**Black Popular Cultures, Global Dimensions**  
**AFA 2004**  
**Spring 2011**

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Office: LC 308  

Course Hours: MWF 11-11:50 AM  
Office Hours: W 3-5 PM or by appt.

**This is the only required core course for students who are pursuing a Certificate in African & African Diaspora Studies. This course also meets the University Core Curriculum (UCC) and the Global Learning (GL) 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, differently in different contexts, through performances of self and culture(s)? If this is the case, are the different forms of blackness connected as parts of networks or circuits? What, if anything, connects Congolese rappers in France to South African Sarah Baartmann a.k.a. The Hottentot Venus to gay U.S. 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; race or racialization; Diasporas; gender, sexuality, and sexualization; 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 cultures.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Identify the key issues, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the experiences of people of African descent in both continental Africa and in the Diaspora.
• Explain how scholars and researchers use various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to examine these key issues.
• Critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the experiences of African people throughout the globe.
• Become very familiar with one specific topic in black popular cultural production.

GLOBAL LEARNING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

• Demonstrate understanding of the inter-relatedness of key issues and events, both historical and contemporary, relevant to the cultural politics of people of African descent in both continental Africa and the Diaspora. (GLOBAL AWARENESS)
• Demonstrate the ability to compose an analysis of the various perspectives associated with the different black subjectivities and diverse cultural backgrounds among people of African descent in both continental Africa and the Diaspora. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)
• Engage in a number of problem solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe that involve peoples of African descent and their cultural formations both in continental Africa and in the Diaspora. (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• Students are required to attend class and participate in discussions. This includes completing in-class writing assignments. Each Monday during the second half of the course students will present and facilitate discussions of the readings and/or films assigned for that week. Thus, you will be required to present the course materials and facilitate a discussion at least once during the semester. You will receive advice from the professor about class presentations.
• There are four (4) quizzes based on assigned readings and films. These quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions.
• There are three (3) film reaction papers (2-3 pages, 12 pt, double-spaced) assigned throughout the course. Students can choose any three of the required films in the course on which to write a reaction paper, however each paper is due the Monday after the film is assigned. The format of the film reaction papers will be explained during the first day of class.
• Early in the second part of the semester, students will be asked to answer 4 short essay questions after reading one or more short text(s) or after watching a specific film. The film or the text(s) will address the existence of global networks or circuits within which black cultural politics are embedded, and in which specific intercultural problems have arisen. The report will consist in answering 4 short essay questions for 25 points each. The total score will be 100 points.
This GL requirement asks students to 1) demonstrate their understanding of the inter-relatedness of key issues and events, both historical and contemporary, relevant to the cultural politics of people of African descent in both continental Africa and the Diaspora; 2) it also asks students to demonstrate their willingness to engage—thanks to what they have learned in this class—in a number of problem solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe. (GLOBAL AWARENESS & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

- Students are required to write a term paper (12-15 pages) that will be based on both library research and brief fieldwork conducted in at least one South Florida black community to which the student doesn’t belong. The paper will be focused on one or two closely related and comparable local/global black popular culture production(s) and/or performance(s).

This GL requirement asks students to demonstrate comprehension 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 also asks students to demonstrate their willingness to engage—thanks to what they have learned in this class—in a number of problem solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)

- Students are required to make a short final presentation to the class based on their independent research project.

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

| Class Participation and Facilitation: | 200 pts |
| Quizzes (50 POINTS EACH) | 200 pts |
| Film Reaction Papers (2-3 pages) (50 POINTS EACH) | 150 pts |
| Global Learning Film or Reading Report | 100 pts |
| Final Paper (10-12 pages) and Presentation | 350 pts |
| **TOTAL** | **1,000 pts** |

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The total number of points that you can earn in this course is 1000. However, throughout the semester, you may have opportunities to earn extra credit through attending events relevant to the course and writing a reaction paper.

GROUND RULES

1) Turn your cell phones OFF. If you have an emergency and have to use it, leave the room so that I do not have to request that you do so.
2) Use laptops ONLY for course related activity (ie: taking notes)
3) Arrive to class ON TIME. Persistent lateness will result in a lower grade.
4) Papers are to be submitted electronically on the Moodle website (turnitin.com upload) associated with this course. NO late papers will be accepted for full credit without a medical excuse. Each day late will result in the loss of 10% of the total possible points.

SAMPLE SCENARIO: You do an excellent job on a paper that is due on February 19th. You submit it on time, you earn 5/5 pts. You submit it a day late, you earn 4.5/5 (A-). You submit it two days late, it drops to a 4/5 pts. (B-). ETC.

5) Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a ‘0’ for the assignment and you will be reported to Academic Affairs. To avoid plagiarism, all assignments will have to be uploaded on a turnitin.com site associated with this course (see the Moodle site associated with this course).

6) Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and number, and page numbers.

7) All email correspondence must begin with a salutation (Professor __________; Dear Dr. __________, Hi Professor __________, etc.) and end with your name. I will not read your email if you fail to include this.

8) In this course, we will be discussing topics some might consider sensitive, provocative, or taboo such as race and sexuality. It is imperative that you express your opinions in a respectful manner.

9) Some of the material in this course uses slang, profanity, and what some might consider derogatory racial and sexual terminology. If you find such language offensive, please see me.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings from this course consist of journal articles and chapters from various texts. There are also several required films. All readings and films will be available on the course’s Moodle website. Required readings for the course are located below in the weekly section for which they are assigned.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE  Introduction to Course:
Race and Blackness

Required Readings and Films


2) The American Anthropological Association (AAA)’s statement on “race”
http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm

3) The AAA’s statement on “race” and intelligence
http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/race.htm

4) Review History of Race in the U.S.A.
http://www.understandingrace.org

5) Film: *Black Is...Black Ain’t* (a film by Marlon Riggs)
In-class viewing and response to film

WEEK TWO
Blackness and Popular Culture

Readings and Films
1) Film: *Black Is...Black Ain’t* (a film by Marlon Riggs)
In-class viewing and response to film


Recommended

WEEK THREE
Diasporas and Pan-Africanism

Readings and Films


3) Film: *W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices*

Recommended

WEEK FOUR
Transnationality of Black Popular Culture: Roots and Routes
Quiz #1: Covers Weeks 1-3

Readings and Films


3) GL reading

WEEK FIVE
Transnationality of Black Popular Culture: Globalization and Race

Readings and Films


WEEK SIX
The Diaspora in Africa: Muhammad Ali’s Rumble in the Jungle and Fela Kuti’s Afrobeat

Quiz #2: Week 4-5 MONDAY

DUE: one paragraph describing potential topics for the final research project.
Readings and Films


3) Film: When We Were Kings

5) Film: Fela Kuti: Teacher Don’t Teach Me Nonsense

WEEK SEVEN
Africa in the Diaspora: Carnival and Parade Culture

Readings and Films


4) In Class Film Clips: Esta Es La Conga (Santiago) and Second Line Parades (New Orleans)

WEEK EIGHT
The Black Body: History and Politics of Representation

Quiz #3: Covers Weeks 6-7

Readings and Films

5) Film: Marlon Riggs, Color Adjustment

WEEK NINE
The Black Body: Femininity
DUE: Bibliography for Final Research Paper

Readings and Films


5) Film: The Life and Times of Sara Baartman

GL Film Report or Reading Report due on Friday of Week 9. Watch the film or read the additional required text on Moodle and upload the report on that site where indicated.

WEEK TEN
The Black Body: Masculinity

Readings and Films
1) Jackson, Ronald L. “Black Masculine Scripts” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body, pp. 73-103.


WEEK ELEVEN
Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Latin America)

Readings and Films

3) Film: Cuban Hip Hop All Stars

4) Video: “Latin American Hip Hop” in A Rising Voice: Afro-Latin America

WEEK TWELVE
Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Europe)

Readings and Films


3) 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.

WEEK THIRTEEN
Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop (Africa)

Quiz #4: Weeks 08-13

Readings and Films


3) Film: I [heart] Hip Hop in Morrocco: peace, love, hip hop

WEEK FOURTEEN
Student Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN
EXAM WEEK
FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY OF WEEK FIFTEEN

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