

Hip Hop's Sexual Politics

(or "The Sexual Politics of Hip Hop")

AFA 3930 Sect. 1C04 & ANT 3930 Sect. 1H47

Time: T – 1:55 – 2:45; R – 1:55 – 3:50

Classroom: TUR 2305

Final Exam: April 30th 10 am – 12 noon

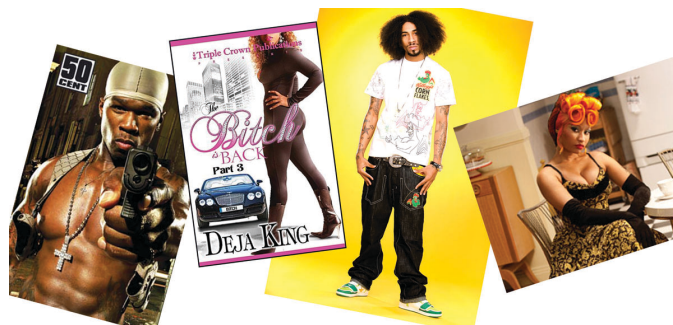
Instructor: marilyn m. thomas-houston, ph.d.

Office Hours: Wed 12 – 2:30 PM and by appt. on Thurs.

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Class Listserv: SPRING-1C04-L@lists.ufl.edu



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the impact of the cultural phenomenon labeled "Hip Hop." Although music does not constitute the whole of Hip Hop culture—it dominates—with fashion (urban fashion) and novels (urban & gangsta fiction) running close seconds. Therefore, the course examines rap music as an artistic and sociocultural phenomenon with emphasis on its impact on the sexual politics within this sphere of cultural production and social relations and how that influence has (re)shaped the ways in which Black bodies are being cast and re-cast on national and global scales. In addition to lyrical and visual representations of Black bodies and of gender relations, critical analysis will focus on the history of rap, the place of hip hop within the structure and culture of American society, different genres and the personalities that introduced them, and the exploitation of hard core rap as a commodity for national and global consumption. Because this is a Black Studies course (and not a music appreciation course), the tenets of the discipline will be discussed in reference to the development of the genre focusing mostly on the music and music videos. From a cultural perspective, the course will explore what function the phenomenon currently serves within the Black community.

Objectives

The objective of the course is to promote a critical discourse centered around the sexual politics of hip hop and its impact on perceptions of what it means to be a person of African descent in 21st century USA. Through critical analysis and debate, students will analyze key issues associated with representations of Black bodies and be able to define sociological and cultural phenomena (concepts) that inform those representations.

Obscene and Offensive Material

In this course, you will be required to listen to, view, and analyze obscene and offensive materials, including language and imagery that is obscene, sexist, homophobic, or racist, and descriptions of sexual conduct and violence. The professor, the African American Studies Program, nor the university share in the opinions of the artists who created this offensive material. However, it is important to understand that these materials speak to issues, debates, and controversies that are essential to this course; therefore, no suitable substitutions are available, and none will be provided.

By continuing with this course, you are agreeing to be held academically accountable for all required materials in the syllabus, regardless of their offensive nature. Students who are unwilling either to hear or think critically about such materials are advised not to continue with the course.

Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance and Assignments. Students are expected to attend all class sessions prepared to discuss (at length and in depth) the selected musical works, videos, lyrics/text, reading assignments, and issues related to the course materials. While it is understood that each student's personality differs and this may impact the degree of participation all students will be given opportunity to show that they have prepared themselves for class by completing the reading assignments and making a contribution to the class discussion. (NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments in the assignments based on the needs and progress of the class.)

Required Texts and Video. The following text and videos are required readings/viewings:

Rose, Tricia. 2008. *Representation: The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters* (Book Store)

Pough, Gwendolyn D. 2007. *Home Girls Make Some Noise!: Hip-Hop Feminism Anthology* (Book Store)

White, Miles. 2011. *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity* by (Book Store)

Hip-hop: beyond beats and rhymes (DVD Library West Course Reserve)

Other assigned readings will be available through the Library West electronic course reserve. (CR = Course Reserve)

Class Twitter Account. Each morning prior to class, students are to post an original tweet of a "concept/idea related to the reading assignments" for discussion in class. The key to the student contribution is "originality," which means the comment should come as a result of the student's own critical analysis and not copied from the readings nor from his or her fellow classmates' contributions. The comment is limited to 140 characters. A good way to begin your contribution is by making notes on the purpose the author had for writing the article and the major points made in that article. After analyzing your notes, construct your tweet around the point that stands out as most relevant for the course. In other words the tweet should have significance for Black life or history and relate to hip hop and/or rap music. The course Twitter account will be set up by the instructor and student tweets are to begin on Week 2.

Special Topic Presentation. Each student will make two presentations. Presentations will consist of the presentation of a short lecture based on the assigned readings for the date of presentation and at least one unassigned chapter from the required textbooks plus a song, film or TV show that in some way reflects the content of the readings. The presenter will choose key issues from the chapters and explain how they are reflected in the choice of media. In the presentation the student should be certain to address how the issues impact the day-to-day lived experiences of African Americans. There will be a Doodle Sign-in page distributed on Thursday January 8th for students to choose their specific presentation day. Each presentation is to be 15 minutes long, which includes a 5-minute Q & A period. Missed presentations will only be made-up when accompanied by excused absences.

CLASSROOM RULES & DECORUM & OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else's published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same work for different courses) will lead to the Department's and the University's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their

commitment to the [University's Honor Code](#) and the student conduct code. If you are unsure whether your activities are legitimate regarding paper writing and exam taking, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. **Please make any requests by the second week of class.**

Inappropriate Use of Technology

No emailing, texting, cell phone calls, or Internet surfing, games or unrelated class web or technology activity in the classroom. Violation of this rule will be cause for confiscation of device until the end of the class day or dismissal for the day.

Attendance

Absence and tardiness due to medical reasons require appropriate medical excuses. Excessive tardiness will be cause for administrative action.

UF Counseling Services

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. [University Counseling and Wellness Center](#), 3190 Radio Road, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
2. [Sexual Assault Recovery Services](#) (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
3. [Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling
4. [Reading & Writing Center](#), Southwest Broward Hall, 392-2010, writing assistance, study skills, test preparation
5. University Writing Studio, Visit online to schedule an appointment. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/>

Grade Points		Grade Scale		
Attendance/Participation	15%	A=90 and above	C=70-73	D-=57-59
Tweets	20%	A-=87-89	C+=74-76	
Mid-Term Exam	20%	B+=84-86	C-=67-69	
Final Exam	25%	B=80-83	D+=64-66	
Special Topics Presentations (2)	20%	B-=77-79	D=60-63	

A FINAL MESSAGE ON DECORUM. Respect Yourself! *Hip Hop's Sexual Politics* is a course intended for the intellectual development of each student in the class. Although some of the works we may view (including language, dress, and interaction), hear and read may be questionable in terms of moral and ethical conduct, such behavior should not stand as a guideline for your own behavior in class. All students are expected to conduct themselves according to the Student Handbook with no exceptions.

THE PROFESSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE RELEVANT CHANGES IN THE SYLLABUS WITH A MINIMUM OF A FIVE-DAY NOTICE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES REGARDING THE CLASS PLEASE SIGN UP TO SEE THE PROFESSOR DURING OFFICE HOURS OR REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT BY EMAIL.

Although the class addresses serious issues, remember to have fun!

SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS (CR = Course Reserve)

Week 1 – Introduction to Course

1/06 – Introductions: to Course, Class Cohorts, and Syllabus; Questions About Structure of Class, Video and Discussion.

In –class Videos:

RACE: Are We Different? (5:22)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aaTAUAEyho&feature=related>

Hip Hop History I (9:38)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATSEv7tIR64&feature=related>

1/08 – Introduction to Hip Hop Continued and Black Studies

Assigned Readings:

Rose, Tricia. Preface & Introduction in *Representation: The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. ix-xii & 1-30.

White, Miles. “Introduction,” *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. pp. 1-7.

Aldridge, Derrick P. and James B. Stewart. “Introduction: Hip Hop in History: Past, Present, and Future,” *The Journal of African American History* - (CR)

In-Class Video: Hip Hop History II (9:54)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yWzTL7echc&feature=related>

OPRAH PRESENTS: MASTER CLASS with Jay-Z.

Week 2 – Representing Black Life and Culture –INTRO LIBRARY WEST LOCATION TBA

1/13 – Black Is, Black Ain’t

Assigned Readings

Collins, Patricia Hill. “Booty Call: Sex, Violence, and Images of Black Masculinity,” *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (CR)

Rose, Tricia. “Chapter 4. Hip Hop Is Destroying America’s Values,” *Representation: The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. 95-111.

Rose, Tricia. “Chapter 6. Just Keeping It Real,” *Representation: The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. 133-147.

In-class Videos: Race And Identity (7:11)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ebion6fWCC0&feature=related>

A Girl Like Me (7:25)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTfyfQ7Sf1w&feature=related>

1/15 – Identity: Black Is, Black Ain't—How does it get defined and what does it signify?

Assigned Readings

Rose, Tricia. "Chapter 11. Mutual Denials," *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. 217-240.

Johns, Lindsay. "In Search of Notorious PhDs," *The New Black Magazine* - (CR)

Bullock, Lorinda. "Uncut is Cut from B.E.T.'s Lineup" - Black PressUSA.com – (CR)

Out-of-Class Video: Black Is Black Ain't

Week 3 – Historical Representations of Race, Black Life and Culture

1/20 – Representing Race and Culture: The Dangers of Stereotypes

Assigned Readings – Moral Fears and Sexual Fantasies: Exploiting Black Bodies

Story, Kaila Adia. "Performing Venus – From Hottentot to Video Vixen: The Historical Legacy of Black Female Body Commodification," *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*, eds. Gwendolyn D. Pough, Elaine Richardson, Aisha Durham and Rachel Raimist. (Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC, 2007).

White, Miles. "Chapter 1. Shadow and Act: American Popular Music and the Absent Black Presence," *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. pp. 9-18.

1/22– Representing Race and Culture: The Dangers of Stereotypes Continued

Assigned Readings

"Meanwhile, down on the plantation ..." and "Signifying racial 'difference'" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 242-249

"Staging racial 'difference': 'and the melody lingered on ...' in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 249-254.

In-Class Video: Ethnic Notions (56 mins.)

Week 4 – Analyzing Contemporary Society

1/27

Assigned Readings

Annual Review of Anthropology

Critical Discourse Analysis - Blommaert, Jan and Chris Bulcaen (CR)

1/29

Assigned Readings

"Historicizing discourse: discursive practices," "From discourse to power/knowledge," and "Summary: Foucault and representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp 46-51.

In-class Videos: Blacking Up: Hip Hop's Remix of Race and Identity (DVD 57 mins.)

Week 5 – Analyzing Contemporary Society

2/03

Assigned Readings

Journal of Black Studies

"The Streets": An Alternative Black Male Socialization Institution - Oliver, William (CR)

2/05

Assigned Readings

"Representation, meaning and language" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). pp. 15-21.

Popular Music

Pop Goes the Rapper: A Close Reading of Eminem's Genderphobia - Stephens, Vincent (CR)

Week 6 – Politics of Sexuality

2/10

Assigned Readings (See next page.)

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Why Black Sexual Politics?" in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (CR)

Rose, Tricia. "Chapter 5. Hip Hop Demeans Women *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. 113-131.

Rose, Tricia. "Chapter 8. There are Bitches and Hoes (sic)," *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—And Why It Matters*, pp. 167-185.

2/12

Assigned Readings

Jeffries, Michael. "Re: Definitions: The name and game of hip-hop feminism" in *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*, eds. Gwendolyn D. Pough, Elaine Richardson, Aisha Durham and Rachel Raimist. (Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC, 2007). Pp. 208-227.

Week 7 – Gender in the Age of Hip Hop

2/17 – A Space to be "Somebody"?: Negotiating Place

Assigned Readings

Dance Research Journal

Getting off: Portrayals of Masculinity in Hip Hop Dance in Film - LaBoskey, Sara (CR)

2/19 – A Space to be "Somebody"?: Negotiating Place Continued

Assigned Readings

Callaloo

Black Masculinity and Visual Culture (CR)

Week 8 – Gender in the Age of Hip Hop Continued

2/24 – A Space to be “Somebody”?: Negotiating Place Continued

Assigned Readings

Gender and Society,

"Where My Girls At?": Negotiating Black Womanhood in Music Videos - Emerson, Rana A. (CR)

2/26 – A Space to be “Somebody”?: Negotiating Place Continued

Assigned Readings

Culture, Health & Sexuality

Representin' in Cyberspace: Sexual Scripts, Self-Definition, and Hip Hop

Culture in Black American Adolescent Girls' Home Pages (CR)

Week 9 – SPRING BREAK

3/03 – NO CLASS 3/05 – NO CLASS

Week 10 – Power, Commodification and the Representation of Black Bodies

3/10

Assigned Readings

Cooper, Brittney. “Excavating the Love Below: The State as Patron of the Baby Mama Drama and Other Ghetto Hustles” in *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*, eds. Gwendolyn D. Pough, Elaine Richardson, Aisha Durham and Rachel Raimist. (Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC, 2007).

3/12

Assigned Readings

Journal of Black Studies

The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music (CR)

Week 11- Power, Commodification and the Representation of Black Bodies Cont’d.

3/17

Assigned Readings

The Journal of African American History

Oppositional Consciousness within an Oppositional Realm: The Case of Feminism and Womanism in Rap and Hip Hop, 1976-2004 - Phillips, Layli and Kerri Reddick-Morgan, Dionne Patricia Stephens (CR)

3/19

Assigned Readings

“Stereotyping as a signifying practice,” “Representation, difference and power,” and “Power and fantasy” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 257-264.

Week 12 – Power, Commodification and the Representation of Black Bodies

3/24 – Can the master’s house be dismantled with his tools?

Assigned Readings

“Contesting a racialized regime of representation,” “Reversing the stereotypes,” “Positive and negative images,” “Through the eye of representation,” and “Conclusion” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 269-277.

“Heavenly bodies” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 254-257.

3/26 – Who bears responsibility?: Creator or Consumer

Assigned Readings

“Fetishism” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed., Stuart Hall. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). Pp. 264-269.

Muhammad, Fatimah. “How to NOT Be 21st Century Venus Hottentots” in *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*, eds. Gwendolyn D. Pough, Elaine Richardson, Aisha Durham and Rachel Raimist. (Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC, 2007). Pp. 115-140.

Week 13 - Theorizing Black Bodies

3/31

Assigned Readings

Political Psychology

Social Dominance Theory: Its Agenda and Method - Sidanius, Jim and Felicia Pratto, Colette van Laar, Shana Levin (CR)

4/02

Assigned Readings

Sociological Perspectives

What is Internalized Racial Oppression and Why Don't We Study it? Acknowledging Racism's Hidden Injuries (CR)

Week 14 - Theorizing Black Bodies

4/07

Assigned Readings

Pough, Gwendolyn. “Ringing Wreck: Theorizing Race, Rep, Gender, and the Public Sphere

White, Miles. “Chapter 2. The Fire This Time: Black Masculinity and the Politics of Racial Performance,” *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. pp. 19-31.

4/09

Assigned Readings

Callaloo

Bill T. Jones, Tupac Shakur and the (Queer) Art of Death (CR)

Week 15 - Theorizing Black Bodies

4/14

Assigned Readings

Butler, J. 1990. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory', in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. S.-E. Case (Baltimore), pp. 270-82 (CR)

4/16

Assigned Readings

Relationships Between Exposure to Rap Music Videos and Attitudes Toward Relationships Among African American Youth *Journal of Black Psychology* August 200834: 356-380, first published on March 18, 2008 (CR)

Week 16 – What’s Representation ‘Gotta do wid it?’—entertainment that is? And, why does it matter?

4/21

Assigned Readings

White, Miles. “Chapter 4. Real Niggas: Black Men, Hard Men, and the Rise of Gansta Culture,” *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. pp. 1-7.

White, A. 1996. 'Who wants to see ten niggers play basketball?', in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture*, ed. W.E. Perkins (Philadelphia), pp. 192-202 (CR)

Williams, S.A. 1992 'Two Words on Music: Black Community', in *Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace*, ed. G. Dent (Seattle), pp. 164-72 (CR)