

COLLEGE FRESHMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF RACISM
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA-"DO YOU SEE WHAT I
SEE"

Nadie DuBose

Dr. Rex Campbell, Dissertation Advisor

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the perceptions that college freshmen have of racism on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus (UMC). A detailed history of the social interactions that have occurred between Blacks and Whites in the United States, in Missouri and on the UMC campus is discussed in great detail. Erving Goffman's Dramaturgical Analysis, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's theory on Color-Blind racism and Emory Bogardus Social Distance Scale is utilized to understand why some students would choose to socially distance themselves from others on the UMC campus. Four focus groups were conducted with first time college freshmen and the Bogardus Scale of Social Distance was distributed to one hundred and ninety college freshmen during the Winter and Spring semester of 2006. The focus groups were transcribed and chi-square cross tabs were used to analyze the results from the Social Distance Scale. Results indicated that gender, student's identification as White or Minority, estimated household income and whether students were from a rural or urban area were found to be

significant variables that affected student's level of social distance with other students from various ethnic backgrounds. Additional focus group findings revealed that student's perceptions of other students guided their decision to engage in less or a greater amount of social distance with individuals who were racially different from themselves while on the UMC campus.