

History of Hip Hop

HILL HALL 204

MW – 2:30-3:50; 1:00 – 2:20 PM

Fall 2017



Course Description:

The political and economic policies of our contemporary moment seem to be at their worst. Complicated by racial and ethnic tensions and violence, American society has certainly seen more progressive days. And yet, this specific historical moment in United States history has borne new interest in civic activism and social justice. For the generation of Americans whose pop culture was (and is) consumed by hip hop, this time we live in is ripe with opportunity to extend the reach and promise of hip hop culture. It is also the time to be more critical about what parts of the culture expand. While there are many questionable aspects of hip hop, few American cultural phenomena transcend racial, ethnic, class, religious, and gender boundaries in the ways that it does. That is, Hip Hop is one of the few cultures that can simultaneously promote wasteful consumerism, misogyny, homophobia, and violence, while also developing multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-faith and multi-class alliances. This bizarre combination is a reflection of our national culture. Hip Hop, with all of its faults, mirrors the contradictions of American society. Yet, in many ways, it also challenges Americans to live up to the national democratic ideals and to openly engage the paradoxes of their culture. In the coming weeks, we will chart the birth and maturity of Hip Hop culture, considering its impact on contemporary national dialogues about race, gender, sexuality, class, politics and religion. The course content will trace the historical origins of Hip Hop from the mid-1960s into the present, drawing on a host of written, audio and visual sources. It will challenge you to critically and closely assess Hip Hop culture, and to place it squarely within the past and the present.

Course Objectives:

1. Place the development and evolution of Hip Hop culture within the historical context of the last forty years
2. Identify the key components of Hip Hop culture
3. Identify the major shifts in Hip Hop music and culture from the 1970s into the early twenty-first century
4. Differentiate rap techniques through analysis of lyrical content and musical style
5. Assess the notion of racial authenticity through Hip Hop dance, art and video
6. Debate the relevance of Hip Hop culture as a force of contemporary change in the United States

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MW 11:30 – 12:30

Required Text:

Murray Foreman & Mark Anthony Neal *That's The Joint: The Hip Hop Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2012) 2nd Edition

All additional required readings are posted on blackboard. Please be sure to read, save/print them before their dates of discussion.

Course Requirements

Reading/listening Responses: You will be responsible for **three 2-3-page papers this semester**; it will require you to critically assess and historicize a combination of primary sources, videos, playlists, and scholarly articles. A detailed guide is available on blackboard.

Quizzes: you will take four quizzes this semester, which will require you to demonstrate a critical analysis of the key elements of Hip Hop culture and contemporary American historical developments. You will also need to illustrate your understanding of Hip Hop's role as a determinant in the shaping of the American social and political landscape.

Exam/Take Home Assessment: You will complete two exams this semester. Your midterm will assess your command of the historical trends and events that shaped the 1970s, and 1980s. The date for this exam is listed below. Your final exam will be a take home essay assignment due on December 18. Guidelines for the final will be available on blackboard mid-semester.

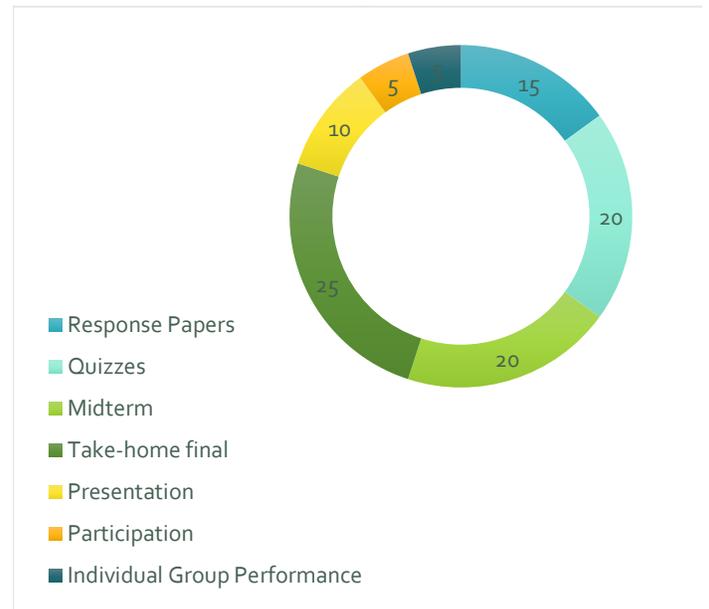
Presentation: Beginning in week three of this semester, you will sign up to participate in a group project in which you will create a community outreach event/campaign or documentary to help a local community and reinforce the most important aspect of Hip Hop culture – “knowledge of self.” A detailed guide is available on blackboard.

Individual Project Grade: Five points of your grade this semester will be given by your group members based on the consistent and active contribution to the final project you present to the class.

Participation: Consistent participation in this course is vital to excelling in it, and thoughtful, open conversations are the only ways to keep it interesting and fun. To ensure this, we must each bring ourselves to every conversation. We must each question, challenge, critique and consider every point raised in class if we are to walk away from this semester with a strong command of the major issues that shape the development of Hip Hop culture in American history. Accomplishing this for all of us will mean active participation in class dialogue and spirited involvement in every course activity.



Grading Scale



Evaluations & Course Policies

Evaluation: A key element aspect of your experience in this class will involve the instructor's evaluation of your progress in the course, with the course materials. As part of each of the instructor's assessment of your coursework, the following elements will be considered where applicable with each of the course assignments noted above.

- How effectively you develop your arguments in clear and coherent texts, as well as in oral communication, to produce an informed analysis of the materials with which you have been presented.
- How effectively you grasp the differing ways to read a variety of texts and cultural artifacts, and then produce an informed analysis of them. The evaluation will also include assessing your understanding of the connections among texts within given disciplines, and the similarities and distinctions between texts from different disciplines.
- How successfully you discuss your ideas individually and collectively in class, informally address in writing the information which you are presented in your responses to readings, and how you more formally engage these ideas in longer written work, as well as the midterm and final examinations.
- How you creatively produce ideas and texts in response to each other through the debates and the one-on-one conversation sessions.
- How you employ basic methods and methodologies employed in the humanities and social sciences. How well you identify, discuss and analyze interactions between people from a range of political, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, and gendered groups.
- How well you understand and address the relationship between the course materials and the defining social, political, cultural, and intellectual questions of your own time, in both historical and historical perspectives.

Attendance & punctuality: Besides active participation, being in class is a key component to excelling in this course. Understandably, there will be times when each of us may be late or absent. In this case, let's agree to keep each other posted at least 24 hours AHEAD of time when we can. If this is not possible, and your late attendance or absence is not due to an emergency, it will count against you. Three incidences of lateness will equal one absence; each unexcused absence after this will lower your final grade by one half grade. Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Policy on Academic Integrity: Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. The standard minimum penalties for students who cheat or plagiarize include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University. As per University policy, you are *REQUIRED* to insert and sign this academic integrity pledge on ALL of your submitted work this semester:

"ON MY HONOR I, (signature here), HAVE NEITHER RECEIVED NOR GIVEN ANY UNAUTHORIZED ASSISTANCE ON THIS ASSIGNMENT."

Accommodations: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information, please contact Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	WHAT TO READ	WHAT TO LISTEN TO	WHAT'S DUE
1	Sept. 6	Course Introduction			Please confirm your email through the blackboard link.
2	Sept. 11	All Power to All People: Black Power & Urban Unrest 1964-1975	Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from David Farber's <i>The Age of Dreams</i> & William Burman's <i>America's Right Turn</i>	Playlist 1 posted	
	Sept. 13		Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from James Button's <i>Black Violence</i> & Voices of Freedom		
3	Sept. 18	Ronald Reagan & the New Meanings of 'A Great Society' 1975 - 1984	Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from John Ehrman <i>1980s America in the Reagan Years</i> & Lester Salamon's <i>The Reagan Presidency</i>	Playlist 2 posted	
	Sept. 20		Blackboard Readings: Maurice St. Pierre "Reaganomics and Its Implications for African American Family Life" & Michael Boskin "Reaganomics and the Poor"		
4	Sept. 25	Ronald Reagan and the Christian Right 1980-1988	Blackboard Readings: Jim Wallace's "The President's Pulpit" & Matthew Moen's "Ronald Reagan and the Social Issues"	Playlist 3 posted	
	Sept. 27		Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from David Wilkerson's <i>The Cross and the Switchblade</i> & Andrew Murphy "The Christian Right's Traditionalist Jeremiad"		
5	Oct. 2	Crack & the "Concrete Jungle" 1978-1988	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 2 & 4	Playlist 4 posted	Reading/Listening Response 1
	Oct. 4		Blackboard Readings: Kara Lombard "Men Against the Wall" & See CRITICAL CONTEXT FOLDER 1 (read news clips)		
6	Oct. 9	Prophets of Rage: The "Golden Age of Hip Hop" 1988-1998	Watch contents of Blackboard CRITICAL CONTEXT FOLDER 2	Playlist 5 posted	
	Oct. 11		Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from Cherise Chaney "Representing God" & Excerpts from Felicia Mayakawa's <i>Five Percenter Rap</i>		Midterm Review posted
7	Oct. 16		Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from Cherise Chaney <i>Brothers Gonna Work It Out</i>		
	Oct. 18	The Golden Age & Hip-Hop Feminism 1988 - 1998	Blackboard Readings: See CRITICAL CONTEXT FOLDER 2 (watch news clips)	Playlist 6 posted	

8	Oct. 23		Blackboard Readings: Mako Fitts "Drop it Like it's Hot" & Joan Morgan "From Fly Girls to Bitches and Hoes"		
	Oct.25		MIDTERM EXAM		
9	Oct. 30	"The Killers" Gangsta Rap & Hip Hop Culture 1988-2005	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 41 Blackboard Reading: Rachel E Dwyer "Contained Dispersal: The Deconcentration of Poverty in US Metropolitan Areas in the 1990s"	Playlist 7 posted	Reading/Listening Response 2
	Nov. 1		Blackboard Readings: Miles White "Real Niggas" & Charis Kubrin "Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas"		
10	Nov. 6		Blackboard readings: David Drake "Real Trap Sh!t" & Christina Lee "Trap Kings"		
	Nov. 8	Hip Hop & the "Third Coast" 1997-2007	Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from <i>Hip Hop in America</i>	Playlist 8 posted	
11	Nov. 13		Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch.18 Darren E. Grem "The South's Got Something to Say: Atlanta's Dirty South and the Southernization of Hip Hop America"		
	Nov. 15	Authenticity: Queering Hip Hop	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 25 & Blackboard Reading: Tavia N'Yongo "Queer Hop and Its Dark Precursors"	Playlist 9 posted	
12	Nov. 20		Blackboard readings: Rinaldo Walcott "Hip Hop's Queer Future" & Marquita Smith's "Or A Real, Real Bad Lesbian"		Presentation 1 Reading/Listening Response 3
	Nov. 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK	NO CLASS		
13	Nov. 27	Authenticity: Whiteness & Hip Hop	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 13-14 (Watch T-top v. Sno battle)	Playlist 10 posted	Presentation 2
	Nov. 29		Blackboard Readings: Ryan Ford "Hip Hop White Wash" & Maeve Eberhardt "First Things First, I'm the Realest"		Presentation 3
14	Dec. 4	Hip Hop's Global Reach	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 19 & Blackboard Readings: Carol Henderson "The Global Hip Hop Diaspora"	Playlist 11 posted	Presentation 4
	Dec. 6		Blackboard Reading: Halifu Osumare "Beat Streets in the Global Hood"		Presentation 5
15	Dec. 11	Post Hip Hop & Consumerism	Read: <i>That's the Joint</i> Ch. 42-43	Playlist 12 posted	Presentation 6
16	Dec. 13		Blackboard Reading: Excerpts from Nelson George's <i>Hip Hop America</i>		Presentation 7
17	Dec. 18	FINAL EXAM	-----		TAKE HOME FINAL DUE AT 6 PM