

Instructor:  
Meetings:  
Meeting Location  
Office hours:  
Office location:  
Email:

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to Black Cultural Studies. Students will analyze blackness in media and culture, and become versed in Black cultural criticism. Students will examine:

- The ways Blackness is represented and used in U.S. media and popular culture
- Which elements of Black representation have changed over time and which elements remained constant over time.
- How gender, sexuality, ability status, class and religion help structure the representations of Blackness.
- How the “real” and imagined Black body is marked and made meaningful in the Black public sphere(s) as well as dominant institutions.
  - Special attention will be paid to commodified blackness under late capitalism and new racism.

In this Black Cultural Studies, we continuously ask, “What is at stake in the representations?” Students will discuss key debates about Black popular culture, which include taste, authenticity, and its socio-political relevance to an emancipatory project. Implicit in Black cultural criticism is an analysis of power—power as disciplinary, dynamic, policing, empowering, restrictive, and resistant. As such, students will be exposed to scholarship that adopts an intersectional approach, which places notions of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and class in conversation with one another. This course will also take an interdisciplinary approach as draw from Black Cultural Studies scholarship from disciplines such as communication, history, literature, sociology, and women and gender studies.

Media are vital to the course, and will be woven into each class meeting. In-class videos and listening sessions as well as possible outside film screenings will clarify required reading material and should enhance class discussion. You are encouraged to share media examples with me that I will bring to the class.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the key thinkers, criticism and debates concerning Black culture
- Analyze the signification of “Blackness” across various media and cultural platforms
- Produce relevant cultural criticism about representations of Blackness in popular media.
- Demonstrate ability to articulate research-based written and oral arguments and cultural criticism

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Hunt, D. (2005). *Channeling Blackness: Studies on Television and Race in America*. New York: Oxford University.

- Additional readings available on Blackboard. Please note that the following syllabus is provisional in regards to the reading schedule; I reserve the right to add or delete reading materials.

**GRADED ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS: 110 POSSIBLE POINTS**

Representing Black Vegas (libraries, museums, centers) paper	10 points
Exams: (2 @15 each):	30 points
Facilitate Discussion	10 points
Final essay:	20 points
In-class projects and activities (unannounced):	40 points

**\*Extra credit opportunities will be announced.**

**\*Assignment Descriptions will be available on Blackboard at the end of Week 1**

**Grading Scale**

A+: 97-100%*	B+:87-89%	C+: 77-79%	D+: 67-69%	F: 0-59%
A: 93-96%	B: 83-86%	C: 73-76%	D: 63-66%	
A-: 90-92%	B-: 80-82%	C-: 70-72%	D-: 60-62%	

\*UNLV does not indicate an A+ grade on official transcripts

**ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS**

Required readings can be accessed online through [Blackboard]. Students are responsible for the retrieval and reproduction of all electronic reading materials obtained from [Blackboard]. Supplemental course material will be distributed in class or posted on [Blackboard].

**EXPECTATIONS**

- Come to class prepared, fully participate and be respectful of the learning community we will build.
  - Being prepared involves: completing readings or assignments in advanced, and having necessary supplies.
  - Fully participating involves being a part of the discussions, actively listening and/or taking notes and contributing to the general experience.
- We are all here to learn, myself included. Together we will discuss and critically engage with the course material. In order to be successful, we need to respect each other’s opinions, practice active listening and avoid any behavior that disrupts the learning of others.
- Leave your technology in your bag. Checking cell phones, text messages, Facebook, Twitter, etc., is **NEVER** okay in this class. Limit your computer use to note taking.
- Please refrain from disruptive activities. I reserve the right to ask you to leave if your behavior is disruptive.
- Complete and submit assignments on time or ahead of time. Come to class on time. “To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, to be late is unacceptable,” -C. Berry.
- Manage crisis by planning ahead and asking for help when appropriate.
- Ask questions when you have them. This is a great way to learn.
- Trust that you have something to offer the class (your perspective and experience are important)
- Be responsible for your own learning and grades. Do not count on others to take notes or to send you reminders.
- Communicate with me: email, come to my office.
- Have fun!!

**You can expect me to:**

- Be on time and prepared for class.
- Be structured, but flexible when needed.
- Prioritize fairness to ALL students. I will not do for one person what I cannot do for ALL.
- Respond to your questions in a timely manner. Please allow 24-48 hours during the week. I do not check work emails during the weekend, so plan ahead. Emails sent on the weekend will be answered the next Monday or Tuesday. Again, manage your crisis by being prepared—do not email the night before a deadline as you probably will not get an answer. If you email me the morning of class, you will not get a reply until later that day or the next day.
- Be committed to your learning and available outside of class to assist you.
- \*Not be attached to your grades or points. I don't get a bonus for lower or higher grades, so trust that I will be as fair as possible.
- Actively engage in class and have fun!!

**COURSE POLICIES:** *In addition to Expectations (see above) here are some more specifics:*

**Statement regarding oppression:**

The classroom is a place for learning and only works when everyone is respected and treated justly. Language and gestures that are oppressive (ex: hate speech, shutting people down, 'name-calling') will not be tolerated in this space. Additionally, due to the nature of this course, we may encounter texts and examples that are oppressive in nature or that you do not agree with. In order to have this be a meaningful learning experience, it is necessary to not only to acknowledge, but also to respect difference in identities, points of view, life experiences, etc. Further, since we are all in this space, we are ALL responsible to address behavior that is oppressive in nature in a respectful, non-judgmental manner. If you cannot adhere to this, please make arrangements to be in a different class.

**Attendance, Assignments, Tardiness, and Make-up assignments**

- Only you can determine your success in this class. You will get out of it only what you put into it—this requires attending class.
- You are responsible for getting the information and material you miss in class from a classmate.
- A sizeable percentage of the points for this class come from in-class participation activities. Due to the nature of these activities, make-ups will not be available.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date, turned in by you. To be fair to all students who meet the expectations of this course, late assignments are not usually accepted without losing considerable points, unless there is proper documentation for the absence or tardiness.
- Anything turned in after class/outside of class on the due date will go down 1 letter grade per 24-hour period after the deadline. For example, your grade is a B, but it is turned in after class the same day. Your final grade will be a C.
- In order for assignments to be accepted without losing points, please contact me as soon as possible and provide documentation of illness or other university-approved absences. Dated documentation can include, but are not limited to: dated doctor's note, documentation of jury duty, obituary, etc. I reserve the right to contact the appropriate sources to confirm the documentation.
- **Email assignments are not accepted.**
- If your involvement in a university-sponsored activity requires that you miss a certain class period, you must provide me with documentation in advanced. Under some pre-approved circumstance (university-sponsored absence), assignments can be turned in early with advanced notice and proper documentation.
- Exam make ups will be discussed on a 1:1 basis for certifiable/documented medical and/or family emergencies, or university-sponsored activity.

- Students who wish to observe religious holidays that conflict with class dates should inform me in writing of their intention to do so in the first two weeks of the semester.

### **Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

UNLV is committed to providing reasonable support for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Disability Resource Center in order to receive academic accommodations. Students must notify me of accommodation needs at least 5 business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from DRC must accompany this request. Students are encouraged to contact *Disability Resource Center*: 702-895-0866, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>

### **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism** (adapted from syllabus of J.C. Hamm)

Academic dishonesty undermines the educational process and learning community. Using someone else's words or ideas as your own is dishonest and lazy. Cases of suspected plagiarism and/or cheating will be pursued diligently. The range of possible penalties includes a failing grade and dismissal from the university. You are responsible for knowing the university's standards. See University Policies: <http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>

**\*Only original work will receive a grade.** A zero will be assigned to any work with unoriginal work until the situation is resolved.

**Ongoing feedback:** I encourage you to share your feedback and concerns about this course as they arise. Please do not wait until the end of the semester. This includes grading errors or issues (ideally, within 2 weeks). I cannot fix what I do not know is broken. I am open and responsive to constructive feedback and questions.

**Notification:** Periodically, I will make course announcements via email notification. You are responsible for this information, so check your email every 24 hours. If you do not use your UNLV email account, you must forward your UNLV account to one you check daily. If you ask questions that may benefit the class, I may send the notification to the entire class in lieu of only emailing you. Announcements will also be posted on Blackboard

### **Writing help:**

The University provides numerous opportunities for students to get work on their writing. We can all improve our writing. When you turn in papers for this course, I will assume that it has been thoroughly edited. Visit: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

### **Additional Information:**

Use APA style: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

\*Class sessions may not be recorded (unless arranged with instructor through Disabilities Resource Center). Class notes may not be sold.

### **Critical Reading of Texts (adapted from R. Joseph)**

You will soon find out that your reading materials for the class are a mixture of descriptive (i.e., easier reading) and densely theoretical (i.e., more challenging) pieces. Please give yourself sufficient time to read and digest the works for the week. Critical readers of the assigned texts should be able to provide the following: a summary of the primary and supplementary points of the author's argument, a discussion of methodology, a mention of contribution of this work to its field(s), an analysis of strengths and weaknesses (of the style of the writing, the content provided, as well as the argument), and a link of the readings to the week's and course's concerns. For additional background, investigate the authors further, by, for example uncovering a short author biography and select bibliography. Critical readers have a conversation with the text. To do this, be sure to write a minimum of three questions for the class to discuss.

## WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE

\*Please Note: All reading must be complete prior to the class day they are assigned.

\*Also, note that the following schedule is provisional and may be changed as needed by instructor.

**Week 1** Introduction

**Monday, Aug. 26** Introduction to Course

Wednesday, Aug. 28 Introduction to Black Cultural Studies  
READ: BBCS, Intro, pp.1-15

**Week 2**

Mon, Sep. 2 University Holiday: No Class

Wed, Sep 4 Mapping Black Cultural Studies  
READ: BBCS, Chapter 15, Stuart Hall, "Cultural History and Cinematic Representation

**Week 3** Media Representations and Controlling Images 1

Mon, Sep 9

READ: Hunt, D. M. (2005). Making Sense of Blackness on Television. *Channeling Blackness*, pp. 1-24

READ: Bogle, D. (2004). Black Beginnings: From Uncle Tom's Cabin, Blackboard

Wed, Sep 11

READ: Campbell, C. (2005). A Myth of Assimilation. *Channeling blackness*, pp. 137-154

READ: Jhally, S., & Lewis, J. (2005). White Responses. *Channeling blackness*, pp. 74-88

READ: Fuller, J. (2010). Branding blackness. Blackboard

READ: Hunt, D. M. (2005). Black Content, White Control. *Channeling blackness*, pp. 267-302

READ: Worsley, S. (2009). Race, Racism, and Black Popular Culture, Blackboard

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4** Media Representations and Controlling Images 2

Mon, Sep 16

READ: Hall, S. (2005). Encoding and Decoding in the Television. *Channeling blackness*, pp. 46-59

READ: Gray, H. (2005). The Politics of Representation. *Channeling blackness*, pp. 155-174

Wed, Sep 18

READ: hooks, b. (1998). Dialectically Down the Critical Program, Blackboard

READ: Bobo, J. (1998). The Politics of Interpretation: Black Critics, Filmmakers, Audiences, Blackboard

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 5** Representing Black Female Bodies: Black Feminism and Intersectionality

Mon, Sep 23

READ: Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within"

Wed, Sep 25

READ: Hill Collins, P. (2000). "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images," Blackboard

READ: Mako Fitts, "Drop it Like it's Hot, Blackboard"

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6** In class project & presentation: Mapping Black Las Vegas

**Mon, Sep 30**

In class project (Bring together your experiences to tell a story)

Wed, Oct 2

Black Las Vegas Presentations in groups

**\* Black Las Vegas Paper due**

**Week 7** Representing LGBT Representations and Exam 1 Review

Mon, Oct 7

READ: E. Patrick Johnson, Appropriating Blackness, Intro-chap 1

Wed, Oct 9

READ: E. Patrick Johnson, Appropriating Blackness, chap 2

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 8** EXAM 1 AND Blackface and New Millennium Minstrelsy

**Mon, Oct 14**

**Exam 1**

**Wed, Oct 16**

READ: Epp, M. (2003). Raising Minstrelsy, Blackboard

READ: Ogbar, J. (2009). Minstrel Reprise, Blackboard

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 9** Blackface and New Millennium Minstrelsy: The Politics of Representation

Mon, Oct 21 In class video: *Ethnic Notions*  
READ: Smith-Shomade, B. (2007). "I Be Smackin' My Hoes." Blackboard  
READ: Barlowe, J. (2003). "You Must Never Be a Misrepresented People." Blackboard  
READ: Elam, H. J. (2005). Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*, Blackboard

Wed, Oct 23

Facilitators:

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**Week 10**  
Start *Beyond Beats and Rhymes*  
Hip Hop, Hip Hop

Mon, Oct 28

READ: Brandt, C. and Viki, G. (2009). Blame it on Hip Hop. Blackboard

Wed, Oct 30

Representing Black Male Bodies

READ: Fleetwood, N. (2005). Hip-Hop Fashion, Masculine anxiety, Blackboard  
READ: New Black Man, Chp 2, Blackboard

Facilitators:

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**Week 11**

Mon, Nov 4

Style  
READ: Mukherjee, R. (2006). The Ghetto Fabulous Aesthetic, Blackboard  
READ: Baxter, V. K., & Marina, P. (2008). Cultural Meaning and Hip Hop Fashion, Blackboard

Facilitators:

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Wed, Nov 6:

Research Day No class

**Week 12**

Mon, Nov 11

University Holiday: No Class

Wed, Nov 13

Style 2  
READ: Patton, T. O. (2006). "Hey Girl, Am I More Than My Hair?" Blackboard  
READ: Tate, S. (2007). Black Beauty: Shade, Hair and Anti-Racist Aesthetics, Blackboard

Facilitators:

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**Week 13**

Exam 2, Hybridizing Black Cultural Studies

Mon, Nov 18

**Exam 2**

Wed, Nov 20

BBCS Chap 7, Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities”

**Week 14**

Hybridizing Black Cultural Studies 2

Mon, Nov 26

BBCS Chap 5, Stuart Hall, “Minimal Selves”

Wed, Nov 27

Research Day: No Class

**Week 15**

*Mini Conference Week*

Mon, Dec 2

Presentations

Wed, Dec 4

Presentations and wrap up

\*Paper due at time of presentation

**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)**— **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](tel: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](mailto:@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](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/>.

**Syllabus Acknowledgement and Acceptance**

\*Due by

I \_\_\_\_\_ have carefully read the syllabus in its entirety and agree with the requirements, policies, and all other terms.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_