

Instructor:

Leon Lee

Email:lllee@ucsd.edu**Office Hours:**

Wed & Fri, 5:00p-6:30p

via Zoom. You can make an appointment with me @ leonlee.youcanbook.me**Official Class Meeting Times:**

MWF, 4:00-4:50pm @ SOLIS-109 online



(Artwork by C-Ray Art)

Truth will never start out popular in a world more concerned with marketability than righteousness. It will initially suffer ridicule and even violence – yet ultimately it is undeniable. All of humanity is living in a dream world, but suffering real consequences.

–Ms. Lauryn Hill

ETHN 128 x MUS 152: Hip-Hop: The Politics of Culture

**Course Description**

This course engages the politics of Black popular culture through Hip-Hop. We will focus on Hip-Hop not simply as a musical genre, but as a cultural and political movement. In particular, we will examine what makes Hip-Hop a manipulable cultural form—as it often treads simultaneously on terrains of subversion from and incorporation into oppressive societal structures.

We will interrogate Hip-Hop's representation as an oppositional culture and the politics of its mainstream popularity. Is Hip-Hop an effective medium for resistance? Or has it succumbed to national and international corporate interests?

Using theoretical frameworks set forth by scholars of Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies, our exploration into the history and development of Hip-Hop will concentrate on the various ways Hip-Hop has been experienced, interpreted and produced by its practitioners, consumers and observers.

COURSE DESIGN**Disclaimer:**

COVID-19 has brought with it many challenges that none of us signed up for—not for the pandemic, not for the chaotic response to it, not for the sudden end to our physical proximities to each other, not for teaching and learning from home, not for needing to learn and use new technologies that we have varied access to. The same course that I initially imagined cannot be done online. But we will do our best to be adaptable. As such, the structure of this course will be entirely experimental and subject to change.

Both synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (not occurring at the same time) means of facilitation will be attempted. We will ultimately have to learn how to do this together as we go along. If pre-recorded lectures don't seem to be effective, we may try another method. In any case, the goal is to minimize the amount of extra labor that these circumstances produce for all of us, while remaining accountable to the course content the best we can. Please keep your availability open during our officially scheduled class meetings in the event of any changes. But for now, here is the plan moving forward.

“Remote Learning” Format (starts on Week 2)

- M: Mondays will be asynchronous. I will upload weekly lectures to Canvas by the end of the day each Monday for students to view. I will likely condense the week's materials into a single lecture video.
- W: We will not be meeting on Wednesdays. Instead, students will submit a short weekly reflection on Canvas that will be due no later than 11:59pm on Thursdays. More details are outlined in the Assignments Overview section.
- F: We will have synchronous discussions every Friday, 4:00p-4:50p via Zoom.
- Class will be broken up into two parts: 1) Breakout Room discussions from 4:00p to ~4:30p, and 2) class discussion from ~4:30p to 4:50p. I encourage you to form strong working relationships with your peers and continue the conversation outside of class.
 - Students will be randomly assigned to Breakout Rooms each week. Each group will choose a group leader to report back highlights from their discussion to the larger group. I will offer guiding questions and students will offer their own discussion questions to guide the conversation.
 - Your total attendance and engagement in these discussions will account for 10% of your grade. If synchronous meetings prove to be difficult for you due to home circumstances, please communicate with me and we will reassess.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Weekly Discussion Meetings = 10%	Midterm Essay = 20%
Weekly Reflection Posts = 20%	Social Media Art Project = 40% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art piece = 20% • Critical reflection paper = 20%
Hip-Hop Art Share = 10%	Total = 100%

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

Weekly Reflection Posts = 20%

Students will submit short critical reflections on the weekly texts and themes on Canvas. Reflection posts should be approximately 200-300 words (less than a page double-spaced) and should directly reference to course texts. At the end of each reflection, students will be required to generate one discussion question that the texts provoked for them (your question will be exempted from the word limit). Discussion questions should be generative and encourage deeper pondering of the materials. If desired, students can choose to begin their reflection post by responding to another student's discussion question. However, the same

engagement with the course texts should be demonstrated, and a discussion question will still be required at the end of the reflection.

Your reflection posts should:

- 1) Briefly summarize the main arguments from that week, and raise questions or issues about the readings
- 2) Draw connections across the texts. Explain why you think these readings are assigned in the same week. How are they in conversation with each other? How do they connect with other course materials?
- 3) They are to be analysis-driven, rather than opinion-driven. This means properly deploying the theoretical frameworks posited in the texts and citing evidence to explain what is happening.
- 4) Draw connections to the contemporary moment whenever possible
- 5) Include one discussion question that you would like to pose to the class

Reflection posts will be due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm on Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Please note that there are 7 opportunities to write reflection posts, of which **you are only required to write 5**.

Each post will be worth 2% and will be graded as P/NP based on their thoughtfulness and completion of all the above mentioned requirements. You are allowed to write an optional 6th or 7th reflection post, which will either replace a previous post that scored NP, or serve as 1% extra credit for each additional post. This equals a total of **2% possible extra credit**.

Hip-Hop Art Share = 10%

Share on Canvas a piece of Hip-Hop art that inspires or speaks to you in some way. It can be a song, a video, an image, etc. Write a short description of the artist(s) and the artifact and give an analysis of the political stakes. In other words, what kind of message does it invoke for you and why is it important? Cite at least 2 articles from the course in your analysis. 500-800 words

Midterm Essay = 20%

Prompt will be distributed on Week 5. You will be assessed based on the level of critical engagement with the course materials. This will be a formal academic essay so please format accordingly. You are required to cite at least 4 articles from the course in your analysis. 1000-1500 words

Social Media Art Project = 40%

This final project will be broken into two parts, each worth 20%: 1) a digital media art piece, and 2) a critical reflection paper.

- 1) Using whatever tools at their disposal, students will produce a Hip-Hop inspired video art project that will be posted on a social media platform of their choosing. It can be a recording of some kind of live performance, a music video, vlog, animation, or anything of the sort. The possibilities are virtually endless. It should be at least approximately one-minute or longer. The piece should invoke some kind of message that relates back to the course materials and discussions. The method of delivering this message and its shape and form can be explicit or abstract. It can be intricately produced or unedited. Just be *intentional* with your creative choices. Be specific in your mind the message you want to get across, as well as how and why you're going to do it, as you will have to explain these decisions in the Critical Reflection Paper.
- 2) The Critical Reflection Paper will unpack their video project in relation to themes from the course. In addition to explicitly laying out your intentions behind the video art project, you will be required to draw specific connections to your reflections of the course as a whole. You will be assessed based on

the level of critical engagement with the course materials. This will be a formal academic essay so please format accordingly. You are required to cite at least 6 articles from the course in your analysis. 1500-2000 words

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need any accommodation for disability, illness or any other reason, please let the instructor and the Office for Students with Disabilities know as soon as possible. We will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you.

Given the emphasis on online instruction, access to technology will be imperative to your success in this class. It is my understanding that UCSD will be offering assistance in this regard. Here is a link to the Student Affairs website, which has information on resources including a laptop loaner program if you need it:

<https://vcsa.ucsd.edu/news/covid-19-info.html>

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD

Interested in a career in law, public policy, medicine, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, community organizing, urban planning, and other socially-engaged careers? Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that allows students to critically examine the complex dynamics of race and identity in the United States. Being an Ethnic Studies major or minor equips you with a range of significant skills such as critical thinking, data analysis, argumentation, community building and compassionate social engagement. Whether you are taking this course for a graduation requirement, personal interest, or curiosity, we invite you to explore the possibilities of an Ethnic Studies major or minor.

If you would like information more information, please contact:

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Or visit www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu

COURSE CALENDAR

W	DATE	TOPIC	TEXTS / MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS
I	Mon, 3/30	First things first	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawiya Kameir, "All American Music Is Black Music. Robert Glasper Is The Jazz Renaissance Man Tracing Its History", available @ https://www.thefader.com/2016/09/14/robert-glasper-artscience-interview Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Wild Style</i> (1983), available @ ucsd.kanopy.com <i>Style Wars</i> (1983), available @ ucsd.kanopy.com 	Review the course syllabus closely and thoroughly
	Weds, 4/1			
	Fri, 4/3			

			<p>Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rapper’s Delight” by The Sugarhill Gang (1979) • “The Message” by Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five (1982) 	
2	Mon, 4/6 Weds, 4/8 Fri, 4/10	What is Hip-Hop and why is it political?	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imani Perry, “Hip Hop’s Mama: Originalism and Identity in the Music” • Marcyliena Morgan & Dionne Bennett, “Hip-Hop and the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form” • R. Scott Heath, “TRUE HEADS: Historicizing the Hip_Hip ‘Nation’ in Context” <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes</i> (2006), available @ ucsd.kanopy.com 	Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm
3	Mon, 4/13 Weds, 4/15 Fri, 4/17	Politics of Black Representation	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Hall, “What Is This “Black” in Black Popular Culture?” • Cornel West, “The New Cultural Politics of Difference” • Richard Schur, “Authentic Black Cool? / Branding and Trademarks in Contemporary African American Culture” <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Stuart Hall – Race, Gender, Class in the Media”, available @ https://youtu.be/FWP_N_FoW-I <p>Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Fear Not of Man” by Mos Def (also known as Yasiin Bey) 	Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm
4	Mon, 4/20 Weds, 4/22 Fri, 4/24	Cultural authenticity and appropriation discourse	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baruti N. Kopano, “Soul Thieves: White America and the Appropriation of Hip Hop and Black Culture” • Imani Kai Johnson, “Black Culture Without Black People / Hip-Hop Dance Beyond Appropriation Discourse” • Ede Yu, “How Hip-Hop Dance Groups Have Helped Asian Americans Find Belonging”, available @ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ne8yxg/how-hip-hop-dance-groups-have-helped-asian-americans-find-belonging <p>Watch:</p>	Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bad Rap</i> (2016), available @ ucsd.kanopy.com 	
5	Mon, 4/27	Is Hip-Hop 'universal'?	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonio T. Tiongson, "The African Americanization of Hip-Hop" • Gaye Theresa Johnson, "'Teeth-Gritting Harmony': Punk, Hip-Hop, and Sonic Spatial Politics" • Melissa Castillo-Garsow, "'Yo soy Hip Hop': Transnationalism and Authenticity in Mexican New York" • Sunaina Maira, "'We Ain't Missing': Palestinian Hip-Hop—A Transnational Youth Movement" <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Palestine Underground Hip Hop, Trap and Techno Documentary Boiler Room", available @ https://youtu.be/M-R8S7QwOIg • "Hip Hop in Cambodia Tiny Toones Organization", available @ https://youtu.be/-HYR5nP3-c0 • "#HIPHOPISHIPHOP – Hip Hop for the World [Official Music Video]", available @ https://youtu.be/ppR7sI9cIRY • "US" by Ruby Ibarra feat. Rocky Rivera, Klassy & Faith Santilla, available @ https://youtu.be/AUfNeCozJBw 	<p>Midterm Prompt to be distributed this week</p> <p>Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm</p>
	Weds, 4/29			
	Fri, 5/1			
6	Mon, 5/4	Hip-Hop Feminisms	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aisha Durham, Brittney C. Cooper, and Susana M. Morris, "The Stage Hip-Hop Feminism Built: A New Directions Essay" • Donyale R. Griffin Padgett, Cheryl D. Jenkins and Dale Anderson, "Imag[e]ining Hip-Hop Femininity: CONTENTIONS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS" • Sherri Williams, "Cardi B: <i>Love & Hip Hop's</i> unlikely feminist hero" <p>Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "U.N.I.T.Y." by Queen Latifah • "Doo Wop (That Thing)" by Ms. Lauryn Hill <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion and Hip-hop Feminism, Explained Unpack That", available @ https://youtu.be/N04gwDEKCKE 	<p>Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm</p> <p>Midterm due on Canvas by Sunday, 5/10, 11:59pm</p>
	Weds, 5/6			
	Fri, 5/8			
7	Mon, 5/11	Queer Feminist	Read:	Reflection post

	Weds, 5/13 Fri, 5/15	Pedagogies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoniqua Roach, “Black Respectable Currency: Reading Black Feminism and Sexuality in Contemporary Performance” Jillian Hernandez, “Carnal teachings: raunch aesthetics as queer feminist pedagogies in Yo! Majesty’s hip hop practice” Bettina L. Love, “A Ratchet Lens: Black Queer Youth, Agency, Hip Hop, and the Black Ratchet Imagination” <p>Watch/Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Don’t Let Go” by Yo! Majesty, available @ https://youtu.be/zbbvugSXUvc “Wavvy” by Mykki Blanco, available @ https://youtu.be/sokeAMDm7mk “Stupid Hoe” by Nicki Minaj, available @ https://youtu.be/T6j4f8cHBIM 	due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm
8	Mon, 5/18 Weds, 5/20 Fri, 5/22	Hip-Hop’s generation gaps	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dart Adams, “Hip-Hop Turns 40”, available @ https://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2013/08/11/211115072/hip-hop-at-40-is-a-shell-of-its-younger-self Stereo Williams, “How Hip-Hop’s Generation Gap Became a War for Its Soul”, available @ https://www.thedailybeast.com/how-hip-hops-generation-gap-became-a-war-for-its-soul-6 Alison Winch, “Does Feminism Have a Generational Gap? Blogging, millennials and the hip hop generation” Hannah Ongley, “bell hooks pens critique of beyoncé’s ‘lemonade’ and ‘fantasy feminism’”, available @ https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/vbekx8/bell-hooks-pens-critique-of-beyoncs-lemonade-and-fantasy-feminism <p>Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1985” by J. Cole <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Rap’s Generation Gap”, available @ https://youtu.be/-ourkOxfIK “Lil Yachty Battles With Joe Budden and DJ Akademiks Everyday Struggle”, available @ https://youtu.be/hmjlA4LSaN4 “Old N*ggas” by YBN Cordae, available @ https://youtu.be/Wngm_Zbp8lo 	Reflection post due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Hold Up” by Beyoncé, available @ https://youtu.be/PeonBmeFR8o	
9	Mon, 5/25	Memorial Day – <i>no lecture</i>	Check out everyone’s Hip-Hop Art Shares on Canvas	Hip-Hop Art Share due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm
	Weds, 5/27		No Friday discussion – Work on final projects	
	Fri, 5/29			
10	Mon, 6/1	Course Reflections & Hip-Hop Futures	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greg Tate, “How Black Lives Matter Changed Hip-Hop and R&B”, available @ https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/how-blacklivesmatter-changed-hip-hop-and-rb-in-2015-61161/• Josh Svetz, “Hip Hop in 2020: We Gon’ Be Alright Current State of Hip Hop Music”, available @ https://hiphopdx.com/editorials/id.4401/title.hip-hop-in-2020-we-gon-be-alright-current-state-of-hip-hop-music• Banny Gonzalez, “Will.I.Am Is Wrong About The State Of Hip-Hop”, available @ https://www.vibe.com/2018/12/will-i-am-is-wrong-about-hip-hop• Taryn Finley, “The Era Of One Queen In Hip-Hop Is Over”, available @ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/hip-hop-queens-nicki-minaj-cardi-b_n_5dfbf0afe4b05b08bab25690 <p>Watch/Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Alright” by Kendrick Lamar, available @ https://youtu.be/Z-48u_uWMHY• “Good As Hell” by Lizzo, available @ https://youtu.be/vuq-VAiW9kw• “My Type” by Saweetie• “Juicy” by Doja Cat (I like the version without Tyga better but to each their own 🙌)	Social Media Art Project due on Canvas by Thursday, 11:59pm
	Weds, 6/3			
	Fri, 6/5			
	Finals Week 6/6-6/12			Critical Reflection Paper due on Canvas by Thursday, 5:59pm