AFA 4372: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Hip Hop  
Spring 2014  
Instructor: Jasminder Kaur  
Email: Via Blackboard Only  
Office: LC304

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Hip Hop may be one of the largest cultural movements the world has seen – a cultural movement that has influenced everything from the music we listen to, to the clothes we adorn 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 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 for the formation of hip hop; its expansion into a discourse of resistance; to its more mainstream contemporary global commodification. Hip Hop was born through 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. It is rooted in the struggles and voices of millions of black and brown youth and served as an expression and alternative to the urban woes plaguing their lives. The early spirit of hip hop has a 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) was 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 the problems hip-hop today is plagued by as well as its possibilities. This is not a purely musical appreciation course. However students will have ample opportunity to engage hip hop lyrics, videos and images throughout the span of the course.

STUDENT 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 not just a source of slick beats, but as a cultural movement with a variety of art forms all of which are rooted in political resistance, civil rights and social justice.
- To understand the political and historical events, as well as the philosophies and economic factors that have made a lasting impact on hip hop so that they can understand how hip hop became its current mainstream form
- Explain how scholars use various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to examine these key issues.
- Critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the
various forms and functions of hip hop

- Become familiar with the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality operating in the space of hip hop
- Think critically about the images of hip hop that are presented to them by the mainstream media; to question and break down the messages that those images and representation of hip hop artists mean; and to consider and recognize the significance of all of the elements.
- **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 STUDENT LEARNING 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.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Blackboard Weekly Reading Response E-Posts**
  During the semester students must contribute **fourteen** 1 page (approximately 400 words) reading response e-posts under the “discussion” section of the Blackboard site. **Responses must be posted weekly starting the second week of class (Jan 13).** E-posts are aimed at encouraging inquiry, analysis and discussion among students, on-line. **E-posts are due, every Sunday by midnight, 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.

• Film Reaction Papers
There are two(2) film reflection papers (4 pages, 12 pt, double-spaced) assigned throughout the course. Students can choose any of the required films/videos in the course on which to write a reaction paper, both papers may be submitted anytime during the semester but absolutely no later than Monday, March 31. March 31 is the final deadline for both film reaction papers. The format of the film reaction papers will be posted under class resources.

• Global Learning Assessment
There is one (1) Global Learning Assessment assigned for the course. Students can choose either the GL film reaction paper or the GL reading reports highlighted in blue in the course syllabus. The GL assessment may be submitted anytime during the semester but absolutely no later than Monday, April 7. April 7 is the final deadline for the GL Assessment. The format of the GL assessment will be posted under class resources.

Note: 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 are given to support your 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 amount of grammatical errors and 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.

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

14 Reading Response E-Posts: 300 pts
3 Exams (100 POINTS EACH) 300 pts
2 Film Reflection Papers (4 pages) (150 POINTS EACH) 300 pts

1 Global Learning Assessments
Global Learning Film or Reading Report (Global Awareness) 100 pts

TOTAL 1,000 pts

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

GROUND RULES

1) All assignments and exams are to be uploaded onto turnitin.com. 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. No exceptions will be made.

2) 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.

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

4) 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.

5) 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.

COURSE MATERIALS

Textbooks
The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop--and Why It Matters. Tricia Rose.

Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation
Jeff Chang

**Required readings include 2 textbooks which must be purchased.** There are additional required readings which include journal articles and chapters from various texts. There are also several required films. All readings and films except for chapters in the required books will be available on the course’s Blackboard website. Required readings for the course are located below in the Modules section for which they are assigned.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Section 1: Social constructions of Race, Gender and Sexuality**

**Module 1: Course overview**
Jan 6 to Jan 12
Introduction to Course and other details
- Watch the Welcome Video to the course
- Post in the 'Introduce Yourself' discussion forum on Blackboard
- Read the syllabus carefully
- Purchase the 2 textbooks without delay (Available at FIU bookstore on MMC)

Required Film

Module 2: Social Construction Theory
Jan 13 to Jan 19

Required Readings and Films


6. Film: The Colour of fear
http://vimeo.com/40602451

Module 3: Intersectionality: Because a woman is not only a woman…!
Jan 20 to Jan 26

Required Readings and Films

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
Jan 27 to Feb 2

Required Readings and Films

Birth of Hip Hop and Jamaican Culture -1960s and 1970s

Required Readings and Films

2. GL Film: Roots, Rock and Reggae -Inside the Jamaican Music Scene (1977)

Module 5 :Early Hip Hop and It’s Diverse elements
Feb 3 to Feb 9

Required Readings and Films


3. Film: Wild Style
http://vimeo.com/31646181

Exam 1: Covers Modules 1-5 on Thursday 4pm, Feb 6 ,to Sunday Feb 9 Midnight.

Module 6:Events and Politics that influenced hip hop in the 1970s and 1980s
Feb 10 to Feb16

Required Readings and Films


**Module 7:** “Lesser Acknowledged” Influences in Hip Hop  
**Feb 17 to Feb 23**

**Required readings and Films**


3. Film: From Mambo to Hip Hop  
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xef0kx_from-mambo-to-hip-hop_shortfilms

**Module 8:** The Big Crossover, Rap and Authenticity debates: 1980s and 1990s  
**Feb 24 to March 2**

**Required readings and Films**


4. Film-Hip Hop Honors 2009 Episode 3  

**Section 3:** Critical Dialogues in Hip Hop

**Module 9:** Is Hip Hop A Positive or Negative Societal influence?  
**March 3 to March 9**

**Required Readings and Films**

Module 10: Hip Hop Demeans Women! Really?
March 10 to March 16

Required Readings and Films


5. Film: A Girl like me
http://www.understandingrace.org/lived/video/

6. YouTube Video “Your Revolution” Sarah Jones
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRgIGMwZd2o

Exam 2: Covers Modules 6 -10 on Thursday 4pm, March 13 ,to Sunday March 16 Midnight.

Module 11: Complicating “Masculinities” in Hip hop
March 17 to March 23

Required Readings and Films


5. Video: Forrest Gump By Frank Ocean

6. Video: Pink Matter By Frank Ocean
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtM8XCXSCiM

**Module 12: Queering Hip Hop**  
**March 24 to March 30**

Required Readings and Films


3. Film: Pick up the Mic!  
   http://www.hulu.com/watch/228078

**Section 4 : Hip Hop Today :Commodification , Consumerism and Globalization**

**Module 13: Dollars! The Economics of Hip Hop**  
**March 31 to April 6**

Required Readings and Films


3. GL Reading  

4. YouTube Video: “For What They do” The Roots  
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qzacv8dtb4

**Module 14: “But wait…There is Always Another Side to Every Story!”**  
**April 7 to April 13**

Required Readings and Films


3. YouTube Video : Dred Perez “Hell Yeah!”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGjSq4HqP9Y

Module 15 : Catch up week!
April 14 to April 19
No Readings

Exam 3:Covers Module 11 to 14 on Thursday at 4pm, April 17 to Saturday , April 19 Midnight.