

# White professors of Afri Are they qualified

By Erika Helm  
Ink Staff Writer

The scene is common at UNC:

signing up for an African-American or African Studies course, only to show up on the first day of class to find a white instructor.

The question then undoubtedly arises in all African-American students' minds, "Should I drop the course and try to get a black professor—or stay in and be subjected once again to his-  
story."

It's a difficult question that must be answered for a majority of African-American students at this University.

Many find it hard to deal with a white instructor whose culture for years has distorted and ultimately destroyed African-American history.

They've owned the African-American's land, body, and now, teach African-American students their own culture.

But when viewing this should we be so quick to judge? Just because a person is white, does that automatically stigmatize them as just another white person who's trying to distort our history? Or can African-American students step back and see them, not as white, but as instructors who truly have the sincerity to teach an AFAM or Afri class?

Jesse Bolden, an instructor at Morehouse College whose area is African-American history, said students should not be so quick to judge white instructors. "They can easily teach Afro-American history as well as Afro-Americans instructors."

As for bringing enthusiasm to the course, Bolden said, it can go

both ways. "I believe some whites can bring passion into Afro-American studies just as some blacks won't have the passion to teach Afro-

insight on my history that an instructor of color could offer."

"Even though many white instructors can claim involvement in the Civil Rights Movement that aided blacks, they could still escape the issues anytime if they didn't want to deal with them. This discredits their ability, in my opinion, to teach me black history. To put it bluntly, how can you talk about what you don't know?"

Jon Spencer, a black AFAM instructor, agreed slightly with her comments. It's possible for white instructors to have a passion for Afro-American history, but they have a different passion, he said.

"I feel it would be difficult for a white teacher to understand the oppression I've been through, because I'm looking from the bot-

**"You can't make sense of this country unless you come to terms with the issue of race and the issue of the Afro-American experience."  
—Kenneth Janken**

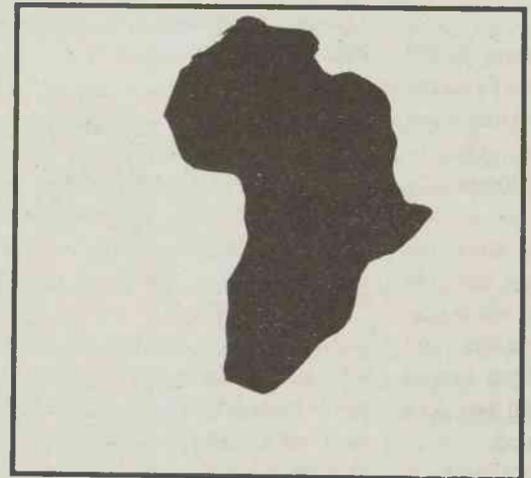
American classes."

White instructors of AFAM and Afri also agree with this statement. Kenneth Janken, a white AFAM instructor, said, "Can a white instructor have a passion for Afro-American history, yes. Is it going to be the same as an Afro-American instructor, probably not, but so what."

"I don't necessarily find two Afro-American instructors with the same passion either, or two white instructors. My view is look at what the instructor is saying. Do other readings and make up your own mind."

Many African-American students, however, have already made up their minds. Todd Reid, a junior biology major, said he was disappointed to have a white AFAM instructor. "But that's what I get for coming to Chapel Hill. I tell my friends at Howard that I have a white professor and they just laugh at me and ask, 'How is a white professor qualified to teach black history?'"

Nicole Huntley, a senior sociology major, said, "I don't feel a white instructor of Afro-American studies can give me the personal



Blacks seek a true view of Africa

tom up.

The difference between black and white professors, said Spencer, is often the more willingness of an Afro-American student to listen to the voice of the least of them. "This is something that is not taught in the

class room."

Being a black AFAM instructor, Spencer said he's on a mission to uplift the black community, from a black male who knows what it is to be black.

Carlton Wilson, also a black AFAM instructor, said it's difficult to generalize because there are some white instructors who shouldn't teach it because they're not com-

petent, like some blacks.

"What students see sometimes is perhaps they [white instructors] can't bring the emotionalism that certain students seek.

"Being a historian, I know there are some whites who do a very good

## EBONY

### Do you think white instructors effective

By Rynita Younger  
Ink Staff Writer

*Editor's Note: Ebony voices are black students on campus giving their opinions about current issues.*

"I don't feel they can truly relate to the studies. They can't feel what you are learning; this feeling is what makes you a stronger black individual." - Melody Turner

"I had a black female for African-American studies; she was effective because of her knowledge. In addition she could relate to us more than, say a white instructor." - Elliot Andrews

"I think it is really flattering that

they want to learn more about our culture; but they cannot give the experience point of view necessary. They can only teach book knowledge."

- Tonya Williams

"Just because you are black does not mean that a white professor can not teach effectively. If they go to school and learn about our history, it should not matter whether they are coming from a black perspective or not." - Shantrell Williams

"I feel white instructors have the same capabilities of teaching as black professors. True, black people have the experience, however a white person can give a non-biased perspective to the course." - Christa Way

"White professors can teach the textbook point of view, however, they would not offer the background necessary in relating the course, being a black person today." - Jamilla O. Perry

"I do not feel white instructors can effectively teach African-American courses because they have never experienced being black; therefore they cannot teach others from a black perspective. Students need that. The only thing they would do is to uplift the whites that helped with the struggle." - Chuckie Burnette

"I think they can, they can teach African-American courses because anyone can teach out of a textbook however, they cannot understand and should not pretend to under-