as not being normative for someone in that group (Franks; Landrine).

According to Franks, exaggerated, stereotypic genderrole behavior is considered pathological for both males and females. Several personality disorders (PD) can be viewed as the presentation of extremely gender-typed behavior. Borderline PD, Histrionic PD, and Dependent PD seem to include aspects of the traditional feminine stereotype as diagnostic criteria, and the same is true of Antisocial PD and male stereotypes. Williams and Spitzer argue that diagnostic criteria and categories are not gender biased. However, Ford and Widiger found that females are more likely than males to be categorized as Histrionic PD, whereas males are more likely to be categorized as Antisocial PD. Furthermore, Hamilton et al. found that clinicians who were given case histories of clients presenting histrionic symptoms were significantly more likely to diagnose

female clients as Histrionic PD than male clients. Genderrole stereotypes are also thought to be related to the development and diagnosis of depression and eating disorders among women (e.g., Franks).



Photographer Janet Woodcock. Seniors lining up for Convocation

Stereotyping, and fraudulent presentation of data, is also tied to diagnostic racism. For example, in the 1800s, blacks were stereotyped as unintelligent and as unable to care for themselves (Wright et al.). Thus, when the 1840 census erroneously reported that free blacks in the north had

higher rates of psychopathology than blacks in the slave states, psychologists interpreted this to mean that the "care," supervision, and control provided by slavery were essential to the mental health of blacks. Slavery was defended as good for the mental health of blacks (Wright et al.). Over a century later, in 1944, the statistical errors in the census data were discovered, but 100 years of damage had been done.

Several prominent early psychologists, including G. Stanley Hall, Carl Jung, and Benjamin Rush, proposed racist theories of psychopathology. Among their theories was the assumption that blacks had not evolved to the same level as whites and were prone to schizophrenia (Landrine). In addition, blacks were often viewed as intrinsically happy-go-lucky and emotionally simple and, thus, immune to depression (Jones and Gray; Wright et al.). Although contemporary clinicians are unlikely to be blatantly racist, underlying racism may still exist. For example, some clinicians may hold on to concepts of blacks as lacking in ego strength and as being hostile, concrete, nonverbal, unmotivated, religious, and paranoid (Jones and Gray). The primary result of this underlying racism is that blacks who seek psychiatric treatment are at risk of being diagnosed as schizophrenic (Jones and Gray; Pavkov et al.).

Course overview

This course addressed the issues cited above and more. Several specific topics relevant to institutionalized prejudice in psychology were addressed, including an overview of theories and research on prejudice; basic background on racism, sexism, and homophobia; a history of the study of prejudice in psychology; an examination of prejudice in psychological theories and research; the relation of studying group differences to prejudice; prejudice in the study of intelligence; racist and sexist views on individual difference; and prejudice in abnormal psychology (theory and diagnosis).

The course was designed for Honors students, but in a general fashion so that both psychology majors and nonmajors could benefit from the course. Although the course was primarily a seminar in nature, lectures were used to provide background material and to pull together the various lines of thought encountered in the readings and discussions.

The accompanying syllabus is complete, with the exception of administrative (points per project, etc.). It is

followed by the general course schedule and a full annotated bibliography. Full description of the field experiment projects may be obtained by contacting the author.

Course evaluation

Overall, this course worked very well. The compelling nature of the subject area and the interesting readings (see the Annotated Bibliography) evoked dynamic discussions. Requiring discussion questions for each reading assured that most of the students were familiar enough with the material to talk intelligently about it. The seminar format, with no exams, was effective. The students thought about the material in a critical sense, rather than simply attempt to learn material for exams.

One of the most successful assignments for this course was the journal. Students indicated that they enjoyed keeping the journal and that it made them more aware of instances of prejudice, in themselves and others. Several students remarked that keeping the journal fostered personal growth and self-awareness.

On the other hand, the debate/pro-con statements were of little use in the context of the course. Although the students were able to complete the assignment, it did not challenge or engage them. In addition, the debates did not work well; they seemed to interrupt the flow of the course rather than cultivate discussion of the issues.

The presentations and projects did work well. However, in the future I will require that students complete only one, rather than both, of the projects. In addition, I would offer the option of performing group *or* individual projects. Students particularly enjoyed the field experiment, where they manipulated the environment to experience prejudice. The class arranged some activities to do together outside of class which also contributed to the success of this course. For example, at the request of the class, I arranged a screening of the movie "And the Band Played On," and we watched the movie as a group in an informal setting. We also attended University lectures as a group. Although these activities were not required, many students participated in them. These activities helped form unusually close bonds between class members, enhancing classroom participation.

THE POLITICS OF PREJUDICE IN PSYCHOLOGY: SYLLABUS

Course description: This course will focus on the impact of prejudice, including racism, sexism, and heterosexism/homophobia, on theory, practice, and research in psychology. The impact of prejudice on the psychological development and well-being of the individual will also be addressed. Finally, the impact of prejudice in psychology on society will be discussed.

Course requirements

Discussion questions: Each student will prepare two discussion questions on the assigned readings for each day that readings are assigned. Questions must be neatly hand printed or typed and turned in at the beginning of the class period. The questions should be aimed at provoking critical thought and should be integrative in nature.

Journal: Each student will maintain a journal in which she or he will record instances of prejudice and/or discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and/or age. The student should be aware of and record such instances of prejudice occurring in day-to-day life. Be alert to prejudicial/discriminatory language, attitudes, and behaviors (including covert behaviors such as staring or altering personal space) among both yourself and others. In addition, record instances of prejudice/discrimination that you observe in the curriculum and in the media, such as a member of a group being portrayed in a stereotypic manner, news reports or TV characterization of prejudiced/discriminatory behavior, and prejudice in news reports (e.g., reporting that someone is black or gay, but not reporting that others are white or straight). Be perceptive to racist, sexist, and heterosexist/homophobic behaviors. The journal should be kept legibly in a small/medium-sized, bound notebook. Journals will be turned in at three designated times during the semester and will be used for class discussion.

Debate groups: Students will prepare pro and con statements on two specified topics for use in class debates.

Presentation/written project options: Each student will carry out both of the following projects and will make a brief, informal class presentation for each project. In addition, each student must prepare a written report on one of the two projects. Students may choose either of the projects to fulfill the written requirement. Each student

must revise the written project. Both the first draft of the written project and the revision will receive a grade. Criteria for each of the projects will be distributed separately.

Experiment design: Design an experiment that either (a) is nonsexist, nonracist, etc. or (b) examines sexism, racism, or homophobia/heterosexism in some way.

Field experiment project: You will carry out a field experiment designed either (a) to examine prejudice in a real-world setting and/or (b) to provide a context in which students can experience prejudice. The project options and guidelines will be described in a separate handout.

Grading and the grade scale: The final grade for this course is based on your performance on the journal, discussion questions, presentations, discussion groups, written project, revision, and the extra credit points that you earn. Attendance will be taken into consideration as appropriate.

Special needs: If you are differently abled *or* if there is anything that the instructor needs to know to improve your learning environment in this class, please contact her. *All* students should view their instructors as a resource and make appropriate use of them during office hours to answer questions, clarify reading or lecture materials, etc.

Statement of fairness: The instructor will make every attempt to present material in an equitable and sensitive manner. However, if she presents material in a manner that you feel is degrading to people on the basis of their racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, or gender, please talk to her about it.

SCHEDULE

	<i>Topic:</i>	<i>Reading Assignment:</i>
Day 1	Class Procedures/Intro	—
Day 2	What is Prejudice?	Myers
Day 3	Research on Prejudice	Myers
Day 4	Prejudice in the “Real World”	Myers
Day 5	History of the Study of Prejudice	Duckitt
Day 6	Journal Day	—
Day 7	Prejudice in Psychological Theories	Kittay
Day 8	Prejudice in Psychological Theories	Westerlund
Day 9	Prejudice in Psychological Research	Pyke and Agnew, Denmark et al.
Day 10	Prejudice in Psychological Research	Graham
Day 11	Experimental Design Presentations	—
Day 12	Experimental Design Presentations	—
Day 14	Should We Study Sex/Race Differences?	Baumeister, Ploman and Foch
Day 15	Findings on Sex Differences	Maccoby and Jacklin, Friedman
Day 16	Journal Day	—
Day 17	IQ, Sex, and Race	Eysenck (1977), Eysenck (1984), Hearnshaw

Day 18	IQ, Sex, and Race	Kamin, Stephenson
Day 19	General Discussion	—
Day 20	Impact of Prejudice on Education	McDonald

**WRITTEN
PROJECTS DUE**

Day 21	Findings on Race Differences	Rushton, Zuckerman and Brady
Day 22	Rushton Discussion	Fairchild
Day 23	Prejudice in Abnormal Psychology	Tavris
Day 24	Prejudice in Abnormal Psychology	Szasz
Day 25	Prejudice in Abnormal Psychology	Franks, Williams and Spitzer
Day 26	Prejudice in Abnormal Psychology	Pavkov et al., Wright et al.

REVISIONS DUE

Day 27	Prejudice in Abnormal Psychology	Bieber, Socarides
Day 28	Journal Day	—
Day 29	Naturalistic Observation Presentations	—
Day 30	Naturalistic Observation Presentations	—

Annotated Bibliography

Baumeister, R.F. "Should We Stop Studying Sex Differences Altogether?" *American Psychologist* 43 (1988): 1092-95.

In this editorial, Baumeister suggests that the study of sex differences may have negative social and political ramifications. He presents arguments as to why it may be preferable to abandon most sex difference research.

Bieber, I. "A Discussion of 'Homosexuality: The Ethical Challenge.'" *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Psychological Issues* (4th ed.). Ed. I Rubinstein and B. Slife. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1986. 248-52.

Bieber, who focuses on males, argues that homosexuality is the sequelae of adverse experiences with one's parents. He states that viewing homosexuality as a normative behavior is detrimental, particularly to homosexuals. Either this article or the Socarides article, but not both, should be used. A pro-gay article to balance this section of the course would be helpful.

Denmark, F., N.F. Russo, I.H. Frieze, and IA. Sechzer. "Guidelines for Avoiding Sexism in Psychological Research: A Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nonsexist Research." *American Psychologist* 43 (1988): 582-85. This brief article gives helpful examples of some of the ways sexism can enter the research process. The authors present numerous problems, examples of bias, and ways that the problems might be corrected.

Duckitt, I "Psychology and Prejudice: A Historical Analysis and Integrative Framework." *American Psychologist* 47 (1992): 1182-91.

This historical overview examines how prejudice has been viewed and studied from within the context of the field of psychology. The major theories of prejudice over the past eighty years are discussed in light of social and psychological trends. The dry, academic writing of this piece is more suited to graduate than to undergraduate students.

Eysenck, H.I "Sir Cyril Burt." *American Psychologist* 32 (1977): 674-76.

This article, along with those by Eysenck (1980), Kamin, and Hearnshaw, was used, along with lecture, to discuss the fraudulent data produced by Sir Cyril Burt and the subsequent effect of this action on the IQ debates. This series of short articles/editorials provides

both positive and negative evaluations of Burt.
Eysenck, H.I. "Psychology of the Scientist: XLIV Sir Cyril Burt: Prominence Versus Personality." *Psychological Reports* 46 (1980): 893-94.
See Eysenck (1977).

Fairchild, H.H. "Scientific Racism: The Cloak of Objectivity." *Journal of Social Issues* 47.3 (1991): 101-15.
Fairchild critiques sociobiological perspectives on "racial" differences. He argues that these theories are invalid, in part, due to a failure to distinguish between nature and nurture confounds and a tendency to misrepresent data. Fairchild focuses on Rushton's sociobiological theory.

Franks, V. "Sex Stereotyping and Diagnosis of Psychopathology." *Women and Therapy* 5 (1986): 219-32.
Franks argues that sexism is prevalent in the DSM diagnostic tradition. Her article serves as a good contrast to the Williams and Spitzer article.

Friedman, L. "Mathematics and the Gender Gap: A MetaAnalysis of Recent Studies on Sex Differences in Mathematical Tasks." *Review of Educational Research* 59 (1989): 185-213.
This article on sex differences in mathematical tasks, although informative, is difficult for undergraduates to grasp.

Graham, S. "Most of the Subjects Were White and Middle Class: Trends in Published Research on African Americans in Selected APA Journals, 1970-1989." *American Psychologist* 47 (1992): 629-39.
Graham presents interesting data on the marginalization of African Americans in psychology and in psychological research. In addition, she discusses several methodological and ethical issues relevant to the topic.

Hearnshaw, L.S. "Cyril Burt." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Ed. D.L. Sills. Vol. 18. New York: The Free Press, 1979. 86-91.
See Eysenck (1977).

Kamin, L.I. "Review of *Cyril Burt: Psychologist* by L.S. Hearnshaw." *New Republic* 181.16 (1979): 30-2. See Eysenck (1977).

Kittay, E.F. "Rereading Freud on 'Femininity' or Why Not Womb Envy?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 7 (1984): 385-91.
Kittay focuses on how the androcentric approach of

Freudian psychoanalysis limits the usefulness of the theory. She asserts that Freud's androcentric view precluded him from incorporating womb envy into the theory. A basic knowledge base of Freudian theory is essential for comprehension of this article.

McDonald, S.M. "Sex Bias in the Representation of Male and Female Characters in Children's Picture Books." *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 150 (1989): 389-401. Although this article on sex bias in children's books is interesting and informative, it did not fit in well with the structure of the course and the other readings.

Maccoby, E.E., and C.N. Jacklin. *The Psychology of Sex Differences*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1974. 349-60. This partial chapter from Maccoby and Jacklin's classic work is excellent for eliciting discussion on sex differences and similarities.

Myers, D.G. *Social Psychology* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993. 376-415. This well-written textbook chapter on prejudice was used as an introduction to the course. The chapter provides a good background on prejudice in general, as well as focusing on more specific types of prejudice, such as racism and sexism. Research on sources of prejudice is covered in a cogent and interesting fashion.

Pavkov, T. w., D.A. Lewis, and IS. Lyons. "Psychiatric Diagnoses and Racial Bias: An Empirical Investigation." *Professional Psychology Research and Practice* 20 (1989): 364-68. This article shows that African Americans who are admitted to state mental hospitals are more likely to be given a diagnosis of schizophrenia than are whites. Although this is an interesting article, the Wright et al. article covers the issue of racial discrimination more thoroughly and puts the issue into a broader social and historical context.

Plomin, R. , and T. T. Foch. "Sex Differences and Individual Differences." *Child Development* 52 (1981): 383-85. This brief article is useful for discriminating between statistical and practical difference. However, the formal statistical language of the article makes it somewhat difficult for undergraduates to read.

Pyke, S.W, and N.M. Agnew. *The Science Game: An Introduction to Research in the Social Sciences*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991. 247-63. This chapter clearly enumerates how bias may enter the

scientific process at each step of the scientific method. The chapter is well written and interesting.

Rushton, J.P. "Race Differences in Behaviour: A Review and Evolutionary Analysis." *Personality and Individual Differences* 9 (1988): 1009-24.

Rushton asserts, via sociobiological theory, that "Mongoloids" are superior to "Caucasoids" in several respects and that "Caucasoids" are, in turn, superior to "Negroids." This article is an excellent discussion starter. In addition, having students critique the article and the weaknesses in Rushton's arguments is an excellent exercise in critical thinking and scientific reasoning.

Socarides, C.W. "Sexual Politics and Scientific Logic: The Issue of Homosexuality." *Journal of Psychohistory* 19 (1992): 307-29.

Socarides argues that the trend to view homosexuality as a normal behavior is a dangerous and negative trend. He views homosexuality as a mental disorder. This article is a good demonstration of how political and personal views decrease objectivity in science. Either this article or the Bieber article, but not both, should be used. It would be helpful to find a pro-gay article to balance this section of the course.

Stephenson, W. "Professor Kamin, Sir Cyril Burt, and Hyperbole." *American Psychologist* 35 (1980): 1144-46.

Szasz, T. *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement*. New York: Dell, 1970.

This book is an intriguing journey into the history of mental illness. Selected readings and lectures combine to encourage spirited discussion.

Thavis, C. "Misdiagnosing the Mind." *The Mismeasure of Woman* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. 170-207.

This chapter from Tavis's excellent book examines myths of mental illness in terms of women. She focuses in particular on personality disorders, pre-menstrual syndrome, and the "recovery movement."

Westerlund, E. "Freud on Sexual Trauma: An Historical Review of Seduction and Betrayal." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 10 (1986): 297-309.

In this intriguing article, Westerlund suggests that Freud abandoned his original "seduction theory" of hysteria because to accept the theory he would have to accept that his father was an incestuous pedophile. Westerlund uses

Freud's writings (articles and personal letters) in making her case. This article captures the interest of students and typically leads beyond the immediate topic of sexism in Freud's theories to broad moral and ethical issues.



Photo courtesy of Appalachian State University

Williams, IB., and R.L. Spitzer. "The Issue of Sex Bias in the DSM-III: A Critique of 'A Woman's View of DSMIII' by Marcie Kaplan." *American Psychologist* 38 (1983): 793-98.

Williams and Spitzer refute claims that many DSM diagnoses are sexist or biased in nature. This article was used together with Franks.

Wright, H.H., H.R. Scott, R. Pierre-Paul, and T.A. Gore. "Psychiatric Diagnoses and the Black Patient." *Psychiatric Forum* 12.2 (1984): 65-71.

This interesting article covers the issue of racial discrimination in diagnostic trends using a sociohistorical perspective.

Zuckerman, M., and N. Brody. "Oysters, Rabbits and People: A Critique of 'Race Differences in Behaviour' by IP. Rushton." *Personality and Individual Differences* 9 (1988): 1025-33.

Zuckerman and Brody provide an excellent critical response to Rushton's sociobiological theory that "Mongoloids" are superior to "Caucasoids" who are, in turn, superior to "Negroids." There is another series of articles, published in the *Journal of Research in Personality* in 1988 and 1989, that includes a back and forth discussion of Rushton's theory between Rushton and

Michael Lynn, who also provides excellent counterpoints to Rushton's theory.

Additional References

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: APA, 1995.

Duncan, G.1., 1. Brooks-Gunn, and P.K. Klebanov. "Economic Deprivation and Early Childhood Development." *Child Development* 65 (1994): 296-318.

Ford, M.R., and T.A. Widiger. "Sex Bias in the Diagnosis of Histrionic and Antisocial Personality Disorders." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 57 (1989): 301-5.

Gould, S.1. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York: Norton, 1981. Although no readings were assigned from this book, it was an invaluable resource in preparing the material on "scientific" racism and sexism in psychometrics.

Hamilton, S., M. Rothbart, and R.M. Dawes. "Sex Bias, Diagnosis, and DSM-III." *Sex Roles* 15 (1986): 269-74.

Jones, B.E., and B.A. Gray. "Problems in Diagnosing Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders Among Blacks." *Hospital and Community Psychiatry* 37 (1986): 61-5.

Landrine, H. "Revising the Framework of Abnormal Psychology." Ed. P. Bronstein and K. Quina. *Teaching a Psychology of People*. Washington, DC: APA, 1988.