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Black Popular Cultures
AFA 2004**
FALL 2017

Professor: Zablon Mgonja
Email:

Course Hours: **T/Th 12:30- 1:45 PM**

Rm: GC

Office Hours: **Tuesday 2-3.**

Office: **LC 307 A African and African Diaspora Studies**

**This is the core course required for students who want a Certificate in African and African Diaspora Studies. This course also meets the University Core Course (UCC) Global Learning (GL), and Gordon Rule/Humanities with writing requirements.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is blackness? Is it skin color? Hair texture? African origins? The experience of and resistance to enslavement, colonialism, and discrimination? Call and response, improvisation, double-dutch and the drum? How has it been created and recreated through performance? What, if anything, connects Congolese rappers in France to South African Sarah Baartmann a.k.a. The Hottentot Venus to gay North American filmmaker Marlon Riggs to Mardi Gras Indians and Second Liners in New Orleans to Nigerian

Afro-beat icon Fela Kuti to Muhammad Ali and George Foreman's 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" to...?

Through an in-depth examination of key aspects of black popular cultures in their global dimensions, this course considers fundamental questions about the nature of identity, identification, and belonging. It employs a comparative, interdisciplinary approach, focusing on historical processes of race oracialization, Diaspora, gender and sexuality, music, and other related topics. The course begins with a look at how artists and intellectuals have theorized race, blackness, Diaspora and globalization. It then proceeds to further explore these concepts through various articulations of black popular culture.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Define the race concept and discuss its development and application.

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- Understand how scholars, researchers, and culture workers have theorized blackness and Diaspora.
- Identify key interrelated experiences, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to black people in both continental Africa and in the Diaspora.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the various perspectives and diverse cultural backgrounds of African peoples throughout the globe.

GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have:

- Acquired global awareness through understanding key interrelated issues, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the local and global experiences of people of African descent in both continental Africa and in the Diaspora.
- Acquired a sophisticated global perspective through analyses of the different local and global experiences of blackness articulated and produced by people of African descent in continental Africa and in the Diaspora.
- Developed problem solving and critical thinking skills through engagement with issues that impact people of African descent across the globe.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students are required to attend class and participate in discussion. This includes completing in-class writing assignments. Be sure to bring something to write on or in for these in-class exercises.
- During the first week of class, students will be asked to form groups of 3 people and choose a week from the course contents. Each group will present their article for 15 minute on the day in which the article/movie falls. After the presentation, the class will engage in the discussion of the article for 20 minutes, then the professor will sum up all the discussions for the remaining minutes. See the presentation/discussion guide in the course resources folder. The discussion and personal contributions are very important and they do count in your final grade.
- Students are required to submit a one-page response to questions on the assigned materials EACH WEEK at the end the week. Students are allowed to revise and resubmit up to weekly 3 response papers based on instructor feedback in order to improve their score. These papers will be used to evaluate student global awareness.

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- There are **THREE** take home exams. Students will be given a question or set of questions that require students to draw upon the readings and films in order to demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of the relationship between key issues and events relevant to people of African descent. Each exam will be posted at or near the conclusion of each module and students will have **three days** to answer the questions. Exam responses are between 3-5 pages (12 pt, double-spaced) cited properly following APA style. Course time will be devoted to discussing the take home exam questions and expectations for successful responses.
- Students are required to write a 7-10 page research paper that explores a question or problem related to Black Popular culture and demonstrates understanding of key issues and different perspectives associated with diverse populations of African descent from any part of the world. The instructor must approve of this question and students must submit an annotated bibliography with a minimum of five scholarly sources as part of the assignment. Course time will be devoted to discussing the development of the research paper. The term paper will be used to assess the student global perspective and global engagement.
- **Students are required to take part in an extracurricular activity that will expand their knowledge of the existence of various perspectives associated with different black subjectivities and diverse cultural backgrounds among people of African descent in both continental Africa and the Diaspora. It can be a field visit to a museum, an event in South Florida, a music concert that focus on black culture or any relevant event in consultation with course instructor. Each student will be given 5 minutes to present their findings/experience during the semester.**

****FOR ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES, GO TO THE "COURSE CONTENT" FOLDER ON BLACKBOARD**

GRADING

1. Group presentation	100 pts
2. Attendance and participation	50 pts
3. Fieldtrip/Event Report	50 pts
4. Weekly Reading/Film Response Papers (1-2 pages):	280 pts (20 Pts each)
5. Take Home Exams (3):	300 pts (100 Pts each)
6. Final Research Paper (5-7 pages):	220 pts
7. Total possible points:	1,000

Grade Ranges

100-95	A	89-87	B+	79-77	C+	59-0	F
94-90	A-	86-83	B	76-70	C		
		82-80	B-	60-69	D		

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COURSE CALENDAR

Module 1 - Introduction to Course - Race and Blackness - Blackness and Popular Culture

WEEK 1: AUGUST 21-25

Required Readings and Films

1. Graves, Joseph 2004. "How Biology Refutes Our Racial Myths" in *The Race Myth: Why We Pretend Race Exists in America*. New York: Penguin Books, pp. 1-18
2. [The American Anthropological Association \(AAA\)'s statement on "race"](#)
3. [The AAA's statement on "race" and intelligence](#) 4. [Review History of Race in the U.S.A.](#)
5. Film: *Black Is...Black Ain't* (a film by Marlon Riggs)
6. Hall, Stuart 1992. "What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" *Black Popular Culture*, Gina Dent, pp. 21-33.

Module 2 - Diasporas and Pan-Africanism

WEEK 2: AUGUST 28-SEPTEMBER 1

Required Readings and Films

7. Cohen, Robin 2008. "Four Phases of Diaspora Studies", *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-20.
8. Safran, William. 1991 "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora*. Vol. 1. 1991. Spring: 83-99.
9. Film: *W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices*

Module 3 - Transnationality of Black Popular Culture: Roots and Routes

WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 4-8

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Required Readings and Films

10. Rahier, Jean Muteba 1999. "Introduction", *Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities*. J. M. Rahier (Ed.), Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, xiii-xxvi.
11. Gilroy, Paul 1995. "Roots and Routes: Black Identity as an Outernational Project." In *Racial and Ethnic Identity: Psychological Development and Creative Expression*. Edited by Harris, H., H. Blue, and E. H. Griffith. New York: Routledge: 15-30.

Module 4 - Transnationality of Black Popular Culture: Globalization and Race

WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 18-22

Required Readings and Films

12. Clarke, Kamari and Deborah Thomas 2006 "Introduction" In *Globalization and Race: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness*. Edited by Kamari Maxine Clarke and Deborah A. Thomas. Durham: Duke University Press: 1-36.
13. Jackson, Kennel 2005 "Traveling While Black." In *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture*. Edited by H.J. Elam and K. Jackson. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press: 1-39.

Module 5 - The Diaspora in Africa: Muhammad Ali's Rumble in the Jungle

WEEK 5: SEPTEMBER 25-29

Required Readings and Films

14. Olanitan, Oluwafemi 1996. "When We Were Kings." *Cineaste* 22(4): 2pp.
15. Carrington, Ben 1998. "Audio Visual Review: When We Were Kings". *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 33(1): 75-81. Film: *When We Were Kings*
16. Olanitan, Oluwafemi 2001 "The Cosmopolitan Nativist: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and the Antinomies of Postcolonial Modernity." *Research in African Literatures* 32(2): 76-89. Film: *Fela Kuti: Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*

Exam # 1 available on Blackboard from September 28 at 7:00 AM due October 1 at 11:59 PM

Module 6- The Diaspora in Africa: Fela Kuti Afrobeat- Teacher don't teach me nonsense

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WEEK 6: OCTOBER 2-6

Required Readings and Films

Olaniyan, Tejumola 2001 “The Cosmopolitan Nativist: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and the Antinomies of Postcolonial Modernity.” *Research in African Literatures* 32(2): 76-89.
Film: *Fela Kuti: Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*

Module 7 - Africa in the Diaspora: Carnival and Parade Culture

WEEK 7: OCTOBER 9-13

Required Readings and Films

Herskovits, Melville, 1958 “The Significance of Africanism in *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 1-32.
Farris Thompson, Robert 1988. “Recapturing Heaven's Glamour: Afro-Caribbean Festival Arts” in *Caribbean Festival Arts: Each and Every Bit of Difference*. Edited by Robert Nunley and Judith Bettelheim. Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 17-29.
Bettelheim, Judith, Barbara Bridges, and Debra Yonker 1988. “Festivals in Cuba, Haiti, and New Orleans” in *Caribbean Festival Arts: Each and Every Bit of Difference*. Edited by Robert Nunley and Judith Bettelheim. Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 137-164.

Module 8 - The Black Body: History and Politics of Representation

WEEK 8: OCTOBER 14-20

Required Readings and Films Jackson, Ronald L. 2006. “Origins of Black Body Politics” and “Scripting the Black Body in Popular Media” in *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 1-72. Film: *Ethnic Notions*

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Module 9 - The Black Body: Femininity

WEEK 9: OCTOBER 23-27

Required Readings and Films

Magubane, Zine 2001 "Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the "Hottentot Venus." *Gender & Society*, Vol. 15, n.6, December: 816-834. Hooks, Bell 1992 "Selling Hot Pussy: Representation of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, pp.61-78.
Film: *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman*

Module 10 - The Black Body: Masculinity

WEEK 10: OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 3

Required Readings and Films Jackson, Ronald, "Black Masculine Scripts" in *Scripting the Black Masculine Body*, pp. 73-100.

Alexander, Bryant Keith "Facing, Twisting, and Weaving: An Interpretive Ethnography of the Black Barbershop Salon as Cultural Space" in *Performing Black Masculinity: Race, Culture, and Queer Identity*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Press, pp. 135-160.

Poulson-Bryant, Scott 2005, *Being: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 1-24.

Exam # 1 available on Blackboard from November 2 at 7:00 AM due November 5 at 11:59 PM

Module 11 - Black Music Global Dimensions- Reggae Music

WEEK 11: November 6- 10

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Required Readings and Films

Black Music global dimensions: Bob Marley and Reggae Music

Smith A. W (ND) Songs of freedom: The music of Bob Marley as transformative education
Haner, M. (2007) Bob Marley's Spiritual Rhetoric, the Spread of Jamaican Culture and Rastafarianism. Western Oregon University
Film: Bob Marley's cultural legacy: African centered Documentary:

MODULE 12: Black Music Global Dimensions: Hip hop Africa

WEEK 12: November 13-17

Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Africa)

Required Readings and Films

Magubane, Zine 2007, "Globalization and Gangster Rap: Hip Hop in the Post-Apartheid City", in Sidney Lemelle and Dipanita Basu *The Vinyl Ain't Final*, Verso, pp.208-229.
Ntarangwi, Mwenda 2009. "Hip Hop and African Identity in Contemporary Globalization" in East African Hip Hop: Youth Culture and Globalization. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

WEEK 12: November 13-17

Film: *I [heart] Hip Hop in Morocco: peace, love, hip hop (GL Film)*

MODULE 13: Black Music Global Dimensions: Hip Hop in Europe

November 20-24

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Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Europe)

Required Readings and Films

Hélénon, Véronique 2007, “Africa on Their Mind. Rap, Blackness and Citizenship in France”, in Sidney Lemelle and Dipanita Basu *The Vinyl Ain't Final*, Verso, pp.151-166.

Codrington, Raymond 2006, “The Homegrown: Race, Rap, and Class in London”, In *Globalization and Race: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness*.

Brown, Timothy S. 2007, “’Keepin it Real’ in a Different ‘Hood: (African-) Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany”, in *The Vinyl Ain't Final*, pp. 137-150.

Due on November 26 at 11:59 PM: Research Paper

MODULE 14: Black Music Global Dimensions- Latin America

WEEK 14: November 27 – December 1st

Black Music: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Latin America)

Required Readings and Films

Osumare, Halifu 2005, “Global Hip Hop and the African Diaspora” in *Black Cultural Traffic*, pp. 266-288.

Sujatha Fernandes 2006, “Fear of a Black Nation: Local Rappers, Transnational Crossings, and State Power,” in *Cuba Represent!: Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures*.

Film: *Cuban Hip Hop All Stars*

**Week 15: Exam # 3 posted on Monday December 3rd due Thursday
December 7th at 11:59 PM**