

Hip Hop and Democracy 342-001

Online

Fall 2024

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Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary course that explores the dynamic relationship between Hip Hop culture and society. It examines how Hip Hop serves as a powerful platform for expression, social activism, and community engagement. Through an analysis of hip hop music, art, commentary and rhetoric, students will investigate how Hip Hop influences and reflects African American values and practices.

Course Objectives

- Identify economic, political, and social structures that led to the development, growth and commercialization of Hip Hop
- Identify historical, political, and social events effecting the evolution of Hip Hop as a form of Black expressive culture
- Explain Hip Hop's role in the discourses of racism, sexism, and classism in US society and its impact on political and social change
- Analyze and present socio-political critiques of Hip Hop music and content
- Evaluate the impact of Hip Hop in developing and shaping the ethics, values, and ideas of inclusion, political efficacy, civic engagement, and democracy

Required Texts/Materials

- Viator, Felicia A. *To Live and Defy in LA: How Gangsta Rap Changed America*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020)
- Charles L. Hughes. *Why Bushwick Bill Matters*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021)
- [Other readings and handouts as announced in class]

Course Goals

- Critical thinking: prepare students to make informed decisions and ethical choices by examining historical examples
- Informed citizenship: develop knowledge of and concern for a multicultural world
- Historical perspective: increase awareness of how personal bias and opinion shape historical analysis
- Social engagement: encourage students to become actively engaged in issues affecting their lives and those others around the world

Online Etiquette

I fully expect each student to demonstrate a degree of online etiquette that reflects being a respectful adult in our society. Remember that discussion boards are a free space, where students should feel comfortable sharing ideas and asking questions without judgment. Students and faculty have personal beliefs, but should be cognizant of others' beliefs as well. Please respectfully disagree and do not resort to any personal criticisms.

Also, please use proper written communication in all correspondence. Email communication is not a text message and should use proper greetings, closings, and titles when addressing each other and faculty. This type of etiquette is beneficial when learning how to respectfully communicate with your peers, colleagues and superiors in the other settings.

Time Management

This course is both reading and writing intensive. Although it is an online course, students should expect to spend 8-10 hours per week reading, writing, and researching assignments. Student who do not have a disciplined study regiment or who cannot manage time efficiently will have a difficult time successfully completing this course.

Technological Requirements

This course requires students to have regular access to the internet. The course site and email should be checked multiple times per week, if not every day. If wishing to print reading assignments, access to a printer is necessary as is a word processing program that allows users to create complex formatting such as footnotes and italic style for documents.

Grading and Requirements

15%	Reading Responses (3 at 5% each)	
20%	Book Reviews (2 at 10% each)	
15%	Short Papers (3 at 5% each)	
28%	Weekly Online Discussion Participation (14 weeks at 2% each)	
22%	Final Research Paper	
	Topic and Bibliography	2%
	Annotated Bibliography	2.5%
	Outline and Thesis	2.5%
	Research Paper	15%

90-100 (A, A-); 80-89 (B+, B, B-); 70-79 (C+, C, C-); 60-69 (D+, D, D-), 0-59 (E)

KEEP ALL GRADED WORK INCLUDING PARTICIPATION GRADES

Assignments

All assignments are due by 11:59 pm Sunday at the end of the week that they are assigned.

Reading Responses

Three reading responses must be submitted during the semester on assigned monographs or articles. Students can choose which weeks they want to submit responses and which of the three possible topics (Research Problem, Thesis, Methodology) they wish to cover in the response. All three must be covered by the end of the semester. **Book reviews and reading responses cannot be submitted during the same week.** If more than one reading is assigned for that week, responses should compare and contrast the readings. If one chooses to submit a reading response, it must be turned in by the end of week, 11:59 pm Sunday that the readings are assigned for class. Responses should be between 300 and 600 words, double spaced, use 12 pt. font size and a standard font style. They should use quotations and footnotes with Chicago Manual of Style citation format. Late entries will be accepted with a 10 pt. deduction per day it is overdue. A fuller explanation of this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

Book Review

Two book reviews must be submitted during the semester for the two monographs assigned. Book reviews must be turned in by the end of week, 11:59 pm Sunday that the book is assigned for class. Book reviews and reading responses cannot be submitted during the same week. Book reviews should be 900-1200 words in length, double spaced, use 12 pt. font size and a standard font style such as Times New

Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc. Reviews should use quotations and footnotes with Chicago Manual of Style citation format. A book review should provide all of the elements of a reading response with additional analysis. It should provide a brief overview of the research problem, the author's main arguments, a critical critique of the author's use of sources, its merits as well as shortcomings, its organization and the validity of the author's argument. Late entries will be accepted with a 10 pt. deduction per day it is overdue. A fuller explanation of this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

Short Papers

There will be three short paper assignments given during the semester on a variety of Hip Hop topics. Each assignment is worth 100 pts and is worth 5% of the total grade. A fuller explanation of these assignments can be found on Blackboard.

Research Paper

Students will be required to submit a research paper. All topics must have prior approval by the instructor. Possible topics may include the experience of black soldiers in a particular state or company, deserters, the navy, black women nurses, contraband, disease, marriages, apprenticeship, convict lease, education, religion, labor contracts, politicians, widows, or black female leaders. Research papers should make an original contribution to the body of literature on a subject. They must utilize both primary and secondary sources. Research papers should be 8-10 pages in length, double spaced, use 12 pt. font size and a standard font style. Late entries will be accepted with a 10 pt. deduction per day it is overdue.

Topic and Bibliography

Choose sources and topic carefully. The topic must not be too general, but should be focused enough to allow for meaningful analysis. Identify a research problem that you want to investigate as well as questions that you seek to answer. A written paragraph between 150 and 300 words, about 1 page, should be double spaced, use 12 pt. font size and a standard font style. Students must examine at least 8 different sources on a historical topic. They must analyze both secondary (at least 5) and primary sources (at least 3). In this assignment students must examine at least two articles in addition to historical monographs as secondary sources. Do not use encyclopedia articles or summaries from websites. All articles must come from peer reviewed academic journals or books published by academic presses. The use of the sources must demonstrate an effort to find diverse point of views and arguments. Citation format must conform to Chicago Manual of Style.

Annotated Bibliography

Annotated bibliographies provide an overview of each of the major sources, books or articles that you are using for your project. For this assignment, provide a sentence or two summarizing your research topic. Then list your eight sources (at least three primary and five secondary) and address the following questions for each. Each annotation may not require that you directly answer each question but it must be very clear that you have considered these issues carefully. Each annotation should be at least 100 words. Back up your evaluation with specific reference. Use Chicago Manual of Style format for bibliographies.

- What is the central argument of the text in question? Try to summarize that argument in a sentence or two.
- What do you consider problematic, and point out other authors whose works might better explain or clarify that problem.
- Did you notice any connections between this text and other texts on your list?

- Were there related ideas? Did one text attempt to comment on or correct another?
- How will use this source in your paper?

Outline and Thesis

Briefly restate your topic. Develop a working outline for your paper that reflects your organizational strategy at this point in your process. The thesis statement states the main argument of the paper. It should briefly detail how the argument will be proven and what specific points will be made. Please put your thesis statement in bold type in the introduction so that it is easy to discern. Divide the outline into introduction, main body (with arguments clearly separated), and conclusion sections, to help you organize your thoughts. Your outline should include several quotes and/or citations that you plan to use to support your argument. It is not necessary to include all the quotes that you intend to use; 7 or 8 should suffice. Simple in text parenthetical citations (Author, page number) is sufficient. It should be at least 300 words.

Research Paper:

Research papers should present an argument that is supported by ample evidence. It should also include a short review of the literature that has already been written on the subject. Papers must be 8-10 pages in length, double spaced, use 12pt. font size and a standard font style such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc. Papers should use footnotes with Chicago Manual of Style citation format. Sources should also be listed in a bibliography.

Online Discussion Participation:

Each week there will be a class discussion on Blackboard. In total there will be 14 graded discussions. Students are expected to present meaningful comments on the discussion board. Comments should use quotations from the readings and/or directly reference the readings. This course is reading and writing intensive. While you may not be able to read every word of an assigned monograph or series of articles, you are expected to spend time with each reading in order to familiarize yourself with the main arguments and participate meaningfully in discussion. Bad language or inappropriate content will not be tolerated. It will be expected that *your* comments reflect *your* work. Students should regularly quote from the book or readings for that week. This does not need to be a footnote reference – just use quotation marks around the author's words followed by the author's name and page number of the source in parentheses. It will be expected that assigned texts will be read and every effort made to make statements that reflect one's understanding of the topic. However, do not be afraid to ask questions on the discussion board. Questions can be for clarification, but should also stimulate further discussion. Students should attempt to answer the questions of other students. The instructor will be involved in most discussion boards to give direction and input. **Grading of discussion participation will be done by assessing a student's presence including at least two visits to the blackboard site per week separated by at least 24 hours and three total comments (25%), the depth/length of comments including quotations (25%), the number of questions answered (25%), and how well questions, links, references, and direct responses to other students or comments stimulate further discussion (25%).** Discussion boards will be open from 12:01 am Monday to 11:59 pm the following Sunday each week. Questions that you may ask (and you are encouraged to do so!) are not considered to be "comments" unless preceded by discussion. The more you substantively interact, the better your grade.

Examples of comments are below:

Poor comment – I agree with J. Doe.

Fair comment – I agree with J. Doe because American slaves did practice Christianity.

Good comment – Although J. Doe is correct that many slaves were Christian, J. Doe is incorrect in assuming that all American slaves accepted the religion.

Great comment - Although J. Doe is correct that many slaves were Christian, J. Doe is incorrect in assuming that all American slaves accepted the religion. According to our article, "Citation." (Author, page number). Therefore, Christianity was not always accepted by slaves. Wouldn't you agree, J. Doe?

Technical Support

WKU Students can call 270-745-7000 for technical support with Blackboard or computer problems. Other information can be found at <http://www.wku.edu/it/> or by following the IT Helpdesk link in the left menu bar. A number of short videos on common questions about software and technology are available at <https://asaweb2.wku.edu/atech/trainingsite/> Look for the Video Tutorials tab. See also the link in the menu bar above for help with Tegrity class videos, used by some faculty for lectures or for student work.

Student Support of Special Interest for Online Students

The Distance Learning website located at <http://www.wku.edu/online> provides a Distance Learning Support Directory listing offices on campus that provide support to distance students, including technical support. Other resources provided include:

- The Orientation for Online Learners located at <http://www.wku.edu/online/orientation> provides a complete overview of technology required in online classes, and features tutorials on Blackboard, setting up a WKU email account, accessing TopNet (WKU's student information and registration system), course registration, study skills, time management, writing and other academic skills, and even directions to campus and how to get a parking permit should you need to visit.
- Join an Online Blackboard Community for Distance Learners at WKU. The community provides a download library of free plug-ins and discounted software, a link to technical support, and a university support directory. To join, email learn.online@wku.edu with the subject line Online Community. There are also Facebook, Flickr and YouTube communities found by going to the Distance Learning orientation (above) and selecting Social Networking from the Resources.
- WKUReal: Reaching Each Adult Learner <http://www.wku.edu/real/> is a program to assist adult students (also known as Nontraditional students) at WKU.

Academic Honesty

In all aspects of this course, students are required to demonstrate academic honesty and integrity as outlined in the University Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities (WKU Catalog, 333-5). Violations of this include:

- Cheating by giving, sharing, or receiving unauthorized information before, during, or after an exam or assignment, whether verbal, written, code, or via electronic device used to read notes or search for information on the internet
- Dishonesty, including misrepresentation or lying
- Plagiarism, including memorizing and recanting work or answers from online sources
- Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any type of work in this class. If you choose to use ANY AI tools (i.e., ChatGPT, Quizlet, Course Hero, etc.), your actions will be considered academically dishonest and a violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct. Academically dishonest students will receive a zero in this course and be reported to a board for review.

Penalties for academic dishonesty as noted in the WKU Catalog and in Hilltopics: Handbook for University Life: “Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of the Dean of Student Life for disciplinary sanctions.” See also <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/>. Cases of academic dishonesty may be referred to The Office of Judicial Affairs for review, where the sanctions for academic dishonesty outlined in the WKU Student Handbook and available online at <http://www.wku.edu/judicialaffairs/sanctions.php> may be applied.

Citation format must conform to Chicago Manual of Style. Information detailing this format can be found the History Department’s Style Sheet for Citations available online at <http://www.wku.edu/history/documents/wku-history-citation-guide.pdf>.

Student Disability Service

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.”

ADA Accommodation

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX/ Discrimination & Harassment

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

Inclusion Statement

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to ensuring all members of our campus community have access to equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving

Readings:

Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, chapter 2, pgs. 21-62

Week Three

9/2-9/8

Regional Variation

Readings:

Regina Bradley, *Chronicling Stankonia: The Rise of the Hip-Hop South*, chapter introduction, pgs. 1-19

Felicia A. Viator, "West Coast Originals: A Case for Reassessing the "Bronx West" Story of Black Youth Culture in 1980s Los Angeles." *American Studies* 58, no. 3 (2019): 87-105.

Sampling Short Paper Due

Week Four

9/9-9/15

Trap House and Illegality

Readings:

Gucci Mane, *The Autobiography of Gucci Man*, chapter 12, pgs. 115-129

Regina Bradley, *Chronicling Stankonia: The Rise of the Hip-Hop South*, chapter 4, pgs. 88-99

Topic and Bibliography Due

Week Five

9/16-9/22

Police Brutality

Readings: Viator, *To Live and Defy in LA: How Gangsta Rap Changed America*.

Book Review #1 Due