WRITING ASSIGNMENT

1. Study the stages of racial identity development below (both minority and majority).

2. Write a 600 word essay which consist of the following two sections:
   a) Summarize both minority and majority development theory.
   b) Provide an explanation about your understanding of where you are with your own identity development.

Stages of Racial Identity Development

Guiding Assumptions

1. The development of a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity, not based on assumed superiority or inferiority, is an important task for everyone.
2. Racial/ethnic identity formation is a developmental process which unfolds in rather predictable ways.
3. For young people of color, the process often begins to unfold in adolescence.
4. For whites living in predominantly white areas, the process may not begin until much later.
5. Many white adults have given little consideration to the meaning of their own racial group membership.
6. The fact that adolescents of color and white youth, as well as white educators, are on very different developmental timelines in terms of racial identity development is a potential source of misunderstanding and conflict.
7. Those who feel affirmed in their own identity are more likely to be respectful of others' self-definition.
Minority Identity Development

Before Stage 1 - my addition

Description:
To me, there is lots of information a child learns before they identify race or ethnicity as a far reaching concept that organizes that information.

Examples:
What are familiar and weird names, what is normal and weird food, perhaps visits to different parts of town, when Mom and Dad are tense. "They called me black at school. I'm not black, I'm brown."

Stage 1: Conformity

Description:
Preference for the values and norms of the dominant culture
Strong desire to assimilate into the dominate culture
Negative self-deprecating attitudes toward themselves and their racial group
Attitudes toward the dominant group are positive
Denial

Examples:
For a long time it seemed as if I didn't remember my background, and I guess in some ways I didn't. I was never taught to be proud of my African heritage. It's like we talked about in class, I went through a very long stage of identifying with my oppressors. Wanting to be like, live like, and be accepted by them. Even to the point of hating my own race and myself for being a part of it. Now I am ashamed that I ever was ashamed.

Stage 2: Dissonance

Description:
Individual begins to question pro-White attitude and behaviors
Individuals alternate between self- and group-appreciation and deprecating attitudes and behaviors
Confusion

Examples:
I feel that because of this class, I have become much more aware of racism that exists around. Because of my awareness of racism, I am now bothered by acts and behaviors that might not have bothered me in the past. Before when racial comments were said around me I would somehow ignore it and pretend that nothing was said. By ignoring comments such as these, I was protecting myself. It became sort of a defense mechanism. I never realized I did this, until I was confronted with stories that were found in our reading, by other people of color, who also ignored comments that bothered them. In realizing that there is racism out in the world and that there are comments concerning race that are directed towards me, I feel as if I have reached the first step. I also think I have reached the second step, because I am now bothered and irritated by such comments. I no longer ignore them, but now confront them.

Stage 3: Resistance and Immersion

Description:
Individuals embrace their own racial/ethnic group completely
Blind endorsement of one's group and all the values/attitudes attributed to the group
Individuals accept racism and oppression as a reality
Rejection of the values and norms associated with the dominant group
Empathic understanding and an overpowering ethnocentric bias

Examples:
Another point that I must put down is that before I entered class today I was angry about the way Black people have been treated in this country. I don't think I will easily overcome that and I basically feel justified in my feelings.

We are concerned about the well-being of our own people. They cannot be well if they have this pinned-up hatred for their own. Internalized racism is something that we all felt, at various times, needed to be talked about.

Stage 4: Introspection

Description:
Individuals develop a security in their racial identity that allows questioning of rigid Resistance attitudes
Re-direct anger/negativity toward "White system" to exploration of
individual and group identity issues
Conflict between allegiance to one's own ethnic group and issues of personal autonomy
Individuals acknowledge there is variation amongst all groups of people

Examples:
I have been aware for a long time that I am Korean. But through this class I am beginning to really become aware of my race. I am beginning to find out that White people can be accepting of me and at the same time accept me as a Korean.

I grew up wanting to be accepted and ended up almost denying my race and culture. I don't think I did this consciously, but the denial did occur. As I grew older, I realized that I was different. I became for the first time, friends with other Koreans. I realized I had much in common with them. This was when I went through my "Korean friend" stage. I began to enjoy being friends with Koreans more than I did with Caucasians.

Well ultimately, through many years of growing up, I am pretty much in focus about how I am and who my friends are. I knew before I took this class that there were people not of color that were understanding of my differences. In our class, I feel that everyone is trying to sincerely find the answer to abolishing racism. I knew people like this existed, but it's nice to meet with them weekly.

Stage 5: Synergetic Articulation and Awareness

Description:
Characterized by a sense of self fulfillment with regard to racial identity, confident and secure
Desire to eliminate all forms of oppression
High level of positive regard toward self and toward one's group
Respect and appreciation for other racial/cultural groups
Openness to constructive elements of the dominant culture

Examples:
...

- stages more often spiral staircase than linear
White/Majority Identity Development

Before Stage 1 - my addition

Description:
To me, there is lots of information a child learns before they identify race or ethnicity as a far reaching concept that organizes that information.

Examples:
What are familiar and weird names, what is normal and weird food, perhaps visits to different parts of town, when Mom and Dad are tense.

Stage 1: Pre-exposure/pre-contact

Description:
Whites have not begun to examine their own ethnicity.
Lack of awareness of self as a racial being.
Unaware of social expectations and role with regard to race.
Unconscious identification with whiteness.
Acceptance of stereotypes about minority groups.

Examples:
I don't notice what a person's race is.
I don't have an ethnic identity. I don't think myself as white, I'm just a person.

Talking about movement from stage 1 to stage 2:

At one point in my life - the beginning of this class - I actually perceived America to be a relatively racist free society. I thought that the people who were racist or subjected to racist stereotypes were found only in small pockets of the U.S., such as the South. As
I've come to realize, racism (or at least racially oriented stereotypes) is rampant.

"Yeah, I just found out that Cleopatra was a Black woman."
"What?" ... "That can't be true. Cleopatra was beautiful!"

As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage...I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.

"You don't act like a Black person."

**Stage 2: Conflict/Disintegration**

**Description:**
- Individuals begin to recognize that they live in a society that discriminates based on race
- Individuals become aware of the realities of prejudice, discrimination, and racism
- Conflict over new knowledge about race relations
- Marked by feelings of confusion, guilt, anger and depression

**Examples:**
- I never knew it was really that bad just 35 years ago. Why didn't I learn this in elementary or high school? Could it be that the White people of America want to forget this injustice?...I will never forget that movie for as long as I live. It was like a big slap in the face.

- I feel so stupid I never even knew that these (Japanese internment camps) existed. I never knew that the Japanese were treated so poorly. I am becoming angry and upset about all of the things I do not know.

- classmate observes that the fact that she has never read any books by Black authors in her high school or college English classes is an example of cultural racism. Tom, a white student, writes: "It's not my fault that Blacks don't write books."
I realized that it was as possible to simply go through life totally oblivious to the entire situation or, even if one realizes it, one can totally repress it. It is easy to fade into the woodwork, run with the rest of society, and never have to deal with these problems. So many people I know from home are like this. They have simply accepted what society has taught them with little, if any, question. My father is a prime example of this. It has caused so much friction in our relationship, and he often tells me as a father he has failed in raising me correctly. Most of my high school friends will never deal with these issues and propagate them on to their own children. It's easy to see how the cycle continues. I don't think I could ever justify within myself simply turning my back on the problem. I finally realized that my position in all of these dominant groups gives me power to make change occur...It is an unfortunate result often though that I feel alienated from friends and family. It's often played off as a mere stage that I'm going through. I obviously can't tell if it's merely a stage, but I know that they say this to take the attention off of the truth of what I'm saying. By belittling me, they take the power out of my argument. It's very depressing that being compassionate and considerate are seen as only phases that people go through. I don't want it to be a phase for me, but as obvious as this may sound, I look at my environment and often wonder how it will not be.

Individuals respond to their new found awareness in one of two ways:

EITHER

Stage 3: Pro-Minority/Anti-racism

Description:
Whites begin to resist racism and identify with minority groups
Identification serves to alleviate strong feelings of guilt and confusion
Still have self-focused anger and guilt, and anger at White culture in general

Examples:

OR

Stage 4: Retreat into White Culture
Description:
Retreat from situations that stimulate internal conflict
Retreat into comfort and security of same-race contact
Overidentification with Whiteness and defensiveness about White Culture
Fear and anger toward people of color.

Examples:
I am feeling really guilty lately about that (advantage). I find myself thinking: "I didn't mean to be White, I really didn't mean it."...I don't feel any better than a Black person. But it really doesn't matter because I am a member of the dominant race....I can't help it...and I sometimes get angry and feel like I'm being attacked. I guess my anger toward a minority group would enter me into the next stage of Reintegration (Retreat), where I am once again starting to blame the victim. This is all very trying for me and it has been on my mind a lot.

Stage 5: Redefinition/Integration

Description:
White people redefine what it means to be White
Whites acknowledge their responsibility for maintaining racism
Individuals become more balanced, more open to acquiring new information

Examples:
I can remember clearly the resentment I had for people of color. I think I am finally out of the Retreat stage. I am beginning to make a conscious effort to seek out information about people of color and accept their criticism...I still feel guilty about the feeling I had about people of color and I always feel bad about being privileged as a result of racism.

Some information by age

Stephen Quintana interviewed 500 Latino, African-American, Korean, Mexican, Brazilian, Guatemalan and Columbian children in Texas, Arizona, Chicago, Wisconsin and Latin America. Briefly, his research shows
Ages 3-6: Children think about racial differences in purely physical terms and may believe that racial status could change with surgery or if skin color was altered by staying in the sun too long. Example: can wash the skin color off.

Ages 6-10: Children understand ethnic background is a function of ancestry that influences not only how people look but also the food they eat, the language they speak and the activities they enjoy. Literal understanding of ethnicity. Example: being Mexican-American meant speaking Spanish and eating Mexican food.

Ages 10-14: Children realize that ethnicity can be linked to social class. Sixth-graders grasp how political resources are allocated in neighborhoods and how affirmative action affects minorities. Often interracial and inter-ethnic friendships developed in elementary school end as social groups become more racially segregated.

Adolescence: Many teen-agers express pride in their heritage and a sense of belonging to a group as their view of ethnicity and race matures.

1 Source: http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/staff/tlink/development/theme_identity_and_cohort/race_stages.html