

The History of Hip Hop
AFA 3371/AMH 3931 Section Spring 2025 3 credits
African American Studies Program- University of Florida
Dr. David A. Canton, Director African American Studies Program

Class Days/Time: T 8/9 3:00-4:55 and R 4:05-455

Office: African American Studies
1012 Turlington Hall

Class Location: TUR 2306

Phone: 352-392-3060

Office Hours: M/W 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Email: da.canton@ufl.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Examines the blossoming of Hip Hop as a musical genre and as a cultural and political youth movement from the 1970s to the present, extending from its origins in New York city to the rest of the nation and the world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines the history of hip hop music and culture within the context of the impact of a post industrial economy and developing in post-civil rights America. The course explores hip hop's antecedents such as jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, soul, funk, and disco. Students will critically analyze the lyrics and origins of a variety of genres in hip hop music such as socially conscious, trap muzic, gangsta, and crunk. Students examine the 19th century origins of American popular culture, the minstrels, and its relationship to commercial hip hop music. The course explores the relationship between capitalism, technology, mass incarceration, racism, class, sexism in hip hop. The course examines black masculinity and gender construction in hip hop.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will 1) understand the development and economic and cultural impact of hip hop music 2) appreciate the diversity in hip hop music and black cultural production 3) demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental concepts common in Hip Hop Studies 4) enhance your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills 5) gain a general understanding on the development of a podcast 6) an ability to present a general historical overview of the history of hip hop.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Ewoodzie, Joseph, *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-Hop's Early Years* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 2017.

Green, Aaryn, et al, *The Sociology of Cardi B: A Trap Feminist Approach* (New York: Routledge), 2025.

Nielson, Erik and Andrea L. Dennis, *Rap on Trial: Race, Lyrics, and Guilt in America* (New York: The New Press), 2019.

Quinn, Eithne, *Nuthin' but a "g" thang: The Culture and Commerce of gangsta rap* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2005.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION OF GRADES:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>	<u>Points</u>
Attendance	ongoing	100
Reflection Paper	February 19	200
Op Ed	March 18	200
Creative Writing Assignment	April 19	100
Research Paper	April 30	300
Podcast	April 25	<u>100</u>
		1000

<u>GRADE/POINT SCALE</u> Grading Scale Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
934-1000	93.4-100	A	4.00
900-933	90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-599	E	0.00

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Attendance and Class Participation: Students should have read the readings and similar to a battle MC be ready “to spit some bars” participate in class discussions, and drop some knowledge. If you cannot attend class, please contact me the day before class.

Reflection Paper: Write a 3 page analytical essay on any of the themes we discussed in the course, Bronx origins of hip hop, race and American popular culture, hip hop music and political resistance. Take time to read the assigned readings and develop a thesis that explicates the political, social, and cultural impact of each. Your essay should include two books and two journal articles to support your thesis. I want to hear your ideas so only use direct quotes if it is a statement you cannot put into your own words. Upload to Canvas on February 19th at 5pm.

Op Ed Essay: Each student is required to write a 3 page op ed on a topic in the course. You are required to include two links in your essay. I will show up to include links in your essay. Op Eds are designed to expose the public to historical debates and issues. You do not need to site books insert links to essays that support your thesis. If you have questions, please ask before you begin your essay. Your essay is due on March 18th by 5pm. Below is an Op Ed I wrote for *Truthout*.

“Déjà vu All Over Again: Racism, Poverty and Militarism: 50 Years Later”

Truthout, June 1, 2017. <http://www.truth-out.org/speakout/item/40794-deja-vu-all-over-again-racism-poverty-and-militarism-50-years-later>

Creative Writing Assignment

The creative writing paper is a critical and analytical work on the structure of hip-hop rhyme/poetry. The work for the creative writing assignment must be entirely original work. You are to creatively develop a 75-100 word rhyme and explore the usage of various word play, including similes, metaphors, puns and tropes, as well as others to be elaborated on in class. You are to describe and analyze your usage of the structure of the rhyme. Please upload your rhymes to Canvas on April 19 by 5 pm. I will ask for some volunteers to spit their bars in class.

Example:

1. MCs think I'm like an artery because I bring the flow,
2. but I'm really just vain so in case you don't know,
3. I put out wack MCs like yo momma put out the booty
4. You think you a big baller, but you the smallest like Rudy...

1. use of simile in comparison to the flow of blood through an artery with "flow," an idiomatic expression of rhyming skill. This suggests good lyrical ability.
2. use of word play and pun in use of "vain" as a homonym for "vein." This also celebrates a bragging trope.
3. use of simile and idiomatic slang-- "to put out" as in "defeat" -- in comparison to alternate slang meaning as in suggestive of liberal sexual relations. This line also insults the mother of the opponent, thereby celebrating a trope in hip-hop: insult the opponent. This line also employs AAVE in its conjugation of "to put."
4. use of simile to insult the opponent by comparing him/her to the smallest child, "Rudy," on the popular 80s sitcom "The Cosby Show." It can also refer to *Rudy*, the popular 1993 movie about a small football player, thereby offering a double entendre with idiomatic slang "baller" (an athlete; also used in reference to someone with wealth and power). This affirms the humiliation of the opponent and offers a witty popular culture reference. "Big baller" forms alliteration. The verb "to be" is missing in two places: "...you [are] a big..." and "...you [are] the smallest..." reflecting AAVE verb conjugation.

Research Paper

Students are required to write a well researched, organized, and informative 10 page paper on any theme or topic that we discussed in the course. Your final paper must include a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, newspapers, magazines. Please use the University of Chicago Style <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> Some topics include gender in Hip hop, a particular genre such as 'gangsta rap', capitalism and hip hop, or a paper on the history of hip hop in Gainesville. Upload your paper to Canvas on April 30th by 5pm.

Podcast: Podcasting is an expanding and very competitive industry. I am going to divide the class into groups of three and you will create your own Podcast. The podcast will be 6-8 minutes and it can be on any theme that we discuss in the course. You may want to do a podcast on the history of hip hop in Gainesville or a debate over commercial hip and battle rappers. Your podcast must include content from two students and one can be a producer. I suggest using Garageband and I can set up a tutorial and you will learn how to edit and produce a podcast. I am grading for content, accurate information, creativity, audio and unique style, connections, incorporating, readings, popular culture, and analysis.

Below is a link to a Podcast by historians at Villanova University. Be creative. You can add anything you like that will get your audience to listen and learn.

<https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/lepage/resources/podcasts.html>

You can search these popular websites for information:

www.undergroundhiphop.com, www.ohhla.com www.vibe.com,
Hip hop archive.com, www.thesource.com, www.rappages.com,

PRESENTATION OF WORK

All written assignments must be typed-double spaces, using Times New Roman 12 point font in MS word. You must use a standard one inch margin, no bold-faced or large fonts. Use the University of Chicago Style.

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

All pages should be numbered and I do not need a cover sheet. The assignment is due before the end of class. Work will be considered late and graded down one letter grade for each day it is late.

EVALUATION OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

1) Quality, scope, and organization of documentation 2) Clarity and coherence of expression 3) Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation 4) Quality of Critical Analysis 5) Demonstration of an understanding of information and concepts addressed in the readings and or discussed in module lecture 6) Following directions and completing assignments on time.

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings are due the day that they appear on the outline

I reserve the right to change my syllabus at any time. Students are responsible for any work or handouts that I may add.

Week 1: What is Hip Hop Studies? The Bronx Origins of Hip Hop 1973-1978

Tuesday, January 14 Course Overview/ Introductions

“The Warriors” 1979 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTUrWYv2vtU>

“Fort Apache, 1981 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGdH69tzD1M&list=PLS2dXdDILxhkWPDct6g-LpCZ8z4GUj6k2>

Canvas: Break Beats

Video: Hip Hop Evolution, Episode 1: The Foundation

Thursday, January 16: ["Funk What You Heard: Hip Hop is a Field of Study"](#)

Journal of Hip Hop Studies, Volume 9, Issue 1, Winter 2022, pp. 6-33.

Week 2: South Bronx DJ's

Tuesday, January 21:

Ewoodzie, Introduction, Chapter 1 “Herc: The New Cool in the Bronx”

Ewoodzie, Chapter 2, “South Bronx DJs. vs Other DJ's”

Thursday, January 23

Ewoodzie, Chapter 3 “Creating Conventions”

Week 3: Hip Hop Aesthetics: The Rise of the MC, Death of Hip Hop, and Birth of Rap Music

Tuesday, January 28

Chapter 4 “Crews and Outside Influences”

Ewoodzie, Chapter 5 “Race, Gender, and the Pursuit of Recognition”

Sequence “Funk You Up”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGdH69tzD1M&list=PLS2dXdDILxhkWPDct6g-LpCZ8z4GUj6k2>

Sha Rock, Funky Four Plus One “That's the Joint” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVxk9PW62Vk>

Thursday, January 30

Ewoodzie, Chapter 6: "MCs Take the Stage"

Graffiti Rock, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHeAkY-X_nU

[The Message](#) Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five 1982

[Jesse](#) Grandmaster Melle Mel and the Furious Five 1984

Carlton Banks aka The Tap Dance Kid: 1985

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd4C8_FMdjA

Week 4: Origins of Gangsta Rap

Tuesday, February 4:

Quinn, Chapter 1, "A Gangsta Parable"

Chapter 2, "Gangsta's Rap: Black Cultural Studies and the Politics of Representation"

Thursday, February 6

Quinn, Chapter 3 "Always Into Somethin: Gangsta's emergence in 1980s Los Angeles:"

Week 5: Race, Racism and American Popular Culture

Tuesday, February 11:

Canvas, Leroy Ashby, "Blackface, Barnum, and Newspaper Ballyhoo, Chapter 1 in Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture Since 1830*

Thursday, February 13: Hip Hop Evolution: The Birth of Gangsta Rap

Week 6: Keeping it Real: Authenticity and Commercial Hip Hop

Tuesday, February 18:

Quinn, Chapter 4; Straight Out of Compton: Ghetto Discourses and the Geographies of Gangsta" Chapter 5

The Nigga Ya Love to Hate: Badman Lore and Gangsta Rap

Thursday, February 20: [Badass Gangstas: The Parallel Influences, Characteristics and Criticisms of the Blaxploitation Cinema and Gangsta Rap Movements](#) Dustin Engles, *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 1, (Winter 2014), 1-19.

Week 7: Conscious Rap/Gangsta Rap and Commodification of Black Male Death

Tuesday, February 25:

Quinn, Chapter 6: "Who's The Mack? Rap performance and Trickster Tales"

Quinn, Chapter 7: "it's a Doggy-Dogg World": The G Funk Era and the Post Soul Family"

Thursday, February 27: Quinn Chapter 8, "Tupac Shakur and the Legacies and Gangsta"

X Klan: Funkin' Lesson https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g_e6RJRCpk

Brand Nubian, "Wake Up" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE0J4Ewc1kA>

Sista Soulja, “The Final Solution” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcWgPEUT_x0

Week 8: Hip Hop, Gender, and Black Feminism

Tuesday, March 4: Green, Chapter 1, “What is a Trap Feminist Standpoint” and Chapter 2, “Cardi B’s Bad Behavior: Resisting White Gaze and Respectability”

Thursday, March 6:

Ladies First: A Story of Women in Hip Hop, Episode 1 “Shaping Hip Hop” Netflix On Your own

Week 9: “The Ratchet” or Respectable Binary for Black Women Mc’s

Tuesday, March 11: [The Cardi B-Beyonce Complex: Ratchet Respectability and Black Adolescent Girlhood](#)
Ashley Payne, *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Volume 7, Issue 1, Summer 2020, 26-43: Green, Chapter 3, “Cardi B Living Her Best Feminist Life”

Cardi B WAP featuring Megan Thee Stallion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsm4poTWjMs>
Megan Thee Stallion and Beyonce “Savage” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0PH_Tgbl00

Rapsody “Oprah”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTrIB5MabS8>
Sa Roc “Hand of God” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn65R0kuXw4>

Thursday, March 13 : Green, Chapter 4 “Policing Cardi B’s Blackness, Chapter 5, “Cardi Put the WAP on Offset: Trap Feminist Motherhood

Ta-Nehisi Coates Words and Context

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/11/9/16627900/ta-nehisi-coates-n-word>

Week 10: Sexism in Hip Hop and Racial Misandry in America

Tuesday, March 25: Tommy Curry, Chapter 5 “In the Fiat of Dreams” The Delusional Allure of Hope and The Reality of Anti-Black (Male) Death the Demands Our Theorization of the Anti-Ethical: [For the Dead Homie: Black Male Rappers, Homicide Survivorship Bereavement, and the Rap Tribute of Nipsey Hustle](#)
Melvin Williams, et al, *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Volume 8, Winter 2021, pp 89-126.

Lil Jon and Eastside Boys “Get Low” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYH7_GzP4Tg
Juicy J and Lil Wayne “Bandz A Make Her Dance” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJPHE1vyAAk>

Thursday, March 27: Green, Chapter 6, “Cardi B’s Trap Feminist Politics”

Week 11: Hip Hop H Town, The MIA, and New Orleans

Tuesday, April 1 [Hustle in H-Town: Hip Hop Entrepreneurialism in Houston](#)
Brittany L. Long, *Journal of Hip Hop Studies* Winter 2022, pp 53-76.

Bryon Hurt: Beyond Beats and Rhyme

Geto Boys “My Mind Playing Tricks on Me” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KutXyPEEbQs>
Tobe Nwigwe, “Try Jesus: Don’t Try Me” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRP3tig_B20

Kodak Black “Transportin” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ns167_1lTiA
Trick and Trina, Nann <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaFqyJG8ung>

Thursday, April 3:

[The South is Rap's Past, Present and Future](#) Briana Younger

Week 12: Mass Incarceration and Rap Lyrics

Tuesday, April 8: Nelson, Chapter 1 “Hip Hop: From the Margins to the Mainstream” Chapter 2, “Rap Enters the Courtroom”

TI “Rubberband Man” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ns167_llTiA

Thursday, April 10: Nelson, Chapter 3, “Lyrics, Stereotypes, and Bias”

Week 13: Hip Hop is Not Dead: Hip Hop Activism and Lyricism

Tuesday, April 15: Thursday, April 17: Rachel Sullivan, [Rap and Race: Its Got a Nice Beat, but What About the Message](#) *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol 33 (May 2003) 605-622: Nelson, Chapter 4, “What About the First Amendment

Nas “Hip Hop is Dead” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAKxjTRV6ms>

Common “I Use to Love Her” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrUERC2Zk64>

Thursday, April 17:

Marc Lamont Hill, “Scared Straight: Hip Hop, Outing, and the Pedagogy of Queerness”

Cakes Da Killa “Don Dada” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MxT6PePWZQ>

Week 14: The Lyricist Lounge: Nothing But Bars

Tuesday, April 22: Nelson, Chapter 5 “Aggressive Prosecutors and Untrained Experts” Chapter 6 Surveillance. Suppression, and the Rise of the Gang Units.

Podcasts Presentations

CLASSROOM DECORUM

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

COMMUNICATIONS

Please allow 24-48 hours during the week. I do not check work emails during the weekend, so plan ahead. Emails sent on the weekend will be answered the next Monday or Tuesday. Again, manage your crisis by being prepared—do not email the night before a deadline as you probably will not get an answer. If you email me the morning of class, you will not get a reply until later that day or the next day.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND MAKE UP POLICY

Class attendance is expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 10 point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Students who can demonstrate that they were unable to submit an assignment by the deadline due to an excused absence and who can provide appropriate documentation for the absence will be given a reasonable period of time to make up the late work.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HONOR CODE

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

UF COUNSELING AND WELLNES CENTER

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)

WRITING STUDIO

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.