Syllabus

Race, Gender and Sexuality in Hip Hop

1158-AFA4372VC1158-80829

General Information

Professor Information

Instructor: Zablon Mgonja
Office Hours: Via Appointment Only
E-mail: Via Blackboard Only

Course Description and Purpose

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 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 ills and woes plaguing their lives. The early spirit of hip hop has been one of empowerment through artistic expression. It 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 Objectives

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 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)

**Important Information**

**Policies**

Please review the FIU’s Policies webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

**Technical Requirements & Skills**

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer’s operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "What's Required" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our Technical Requirements webpage for additional information.

**Accessibility And Accommodation**

Please visit our ADA Compliance webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.
Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Textbook

Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation
Chang, Jeff. 2005
New York: St Martin’s Press, Picador.
ISBN-10: 0312425791
You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

The Hip Hop Wars
Tricia Rose
Basic Books, 2008
ISBN-10: 9780465008971
You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

- Other required readings will be provided on Blackboard.
- Required films will also be available on Blackboard.

Course Detail

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via messages

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Blackboard to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages
tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our Writing Resources webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

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 11, 2016). 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.

15. What is the main argument(s)? Why did the author(s) write the article or chapter?

16. What are the data used as evidence by the author to support the claims he/she makes in his/her argument?

17. What is useful about the reading(s)?

18. Were any of the points made questionable? If so, why?

19. What points, issues, or terms would you like to discuss or have clarified?

20. How do the various readings assigned inform each other? Contradict? Raise new questions?

Assessments

There are three (3) exams based on assigned readings and films. These exams will be essay questions.

Exam 1 due on February 14 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 due on March 27 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 due on April 28 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 quizzes and 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.

Please note that the following information only applies if your course requires the use of the Respondus LockDown Browser to take assessments.

- Review the Respondus LockDown Browser Instructions on how to install, access your assessments and view your grades.
- After installing the browser, please take the Practice Quiz to familiarize yourself with the testing environment and to ensure that you have downloaded the Respondus Lockdown Browser correctly.

Assignments

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 17.

Global Learning Assessment:

There are one (1) Global Learning Assessment for the course. It is a film reflection paper (4 pages, 12 pt., Times New Roman, double-spaced). 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. The paper is due on April 17.

Please note that the following information only applies if your course requires the use of Turnitin to submit your assignments.

- Review the detailed Turnitin Instructions on how to submit your assignments and how to review the graded comments (feedback) from your professor.

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 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.

DO NOT COPY

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 proper 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).

Grading

Final Grade Calculation

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Reading Response Posts: (15 POINTS EACH)</td>
<td>210 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Exams: (200 POINTS EACH)</td>
<td>600 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Film Reaction Paper: (190 POINTS EACH)</td>
<td>190 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000 pts</td>
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<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000 - 940</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>830 - 800</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>690 - 670</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>930 - 900</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>790 - 770</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>660 - 640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>890 - 840</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>760 - 740</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>630 - 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>860 - 840</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>730 - 700</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 600</td>
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## Module Weekly Schedule

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

#### Module 1: Course Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: January 11-17</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To-do List:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Post in the 'Introduce Yourself' discussion forum on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Read the syllabus carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Purchase the 2 textbooks without delay (Available at FIU bookstore in MMC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Watch film: <a href="http://vimeo.com/22591307">http://vimeo.com/22591307</a></td>
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**Module Level Objectives:**

- Well acquainted with the syllabus and course requirements
- Familiar with fellow students
- Prepared to start working

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#### Module 2: Social Construction Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2: January 18-24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To-do List:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Read the following articles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Visit the following sites:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. <a href="http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm">http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. <a href="http://www.understandingrace.org">http://www.understandingrace.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Watch the following film:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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
Week 2: January 18-24

- 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...

Week 3: January 25-31

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 in Hip Hop: Africa, Jazz and the roots of Rap

Week 4: February 1-7

To-do List:

- Read the following articles:
- Watch the following film:
  53. 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;
### Week 4: February 1-7

- 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

### Week 5: February 8-14

**To-do List:**

- **Read the following articles:**

- **Watch the following film:**
  61. 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 11 at 4pm to Sunday February 14 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 influences Hip Hop in the 1970s and 1980s

### Week 6: February 15-21

**To-do List:**

- **Read the following articles:**
### Module 6: February 15-21


**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: February 22-28

**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.

**To-do List:**

- Read the following articles:
- Watch the following film:

### Module 8: March 29-April 6

**Module 8: The Big Crossover, Rap and Authenticity Debates; 1980s and 1990s**

**To-do List:**
Week 8: February 29-March 6

- 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.

SECTION 3: CRITICAL DIALOGUES IN HIP HOP

Module 9: Is Hip Hop a Positive or Negligible Societal influence?

Week 9: March 7-13

To-do List:

- Read the following articles:

- Watch the following film:
  100. 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;
Week 9: March 7-13

- 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.

Week 10: March 14-20

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

Module 10: Hip-Hop Demeans Women! Really?

Week 11: March 21-27

To-do List:

- Read the following articles:
- Watch the following films:
  112. YouTube Video “Your Revolution” Sarah Jones: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RglGMwZd2o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RglGMwZd2o)
- Take Exam 2 Exam 2 covers Modules 6 -10 from Thursday March 24 to Sunday March 27 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
To-do List:

- Read the following articles:

- Watch the following videos:
  125. 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 has 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

Week 13 April 4-10

To-do List:

- Read the following article:

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

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;
Week 13 April 4-10

- 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

Week 14: April 11-17

To-do List:

- Read the following articles:

- Film Reaction Paper due on April 17 at 11:59pm

- Watch the following video:
  144. “For What They do” The Roots: [Video Link]

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!’

Week 15: April 18-24

To-do List:

- Read the following articles:
   o Watch the following video:
     152. Dred Perez “Hell Yeah!” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGjSqc4HqP9Y
   o Exam 3 covers Module 11 to 15 from Monday April 25 at 4pm to Thursday April 28 at 11:59pm.

Module Level Objectives:

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

   o Understand the political and historical events, as well as the philosophies and economic factors that have mainstreamed hip hop;
   o Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems that influence and shape hip hop culture.