AFA 4372: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Hip Hop- Spring 2015
A Global Learning Foundations Course

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Email: Via Blackboard Only
Office Hours: Via Appointment Only

Course Description
Hip Hop may be one of the largest cultural movements the world has ever experienced – a cultural movement that has influenced everything from the music to which we listen, the clothes with which we adorn ourselves and to the words we speak. However hip hop culture is more than the music, the fashion and the style that is popular today. It transcends the commercialized products sold to mainstream U.S. America and the around globe. How so? Why did hip hop emerge? What does mainstream hip hop today represent? This course addresses these questions by tracing the historical and political context of the formation of hip hop, its expansion into a discourse of resistance; to its more mainstream contemporary global commodification. Hip Hop was born from racial, class and gendered divides as a way for marginalized, black and brown youth in the United States to share their stories and their experiences. Rooted in the struggles and voices of millions of black and brown youth, it served as an expression and alternative to the urban woes plaguing their lives. The early spirit of hip hop has been one of empowerment through artistic expression. It has enabled people to articulate the reality of their lived experiences and to share their knowledge with the world. Hip hop through its diverse elements (B boying/B girling, Graffiti, DJing, MCing) is about fighting self-imposed and systemic oppression. By tracing the philosophies, events and actors that have contributed to hip hop, this course simultaneously takes up the race, class, gender and sexual politics the space espouses. We will look critically at hip hop today, its problems as well as its possibilities. This is not a purely musical appreciation course. However students will have ample opportunity to engage hip hop lyric, videos and images throughout the span of the course.

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

- Identify the key events, actors and philosophies, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the emergence of hip hop;
- Develop a deeper, contextualized understanding of the evolution of hip hop as a cultural movement with a variety of art forms all of which are rooted in political resistance, civil rights and social justice;
- Understand the political and historical events, as well as the philosophies and economic factors that have mainstreamed hip hop;
- Distinguish scholars’ various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to examining these key issues;
- Critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the various forms and functions of hip hop;
- Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
• Shift from simplistic notions of “whether hip hop is a positive or negative influence” to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the “why and how” of hip hop;
• Consciously situate themselves within hip hop as consumers and contributors with an appreciation of their own impact on the culture

Global Learning Course Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape Hip Hop culture (GLOBAL AWARENESS);
• Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in Hip Hop cultures (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE);
• Provide evidence of their willingness and ability to address local, global, international and intercultural problems by integrating issues related to race, gender and sexuality in Hip Hop (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT).

Course Communication
Communication in this course will take place via Messages. The message feature is a private, internal Blackboard only communication system. Users must log on to the blackboard system to send /receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Blackboard to inform users when a new message has been received. It is recommended that students check their messages regularly to ensure up to date communication. **This is the only method to communicate with your instructor.**

Required Reading Materials

Textbooks

Additional Materials:
3. Other required readings will be provided on Blackboard.
4. Required films will also be available on Blackboard.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Blackboard Weekly Reading Response E-Posts**
During the first week of the semester, each student will be assigned a small working group. Students will engage in discussions within their respective group throughout the semester.

During the semester, students must contribute **fourteen** 1-page (approximately 400 words each) reading response e-posts under the “Discussion” section of the Blackboard site. **Responses must be posted weekly starting the first week of class (January 12).** E-posts are aimed at encouraging inquiry, analysis and discussion among students, on-line.

**E-posts are due, every Sunday by 11:59PM, by the end of each Module.** Students are encouraged to read one another’s e-posts. These responses are evaluated on the basis of the quality of students’ engagement with the core themes of the readings and the coherence and clarity of the writing.

As you read for the week, consider the following questions. These will also help you to write your reading response.

1) What is the main argument(s)? Why did the author(s) write the article or chapter?
2) What are the data used as evidence by the author to support the claims he/she makes in his/her argument?
3) What is useful about the reading(s)?
4) Were any of the points made questionable? If so, why?
5) What points, issues, or terms would you like to discuss or have clarified?
6) How do the various readings assigned inform each other? Contradict? Raise new questions?

**Exams**
There are **three (3)** exams based on assigned readings and films. These exams will be essay questions.
Exam 1 will cover the basic course concepts such as the spatial construction and intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality as well as the birth of Hip Hop as a local expression of global inequalities.

Exam 2 is directly related to the global learning outcome called Global Perspective. Students will demonstrate their comprehension and consideration of different cultural perspectives when conducting analyses of the intercultural and international formation of Hip Hop.

Exam 3 is directly related to the global learning outcome called Global Engagement. Students will demonstrate their willingness to engage in problem solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe and propose solutions taken from local, global and intercultural realities and from the history of Hip Hop.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the “Practice Quiz” from each computer you will be using to take your graded exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance, please contact FIU Online Support Services.

Film Reaction Papers
There is one (1) film reaction paper for this course that is directly related to the global learning outcome called Global Awareness. Students can choose any of the required films/videos in the course on which to write a reaction paper. The format of the film reaction paper will be posted under class resources. In this paper, students will demonstrate their ability to apply their acquired knowledge from course material and improved understanding of how Hip Hop interrelates with global, international, and intercultural issues, movements, trends, and systems. The paper will be due April 9.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS
1. A note on papers: Make sure you proofread your papers and provide appropriate citations when referencing readings from our class. Papers will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:
   A: outstanding analysis; solid examples and reasons provided to support views; clearly written.
   B: fulfilled the assignment adequately; few if any grammatical problems or unclear sentences.
   C: fulfilled the assignment but either the analysis is insufficient or superficial and/or there were a number of grammatical mistakes.
   D: the assignment was not adequately fulfilled and/or there were a substantial number of grammatical errors; awkward and confusing sentences.
   F: the assignment was not turned in within two weeks of the due date, or was not completed according to the criteria listed above.

2. Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and page numbers.
3. You must avoid—at all costs—direct quotations in your papers. Please paraphrase and cite only from course materials. For citation style, see the AAA style guide uploaded on the course content page of this course’s website.

4. All assignments and exams are to be uploaded onto turnitin.com. NO late papers will be accepted for full credit without a medical excuse. No exceptions will be made.

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 onto turnitin.com.

6. 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.

7. Make-up Policy: All assignments/exams should be submitted on the dates they are due. The only exceptions are dire emergency, grave illness, and religious holidays. In the case of the first, whether or not a situation qualifies as a dire emergency will be determined by me. Since I do not see most reasons for failing to turn in assignments and take exams as dire emergencies, not attempting to make these excuses is your best bet. In the case of the second, I require a doctor’s note.

8. Accommodations for Disabilities: Any student who, because of disability, may require accommodations in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodations for individual learning needs. FIU and I will make every attempt to accommodate all students with disabilities. For further information on resources available at FIU, contact the Disability Resource Center at WUC 131, Biscayne Park Campus (Phone: 9-5211; Email: drc@fiu.edu).

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

14 Reading Response E-Posts (15 POINTS EACH): 210 pts
3 Exams (200 POINTS EACH): 600 pts
1 Film Reaction Paper (190 POINTS EACH): 190 pts

TOTAL 1,000 pts

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The total number of points that you can earn in this course is 1000.
COURSE SCHEDULE

SECTION 1: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Module 1: Course overview
January 12- January 18

To-do List:
- Post in the 'Introduce Yourself' discussion forum on Blackboard
- Read the syllabus carefully
- Purchase the 2 textbooks without delay (Available at FIU bookstore in MMC)
- Watch film: http://vimeo.com/22591307

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be:
- Well acquainted with the syllabus and course requirements
- Familiar with fellow students
- Prepared to start working

Module 2: Social Construction Theory
January 19- January 25

To-do List:
- Read the following articles:


- Visit the following sites:
  http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm
  http://www.understandingrace.org

- Watch the following film:
  The Colour of fear
  http://vimeo.com/65986553
Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Critique biological notions of race
- Explain how race is socially constructed through laws, media, and popular culture
- Understand that patterns of human diversity and behavior are not fixed and do not fit neatly into categories of race
- Understand why race remains a powerful force in contemporary society.

Module 3: Intersectionality: Because a woman is not only a woman…!
January 26- February 1

To-do List:
- **Read the following articles:**

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Define the concept of intersectionality
- Apply this theoretical tool to their understanding of race, gender, and sexuality

SECTION 2: RETHINKING HIP HOP:
THE PHILOSOPHIES AND EVENTS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED IT

Module 4: Early influences of Hip Hop: Africa, Jazz and the roots of Rap
February 2- February 8

To-do List:
- **Read the following articles:**

- **Watch the following film:**
  Roots, Rock and Reggae -Inside the Jamaican Music Scene (1977)

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:

- Understand that hip hop does not “belong” to a specific racial demographic (African Americans) but that it is a product of cross-cultural integration;
- Identify the key events, actors and philosophies, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the emergence of hip hop;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture.

**Module 5: Early Hip Hop and Its Diverse elements**

**February 9- February 15**

**To-do List:**

- Read the following articles:

- Watch the following film:
  Wild Style: [http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/10059950](http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/10059950)

- Take Exam 1

  **Exam 1 covers Modules 1-5 from Thursday February 12 at 4pm to Sunday February 15 at 11:59pm.**

**Module Level Objectives:**

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

- Identify the key events, actors and philosophies, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the emergence of hip hop;
- Develop a deeper, contextualized understanding of the evolution of hip hop as a cultural movement with a variety of art forms all of which are rooted in political resistance, civil rights and social justice;
- Critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the various forms and functions of hip hop;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture.

**Module 6: Events and Politics that influenced Hip Hop in the 1970s and 1980s**

**February 16- February 22**

**To-do List:**

- Read the following articles:


Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
• Understand rap as a dimension of the wider hip hop culture;
• Identify the key events, actors and philosophies, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the emergence of hip hop;
• Develop a deeper, contextualized understanding of the evolution of hip hop as a cultural movement with a variety of art forms all of which are rooted in political resistance, civil rights and social justice;
• Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop

Module 7: “Lesser Acknowledged” Influences in Hip Hop
February 23- March 1

To-do List:
• Read the following articles:

• Watch the following film:
  From Mambo to Hip Hop: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xef0kx_from-mambo-to-hip-hop_shortfilms

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
• Situate rap within the racialized, sexualized, and gendered processes of wider society;
• Identify the key events, actors and philosophies, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to the emergence of hip hop;
• Develop a deeper, contextualized understanding of the evolution of hip hop as a cultural movement with a variety of art forms all of which are rooted in political resistance, civil rights and social justice;
• Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture;
• Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in hip hop cultures.
Module 8: The Big Crossover, Rap and Authenticity Debates: 1980s and 1990s
March 2- March 8

To-do List:
- **Read the following articles:**

- **Watch the following film:**

**Module Level Objectives:**
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Understand that hip hop is connected to lived experiences, social conditions and inequalities within our society;
- Distinguish scholars’ various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to examining these key issues;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture.

Module 15: Spring Break!
March 9- March 15
No Readings

**SECTION 3: CRITICAL DIALOGUES IN HIP HOP**

Module 9: Is Hip Hop A Positive or Negative Societal influence?
March 16- March 22

To-do List:
- **Read the following articles:**

- Watch the following film:
  Beyond Beats and Rhymes (FIU Library)

**Module Level Objectives:**
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
- **Shift from simplistic notions of “whether hip hop is a positive or negative influence ” to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the “why and how” of hip hop;**
- Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in hip hop cultures.

**Module 10: Hip Hop Demeans Women! Really?**
**March 23- March 29**

**To-do List:**
- **Read the following articles:**

- **Watch the following films:**
  A Girl like me: [http://www.understandingrace.org/lived/video/](http://www.understandingrace.org/lived/video/)
  YouTube Video “Your Revolution” Sarah Jones: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRgIGMwZd2o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRgIGMwZd2o)

- **Take Exam 2**
  Exam 2 covers Modules 6 -10 from Thursday March 26 to Sunday March 29 at 11:59pm.
Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:

- Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
- **Shift from simplistic notions of “whether hip hop is a positive or negative influence” to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the “why and how” of hip hop;**
- Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in hip hop cultures.

Module 11: Complicating “Masculinities” in Hip Hop
March 30- April 5

To-do List:

- **Read the following articles:**

- **Watch the following videos:**
  Pink Matter By Frank Ocean: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtM8XCXSCiM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtM8XCXSCiM)

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:

- Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
- Shift from simplistic notions of “whether hip hop is a positive or negative influence” to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the “why and how” of hip hop;
- Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in hip hop cultures.
Module 12: Queering Hip Hop  
April 6- April 12

To-do List:
- **Read the following article:**

- **Watch the following film:**
  Pick up the Mic! : [http://www.hulu.com/watch/228078](http://www.hulu.com/watch/228078)

- **Global Learning Assessment due on April 9 at 11:59pm**

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
- Recognize how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operate in the space of hip hop;
- Analyze the images of hip hop presented by the mainstream media;
- **Shift from simplistic notions of “whether hip hop is a positive or negative influence” to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the “why and how” of hip hop;**
- Develop a multi-perspective analysis of the local, global, international, and intercultural problems informing racial, gender and sexual outcomes in hip hop cultures.

SECTION 4: HIP HOP TODAY: COMMODIFICATION AND GLOBALIZATION

Module 13: Dollas! The Economics of Hip Hop  
April 13- April 19

To-do List:
- **Read the following articles:**


• Watch the following video:
  “For What They do” The Roots: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qzacv8dtb4

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
• Understand the political and historical events, as well as the philosophies and economic factors that have mainstreamed hip hop;
• Distinguish scholars’ various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to examining these key issues;
• Consciously situate themselves within hip hop as consumers and contributors with an appreciation of their own impact on the culture

Module 14: “But wait… There is Always Another Side to Every Story!”
April 20- April 26

To-do List:
• Read the following articles:

• Watch the following video:
  Dred Perez “Hell Yeah!” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGjSq4HqP9Y

• Take Exam 3
  Exam 3 covers Module 11 to 15 from Monday April 27 at 4pm to Thursday April 30 at 11:59pm.

Module Level Objectives:
At the end of this module, students will be able to:
• Understand the political and historical events, as well as the philosophies and economic factors that have mainstreamed hip hop;
• Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture.