

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS
African American Music and Culture
AAS 105- Fall 2016

Course Description:

Within this course, students will investigate African American music and culture through a historical lens, as well as the emergence of HIP Hop culture. We will discuss African-American music and culture and how it looks to marginally disrupt oppression by highlighting cultural expression negotiated through the readings. However, it should be understood that this course is interactive and will use a social justice approach, which is to educate participants and empower.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course you will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of key arguments around hip hop as a site of resistance and pedagogy;
- Think critically about histories and representations of African American and the African diasporic music and culture.
- Utilize interdisciplinary scholarship (history, feminist and post-feminist theory, psychology, sociology) to frame analyses of African American popular culture, hip hop, and music.
- hone oral communication skills by engaging in full class discussions and small group collaborations.

Philosophy Statement:

The syllabus, though ambitious, is incredibly dialogic and will operate, as Hip Hip should; which is open to all ideas and expressions within the structure of the course. HIP HOP culture can be used as a tool to resist heteronormative, racist, and anti queer messages in music.

Quotes:

"I always feel it's important for me to show females that they can be in charge of their own situation. ... When I win and when I lose, I take ownership of it, because I really am in charge of what I do. There are a lot of strong male rappers, who've influenced me a great deal in terms of my skill, my flow and my business-savvy side. But at the end of the day, I still want to inspire women." ---Nicki Minaj

“I was listening to a lot of hip hop, music like Public Enemy that was about raising consciousness, and I realized I could feed that directly into my work, using images in a way that

was a bit like sampling - taking images from diverse places, exploring the contradictions without trying to hide the seams"--Chris Ofili

Recommended Texts:

Smethurst, J. (2006). *The Black arts movement: Literary nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Univ of North Carolina Press.

Part I.

Week 1: August 29- 31

Introduction

Preliminary Discussion

Social Contract (**Wednesday**)

Listening Party and Response (**Wednesday**)

Week 2: September 5- 7

No class Monday (Labor Day)

Wednesday: *The social activism of African American music (in class lecture)*

Homework: Read lyrics from (*Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos* by **Public Enemy**) and write a 1- page SINGLE SPACED reflection.

Week 3: September 12-14

Popcorn process in response to *Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos* by **Public Enemy**
Gil Scott Heron and the prophetic warning (in class lecture)

Week 4: September 19-21

Hip Hop music and its connection to the Black Arts Movement of the 60's and 70's

Homework: Find a song from the 1960's or 70's that reflects social justice and write a haiku poem describing the song.

Week 5: September 26-28

Popcorn process (haiku) **Monday**

In class movie night (Bastards of the Party)

Homework: Write a 1page SINGLE SPACED reflection

Week 6: October 3-5

Popcorn process

Listening Party: NWA and Hip-Hop's middle finger to mainstream society

Homework: Watch 'Straight Outta Compton' and write a 1page SINGLE SPACED reflection.

Week 7: October 10-12

Turn in papers on Monday

80's Hip Hop and black consciousness (THE KRS1 Effect) **Lecture**

Homework: Read *Framing and Reviewing Hip-Hop Educational Research* Author(s): Emery Petchauer

Week 8: October 17-19

No class on **the 19th** due to the Presidential Debate.

90's Hip Hop and the social ills of black and brown communities

Homework: Watch Menace II Society and write a 1-page SINGLE SPACED reflection.

Week 9: October 24-26

Popcorn process

Introduction of Group Projects

Homework: Graffiti Scavenger Hunt (each student will be required to take a photo of at least three graffiti tags within Las Vegas and write a 1page SINGLE SPACED reflection on what you believe it means. **NOTE: The three graffiti pictures are to be stapled to the 1-page reflection.**

Week 10: October 31-November 2

Presentation of Graffiti scavenger hunt assignment **on Monday October 31st**

Homework: Read *Hip Hop, Critical Pedagogy, and Radical Education in a Time of Crisis* by Christopher M. Tinson and Carlos REC McBride

Week 11: November 7-9

No Lecture time scheduled

Note: **STUDENTS ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO MEET DURING THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS GROUP PROJECTS.**

Week 12: November 14-16

Feminist Hip Hop perspectives (**Lecture**)

Discussion of final group projects

Homework: Read "*Under Construction*": *Identifying Foundations of Hip-Hop Feminism and Exploring Bridges between Black Second-Wave and Hip-Hop Feminisms* Author(s): Whitney A. Peoples.

Week 13: November 21-23 THANKSGIVING WEEK

No Class this week. ENJOY!!!

Week 14: November 28-30

Hip Hop and the LGBTQIA+ community (Lecture)

Homework: Watch Pariah on Netflix and write a 1-page SINGLE SPACED reflection paper.

Week 15: December 5-7

Modern Day Hip Hop: Drill Music and Chicago

Week 16: December 12-14

LAST CLASS

In class Presentation of group projects

Part II.

Learning Expectations/Methods of Evaluation

Reflection Papers---30%

Students will hand in reflection papers that highlight various readings and visual learning resources. At different points during this course, I (Derric) will select a student to present what they wrote for the class to discuss by using a random *popcorn process*. All reflections will be reviewed, graded, and returned with comment.

Graffiti Scavenger Hunt Project---30%

The graffiti scavenger hunt will involve students going outside the walls of the classroom and capturing the essence of graffiti culture by taking photos and responding through a 1page reflection. Students will need to take three photos of random graffiti art and staple the pictures to their reflections. During class, students will give a 5-minute presentation on their findings.

PLEASE NOTE that creativity is key in negotiating this assignment.

HIP HOP Anthology/ Final Group Assignment---30%

Details will be given during the semester.

Class Participation---10%

You are expected to participate in class discussion of all assigned readings, films/videos and any other assigned activities.

Part III.

Criterion for Evaluation and Grading

You will be evaluated on attendance, class participation, and the completion of all other learning expectations. You will be graded on the quality of your contributions to class, and your papers.

Grading Rubric

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% and below

No incompletes will be given unless you have a documented medical/psychiatric concern.

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the **instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to

participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>