

# Scarlett travis

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Scarlett Travis Anthropology 216 — “ The Identity of a Black Puerto Rican”

Although Puerto Ricans are made up of three peoples: Spanish, African, and Taíno, the black history of Puerto Rico is often made light of. Afro-Latino is a term coined to identify people from Latin America who have traceable African ancestry. To many, the term is oxymoronic and often problematic in the United States, where the need for racial and social classification needs to be refined to; Black, White, Hispanic, Native-American, Asian. “ Afro-” as a prefix for something Latin is usually associated with sociological elements such as Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Cuban All Stars, or Afro-Latin studies, but what does it really mean to be Afro-Latino? Outside of cultural concepts and sociological studies, Afro-Latino is a term not often used for self-identification. For those with obvious African physical characteristics, many are often referred to as “ black-” (Black-Puerto Rican, Black-Cuban, etc.) Only 5% of the population in Latin America (encompassing North/Central/South America, and the Caribbean) claim African ancestry, according to census records. With historical facts of the Middle Passage and obvious physical characteristics and cultural influences in culture, African ancestry is often the elephant in the room. My father told me of an old saying his parents taught him, “ ¿Y su abuela, donde es ella? ” Which means “ And your grandmother, where is she? ” In other words, you may look Spanish, but many have a black grandmother tucked away in the house. This was a saying that was used back in the days where racial issues were dominant, especially in those with mixed blood.