ES 310
RACE AND SEX IN HIP-HOP
SPRING 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Race and Sex in Hip-Hop Culture explores and explains how race, gender and sexuality shape the creation and consumption of hip-hop culture. As an ethnic studies course, ES 310 privileges race as a category of analysis when surveying the historical development, political significance, and social influence of popular culture in the United States. This course focuses on the historic and contemporary relationship people of color have with the production and consumption of popular culture. As a form of entertainment, popular culture reflects an amalgam of complex, and sometimes contradictory, social meanings and relations. On one hand, this course demonstrates how popular culture has been used as a mechanism that (re)produces white supremacist ideologies and practices, that is, how popular culture effects prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination. On the other hand, it illustrates how people of color have used popular culture to create a counter-discourse to white supremacy, that is, to (re)produce cultural values, to foster a sense of community and to create an identity politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students will understand 1) how African-American cultural production reflects, reproduces and challenges differences in race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, generation, etc., 2) how hip-hop culture represents gender expectations and black sexualities in African-America, 3) the limitations of popular culture as a form of contestation against white supremacist representations of people of color.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Two Reflection papers 60%
The purpose of the reflection paper is to create a space for you to apply what you have learned in this course to your own lived experiences, and how this knowledge confirms or contradicts your values, perspectives and/or experiences. While reflection papers privilege the articulation of your experience, they also need to significantly engage course material. These papers should be 3-5 pages in length. Due dates May 4 and June 11.

Group Presentation 30%
The group projects will be presented on April 20, May 6 and June 3. Each group will stage a 20-minute presentation that should not only reflect an understanding of concepts introduced by course materials, but also build on those concepts, using
primary and secondary sources. Performance is welcome. The most successful presentations will include critical analysis, supporting materials, media examples drawn from beyond the course syllabus, as well as some performance.

The written portion of the group project will be an annotated bibliography that needs to include at least ten sources relevant to the issue discussed in presentation. A clear, concise thesis statement is required along with an introduction that provides an overview of the topic/issue discussed in your annotated bibliography. Each annotation should include: citation, description, critical comment. The description should be two to three paragraphs but no longer than a half a page. For each annotation you should include a synopsis of the author’s primary points and a critique of those points. You may include no more than two annotations from news articles and articles from popular press. (For more on annotative bibliographies see: http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm

**Class participation 10%**
Class participation (not to be confused with class attendance) is worth 10% of your final grade. Each student is responsible for composing discussion questions that will be posted each day on Blackboard. These discussion points will assist the group responsible for each respective topic. Questions could explore: underlying value implications of the readings, analogies to other issues discussed in class, the validity of the author’s position.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
The University of Oregon seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services @ http://ds.uoregon.edu/. The Center will work with you and I will gladly make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**E-MAIL ETIQUETTE**
As a rule, you should understand your relationships to GTFs and professors as professional relationships. When corresponding by e-mail, always include a salutation (e.g. “Dear Prof. Cheney”) and a closing that identifies who you are (“Sincerely, Maria Rodríguez”). Please also note that I might not check my e-mail more than once per day, or at all on weekends or in the evening, and we might not have time to reply immediately. Please have patience and do not hesitate to follow up with a second e-mail or in person during office hours or before, during, or after class if we have not replied to e-mail.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGARISM**
All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. Please review the University’s policies at: http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/judicial/conduct/sai.htm

COURSE SCHEDULE

March 30/April 1: RACE AND SEX IN HIP-HOP/INTRODUCTION
Film: *Hip-Hop Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

April 6/8: CLAIMING “NIGGA” AS A RACE/CLASS/GENDER IDENTITY: GANGSTA RAP
Film: *Gangsta Gangsta*

April 13/15: REJECTING “NIGGA” AS A RACE/CLASS/GENDER IDENTITY: RAP NATIONALISM

April 20: FIRST GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

April 22/27: HIP-HOP AS META-MINSTRELSY: RAP MUSIC’S AUTHENTIC BLACK EXPERIENCE
Film: *White Boys*

April 29/May 4: WHITE DEVIANTS/DEVIANCE: FROM BEASTIE BOYS TO MACKLEMORE
NinjaCate, “Solidarity is for Miley Cyrus: The Racial Implications of her VMA Performance”

May 4: REFLECTION PAPER DUE

May 6: SECOND GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

May 11/13: LADIES FIRST? RAP MUSIC’S SEXUAL POLITICS
Readings: Imani Perry, “The Venus Hip Hop and the Pink Ghetto”
Film: *Sexploitation*

May 18/20: BEYONCE: SEX POSITIVE OR SEX TERRORIST?
Readings: Janée Desmond-Harris, “Beyoncé’s Feminist Essay: Why It’s a Smart Move”
Christa Bell & Mako Fitts Ward, “The Problem with BeyHive Bottom Bitch Feminism”

May 27/June 1: REDEFINING BLACK-ON-BLACK CRIME
Readings: Prachi Gupta, “Reporter who broke R. Kelly sex abuse allegations: ‘Nobody matters less to our society than young black women’”
Robin James, “Melancholic Damage”

June 3: THIRD GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

**JUNE 11** FINAL REFLECTION PAPER DUE AT NOON