

## **ETHN 164-(#321396)/MUS 153-(#331396): African Americans in Mass Media**

University of California, San Diego (Winter 2024)

### **Course Information**

Instructor: Tsekani Browne (etbrowne@ucsd.edu)

Class Meetings: Monday, 5-7:50pm, RM: WLH #2112

Office/Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 4:30-5pm, T/Th: 9-10am (virtual), by appt.

**Zoom link (if needed):** <https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/tsekanibrowne>

### **Course Description:**

*This course examines media representations of African Americans from slavery through the 20th century. Attention will be paid to the emergence & transmission of enduring stereotypes, and their relationship to changing social, political, and economic frameworks in the United States. The course will also consider African Americans' response(s) to, and interpretations of these mediated images. The course uses lens(es) of race, class, gender, sexuality & violence (in particular) to consider the significance of mass media & popular culture at "critical moments." We know that race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. are constructed categories. In what ways has mass media (music & popular culture specifically) played key roles in constructing such categories? This course defines "mass media" & "pop culture" broadly and examines the historical/political significance of racialized/gendered media in U.S. history & contemporary culture. The course uses both historical and interdisciplinary methods/sources to probe the gender, color & politics of mass media and popular culture (in the past & present).*

### **Major Texts-**

- 1) Robert M. Entman & Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media & Race in America*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999.
- 2) Beretta E. Smith-Shomade, ed.; *Watching While Black Rebooted!*: Rutgers Press, 2023.
- 3) Stephane Dunn, *"Bad Bitches & Sassy Supermamas": Black Power Action Films*, Univ. of Illinois Press, 2008
- 4) Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation*, Picador, 2005
- 5) Safiya Umoja Noble and Brendesha Tynes, eds. *The Intersectional Internet, Race, Sex, Class & Culture Online*, Peter Lang, 2016.

**\*All Readings available on Canvas: (canvas.ucsd.edu)**

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### **Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of "interest" yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Mónica Rodríguez de Cabaza, Ethnic Studies Dept Coordinator, at [EthnicStudies@ucsd.edu](mailto:EthnicStudies@ucsd.edu).

**Grading:**

Final grades are based on the successful completion of class requirements as weighted below (subject to modification). Students must complete all assignments to pass the course. No late assignments or make up exams will be acceptable without documentation of a serious emergency.

- Exam format: Short-answer and essay questions.
- Class Participation: is based on student's contributions and engagement with the class which may include completing short in-class assignments.
- Readings: are to be completed prior to class in order to facilitate discussion.
- Brief Response paper requirements (more details to be presented in class): There will be (2) (two-page) analytical response papers due on class materials.
- Research Paper: (more details to be presented in class); Paper will be developed over multiple weeks & will utilize multiple academic sources to aid your analysis. Research Paper must also include a bibliography and proper citation of sources.

**Coursework/Assignments (Approx.)**

-Class Participation & Coursework:	30%
-Midterm:	20%
-Response Paper(s):	20%
-Final Paper Project:	30%

**Cheating and Plagiarism:**

Cheating and Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing any work (such as information from the internet, your own written work from other classes, papers written by other students, and information from books, magazines, articles, etc.) without full attribution. Sources must be indicated with footnotes or other citation formats. Use quotation marks around any text directly copied from another source.

**UCSD Rule of Community and Code of Conduct:**

This course is designed to promote intellectual engagement and discussion of sensitive & sometimes controversial topics. Rude, disrespectful conduct or speech directed towards the Instructor or other students will not be tolerated. Varying viewpoints are encouraged, therefore we may not always agree. UCSD Principles of Community will guide our discussions, especially: "We affirm the right to freedom of expression at UCSD. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, confidentiality and respect."

**Email Policy:**

Email updates about the course will be sent frequently. **Reading emails sent from Professor are required.** "I did not see the email," "it went to my junk mail," etc. are not viable excuses. Please be sure you have your email linked to your smartphone and that "etbrowne@ucsd.edu" is not an address that is sent to your junk mail. Also, please observe

standard email etiquette and formatting. I prefer that you send all email from your UCSD account. I will do my best to respond to your questions within 24-48 hours. Email is a good way for you to ask short and/or logistical questions or set up office appointments. If you have questions requiring an in-depth answer, please see me after class or in office hours.

### **Disability Access**

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in University Center 202. Please make arrangements to contact the instructor. Contact the OSD for further information: [disabilities.ucsd.edu](http://disabilities.ucsd.edu)

### **Title IX Compliance**

The Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) provides assistance to students, faculty & staff regarding reports of bias, harassment & discrimination. OPHD is the UC San Diego Title IX office. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funds. Students have the right to an educational environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

Students have options for reporting incidents of sexual violence/harassment. Info about reporting options may be obtained at OPHD at [ophd.ucsd.edu](http://ophd.ucsd.edu). Students may receive confidential assistance at CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center ([care.ucsd.edu](http://care.ucsd.edu)) or Counseling & Psychological Services ([caps.ucsd.edu](http://caps.ucsd.edu)).

Additional Resources:

- Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD): <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/about/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.ucsd.edu/>
- Writing Center (127 Mandeville): <http://writingcenter.ucsd.edu/>
- Writing + Critical Expression Hub at the Teaching + Learning Commons: <http://commons.ucsd.edu/students/writing/index.html>

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### **<Reading Schedule>**

#### **WEEK #1-(1.8): Introductions**

- 1) Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, "Introduction"
- 2) Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point, "Introduction" & ch. 1

#### **WEEK #2-(1.15): Theories & Foundations (Holiday: MLK Day Holiday!)**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, "Preface(s) & ch. 1
- 2) Smith-Shomade, ed. Watching While Black, "Foreword" & "Introduction
- 3) Kim Crenshaw, "Intersectionality" (excerpt)

#### **WEEK #3-(1.22): Audience Perceptions of African Americans**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image in the White Mind, chs. 2-3, pp. 16-59
- 2) "Sarah Baartman" Readings & Images (pdf)

- 3) Watching While Black, Ch. 1: Pierson: "Audiences & the Televisual Slavery-Narrative," pp. 15-26
- 4) Dunn, "Baad Bitches & Sassy Supermama: Black Power Action Fims" ch. 1:, "The Pleasure of Looking: Black Female Spectatorship and the Supermama Heroine," pp. 13-34

**Week #4-(1.29): "New Negro" Case Studies: Josephine Baker & Jack Johnson**

- 1) Patricia Morton, Disfigured Images, "Introduction" pp. xi-xvii
- 2) Hine, "Culture of Dissemblance," pp. 37-47
- 3) Baldwin, "Our Newcomers to the City," pp. 159-180
- 4) Hammer, "'Doing Josephine': The Radical Legacy of Josephine Baker's Banana Dance," pp. 165-181
- 5) Kamerbeek, "Abysmal Brutes: Jack London & Jack Johnson" pp. 51-70\*; (\*71+ optional)

**\*Reading Response Paper #1-(Due 1.29)**

**WEEK #5-(2.5): Race, Class & the News Media**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, ch. 4-6, pp. 60-106
- 2) Gilliam: "Welfare Queen Experiment" (pdf)
- 3) Watching While Black, Ch. 3: Gillespie: "Thinking about Watchmen," pp. 41-56
- \*[Optional]: Leon Litwack, "Hellhounds" (pdf)

**Week #6-(2.12): Case Studies: African American Directors-(Holiday: President's Day)**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, chs. 11, pp. 182-204
- 2) Cobb & Jackson, "They Hate Me: Spike Lee, Documentary Filmmaking, and Hollywood's Savage Slot," pp. 251-269
- 2) Smith-Shomade, ed, Watching While Black, ch. 2: Acham, "History Trauma, and Healing in Ava Duvernay's 13<sup>th</sup> & When they See Us," pp. 27-40
- 3) Smith-Somade, ed, Watching While Black, Ch. 10: Greene, "Tyler Perry's Too Close to Home: Black Audiences in the Post-Network Era," pp. 150-168

**\*Midterm-(Due 2.12)**

**Week #7-(2.19): Black Power & "Blaxploitation" & Representation**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, ch 7: "Affirming Discord," pp. 107-124
- 2) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, ch 8: "Black Power," pp. 125-143
- 3) Dunn, "Baad Bitches & Sasy Supermamas," ch. 2: "Black Power & the New Baad Cinema," pp. 35-54

**[Choose: 4.a or 4.b]**

- 4.a) Dunn, "Baad Bitches & Sasy Supermamas," ch. 3: "What's Sex & Women Got To Do With It?: Sexual Politics & Revolution in Sweetback & The Spook," pp. 55-84 **[Or]**
- 4.b) Dunn, "Baad Bitches & Sasy Supermamas," ch. 5: Sexing the Supermama: Racial & Gender Power in Coffy and Foxy Brown, pp. 107-132

**\*Reading Response Paper #2-(Due 2.19)**

**Week #8-(2.26): African-Americans, Television & Television Advertising**

- 1) Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, chs. 9-10, pp. 144-181

**[Choose: 2.a or 2.b]**

2.a) Watching While Black, Ch. 6: Lewis: "Trying to Find Relief": Seeing Black Women thru Lenses of Mental Health & Wellness in Being Mary Jane & Insecure," pp. 91-105; **[Or]**  
2.b-Watching While Black, Ch. 8: Martin: "Black Women, Audiences, And the Queer Possibilities of the Black-Cast Melodrama" pp. 123-135

**[Choose: 3.a or 3.b]**

3.a-Watching While Black, Ch. 9: Barner: "In a 90's Kind of World, I'm Glad I Got My Shows: Digital Streaming and Black Nostalgia," pp. 137-149; **[Or]**  
3.b-Watching While Black, Ch. 12: Smith-Somade: "I'm Digging You: Television's Turn to Dirty South Blackness," pp. 185-198

**Week #9-(3.4): Hip Hop Culture & mass Media**

-Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, chs. 11, pp. 182-204  
-Kelley, "Kickin' Ballistics" ch. 8 in Race Rebels.  
-Joan Morgan, When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost  
-Watching While Black, Ch. 7: Sebros: "On Air Black: The Breakfast Club, Visual Radio, and Spreadable Media" pp. 106-118  
-Chang, Can't Stop, Won't Stop, ch. 18: "Becoming the Hip Hop Generation: The Source, the Industry and the Big Crossover, p. 407-436

***\*Reading Response Paper #3-(Due 3.4)***

**Week #10-(3.11): Streaming, Gaming & Post-Modern Online Community**

**[Choose: 1.a or 1.b]**

1.a-Emtman, The Black Image In the White Mind, ch 12: "Reflecting on the End of Racial - Representation," pp. 205-226; **[Or]**  
1.b-Tynes, et al. Intersectional Internet: ch. 1: Tynes, Shuschke & Noble: "Digital Intersectionality Theory and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," pp. 21-37

**[Choose: 2.a or 2.b]**

2.a-Tynes, et al. Intersectional Internet: ch. 7: Leonard: "Grand Theft Auto V: Post-Racial Fantasies and Ferguson Realities," pp. 129-142; **[Or]**  
2.b-Watching While Black, Ch. 5: Russworm: "Gaming as Trayvon," pp. 77-90

**[Choose: 3.a or 3.b]**

3.a-Watching While Black, Ch. 11: Monk-Payton: "'I'm Trying to Make People Feel Black' Affective Authenticity in Atlanta," pp. 169-182; **[Or]**  
3.b-Watching While Black, Ch. 13: "I Feel Conflicted as F\*ck: Netflix's Dear White People and Re-presenting Black Viewing Communities," pp. 201-212

**[Choose: 4.a or 4.b]**

4.a-Tynes, et al. Intersectional Internet: ch. 4: "Signifyin', Bitching, and Blogging: Black Women & Resistance Discourse Online," pp. 73-90; **[Or]**  
4.b-Tynes, et al. Intersectional Internet: ch. 14: "Education, Representation, and Resistance: Black Girls in Popular Instagram Memes," 244-256

***Final's Week: March 16-23***