

Black Popular Cultures
AFA 2004**
Spring 2015

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African and African Diaspora Studies

Course Hours: T/Th 11AM-12:15PM
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**This is the core course required for students who want a Certificate in African & 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, race or racialization, 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

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

- 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

- Demonstrate 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.
- Demonstrate a 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.
- Demonstrate engagement with intercultural systems of social categorization through critically evaluating popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the experiences of African people throughout the globe.
- Develop problem solving and critical thinking skills through engagement with issues that impact people of African descent across the globe.
- Demonstrate engagement with one specific topic in black popular cultural production through independent research.

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.
- 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.
- There are three take home exams, one for each module of the course. 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 one week to answer the questions. Exam responses are between 3-5 pages (12 pt, double-spaced). 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. The instructor must approve of this question and students must submit an annotated bibliography with a minimum of five scholarly sources as a 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.

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

GRADING

Class Attendance and Participation: 20 pts

Weekly Reading/Film Response Papers (1-2 pages): 28 pts (2 POINTS EACH)

Take Home Exams (3): 30 pts (10 POINTS EACH)

Final Term Paper (5-7 pages): 22 pts

100-94	A	89-87	B+	79-77	C+	69-67	D+	< 60	F
93-90	A-	86-84	B	76-74	C	66-64	D		
		83-80	B-	73-70	C-	63-60	D-		

The total number of points that you can earn in this course is 100. There is no extra credit.

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. NO late papers will be accepted without a medical excuse. Each day late will result in the loss of 10% of the total possible points.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 blackboard website. **To Access go to online.fiu.edu, enter panther ID and 8 digit DOB.** Required readings for the course are located below in the weekly section for which they are assigned.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE ONE: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

WEEK ONE Foundations I: Race January 13-15

Tuesday

Introduction to Course

Thursday

The Race Concept

- 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"
<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>

WEEK TWO Foundations II: Theorizing Blackness and Diaspora January 20-22

Tuesday

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

Thursday

- 1) Johnson, E. Patrick 2003. "The Pot is Brewing: Marlon Riggs's Black Is...Black Ain't in *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.17-47
- 2) 2) Hall, Stuart 1992. "What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?", *Black Popular Culture*, Edited by Gina Dent, pp. 21-33.

WEEK THREE Foundations II: Theorizing Blackness and Diaspora

January 27-29

Tuesday

- 1) Cohen, Robin 2008. "Four Phases of Diaspora Studies", *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-20.
- 2) Safran, William 1991 "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora*. Vol. 1. N°1. Spring: 83-99.

Thursday

- 1) Film: *W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices*
**VIEW ON BLACKBOARD BEFORE CLASS

Recommended

- 2) Sawyer, Mark 2008 "DuBois's Double-Consciousness Versus Latin American Exceptionalism: Joe Arroyo, Salsa, and Négritude" in *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line*. Edited by Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones. New York: Macmillan, pp.135-48.

WEEK FOUR Foundations III: Transnationality of Black Popular Culture

February 3-5

Tuesday

- 1) Appiah, Kwame Anthony 2006. The Case for Contamination. New York Times. TheNewYorkTimes.com: 1-7.

Writing Assignment Workshop

Thursday

- 1) 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.

WEEK FIVE Foundations III: Transnationality of Black Popular Culture
February 10-12

Tuesday

- 1) 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, 2006: 1-36.

Thursday

NO CLASS

FIU ROOTS HERITAGE TOURISM CONFERENCE

Thursday, February 12th-14th

Assignment: Attend one session and write weekly response paper summarizing and commenting upon that session. Papers can be 1-2 pages.

TAKE HOME ESSAY EXAM #1 POSTED, DUE FEBRUARY 19th 11:59PM

DUE February 12th 11:59PM:

PROPOSED FINAL RESEARCH PAPER QUESTION

MODULE TWO: PERFORMING BLACKNESS: AFRICA AND HER DIASPORA

WEEK SIX The Diaspora in Africa: Muhammad Ali's Rumble in the Jungle

February 17-19

Tuesday

- 1) Film: *When We Were Kings*

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

Thursday

- 2) Ryan, Susan 1996. "When We Were Kings." *Cineaste* 22(4): 2pp.

- 3) Carrington, Ben 1998. "Audio Visual Review: When We Were Kings". *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 33(1): 75-81.

DUE: TAKE HOME EXAM ESSAY #1 11:59PM

WEEK SEVEN The Diaspora in Africa: Fela Kuti's Afrobeat
February 24-26

Tuesday

- 1) Film: *Fela Kuti: Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*

Thursday

- 2) Olaniyan, Tejumola 2001 "The Cosmopolitan Nativist: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and the Antinomies of Postcolonial Modernity." *Research in African Literatures* 32(2): 76-89.

LIBRARY RESEARCH SESSION WITH GLOBAL LEARNING LIBRARIAN

CRI CONFERENCE: RACE IN THE AMERICAS, FEBRUARY 26-28

**WEEK EIGHT Africa in the Diaspora: Carnival and Parade Culture
March 3-5**

Tuesday

- 1) Herskovits, Melville, 1958 "The Significance of Africanisms" in *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 1-32.
- 2) In Class Film Clips: *Esta Es La Conga* (Santiago) and *Second Line Parades* (New Orleans)

Thursday

- 1) 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
- 2) Bettelheim, Judith, Barbara Bridges, and Dolores 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

TAKE HOME EXAM #2 POSTED, DUE MARCH 19th 11:59PM

**WEEK NINE Spring Break
March 10-12**

MODULE THREE: REPRESENTING BLACKNESS

**WEEK TEN The Black Body: History and Politics of Representation
March 17-19**

Tuesday

- 1) Film: Marlon Riggs, *Ethnic Notions*
- 2) 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.

Thursday

- 1) Jackson, Ronald L. 2006. CONT'D

DUE: TAKE HOME EXAM #2 THURSDAY 11:59PM

**WEEK ELEVEN The Black Body: Femininity
March 24-26**

Tuesday

- 1) Film: *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman*
- 2) 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.

Thursday

- 1) Badillo, Casandra 2001. "'Only My Hairdresser Knows for Sure': Stories of Race, Hair and Gender." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 34(6):35-7.

**WEEK TWELVE The Black Body: Masculinity
March 31-April 2**

Tuesday

- 1) Jackson, Ronald L., "Black Masculine Scripts" in Scripting the Black Masculine Body, pp. 73-103.
- 2) Alexander, Bryant Keith, "Fading, 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.

DUE: TUESDAY 11:59PM Bibliography for Term Paper

Thursday

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

TAKE HOME EXAM #3 POSTED (COVERS WEEKS 10-12)

MODULE FOUR: GLOBAL HIP HOP

**WEEK THIRTEEN "Black" Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop
April 7-9 Latin America**

Tuesday

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

SPECIAL GUEST LECTURE:

SHANEEQUA CASTLE ON DANCEHALL IN JAMAICA

In preparation, view “Yuh Understand of Yuh Ovastand”

Thursday

- 2) 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*.

- 3) Film: *Cuban Hip Hop All Stars*

DUE: TAKE HOME EXAM #3 THURSDAY 11:59PM

WEEK FOURTEEN

“Black” Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop

April 14-16

Europe

Tuesday

- 1) Hél non, V ronique 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.
- 2) Codrington, Raymond 2006, “The Homegrown: Race, Rap, and Class in London”, In *Globalization and Race: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness*.

Thursday

- 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 FIFTEEN

Black Musics: Global Dimensions of Hip Hop

April 21-23

Africa

Tuesday

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

Thursday

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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 SIXTEEN

EXAM WEEK

April 28-30

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY APRIL 27th 11:59PM

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