

**Ethnic Studies 128/Music 152:  
Hip Hop—The Politics of Culture  
Thursday 5:00-7:50pm, Peterson 102  
UCSD Spring 2015**

**Prof. Gabriel N. Mendes**

**Office:** Social Science Building 229

**Best way to contact me:** gmendes@ucsd.edu. Please write “142” in the subject line.

**Phone:** 858.822.5118

**Office hours:** Tuesday 11:30-12:30 and Wednesday 1:30-3:00pm by appointment only.  
Please set a meeting time with me prior to arrival.

**Course Overview**

This course will examine how Hip Hop has become one of the most influential and manipulable forms of culture in U.S. society and even globally. Our exploration of the development of Hip Hop from a local “subculture” emerging in the South Bronx in the 1970s to a global culture with billion dollar currency will concentrate on the way Hip Hop has been experienced and interpreted by its practitioners, its students, and its critics. We will focus on the processes of production and consumption of Hip Hop culture, always with an eye towards Hip Hop’s aesthetic, political, and even existential dimensions. The key topics in the course derive from larger discussions of what America is and will be, and all of them revolve around the politics of identity & culture that characterize it.

**Creating a learning environment:** Only a portion of what you learn in this course will be from the instructor and the readings. Your classmates will play an instrumental role in your learning experience. In order for this class to be successful, you need to come to class prepared to share your ideas. The more involved you become, the more you will gain. Support your opinions with what you learned in the readings, prior discussion, and lecture. Listen carefully to others before you decide where you stand in relation to their argument and consider how to respond in a respectful and productive manner. Please also refer to UCSD’s Principles of Community, <http://www.vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>.

**Logistics and Policies**

You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during the quarter. I respond to students’ emails by 10am every weekday; I do not answer students’ emails on weekends.

I do not accept late assignments. In case of a medical/personal emergency, you must produce a doctor’s note or other documentation in order for an exception to be made.

Please complete the readings by Tuesday in the week they are assigned, and bring the text(s) we are covering that week to class.

**There are no computers allowed in this course.** In my experience at UCSD, computers have proven to be an obstacle rather than an aid to student learning and engagement. Please obtain a notebook and a several writing utensils that you enjoy using, as well as a highlighter for reviewing your notes.

Turn off phones and refrain from text messaging during class. If I notice you texting, I will ask you to leave the classroom and that will count as an absence.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class or by email.

**Plagiarism and other Academic Misconduct:** Please refer to the guidelines from the Academic Integrity Office. If you cheat or plagiarize in this class, you will fail the course. <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/defining.html>

**Grading and Course Requirements:**

Attendance and Participation:	20%
Two Critical Synthesis Reviews	30%
Final Research or Creative Project	40%
Final Project Presentation	10%

**Attendance and Participation: 20%**

- Attendance and participation constitute a significant portion of your grade. Arrive to each class session on time and stay for its duration. Tardiness and absences will be noted and result in the lowering of your grade. You will be allowed **one unexcused absence**; any subsequent absence(s) requires a note from an official source or agency, i.e. a doctor.
- Active participation means thoughtful engagement in the readings/lectures, meaningful contributions to class discussions, and respectful collegiality toward your classmates and instructor.

**Critical Synthesis Reviews: 30%**

- You will write two brief papers (600-750 words) that offer a critical analysis of the week's assigned reading. You will submit one of these papers prior to **Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**, satisfying the required paper for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the course. Then you will submit a second paper prior to **Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**, thus satisfying the required paper for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the course. Detailed instructions will be provided to you in the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of our course.

**Final Paper or Project: 40%**

- You will choose between producing an original research paper (10pgs.) or a creative project (i.e. video/short story/play) that addresses a topic generated from the course reading material and/or lectures. You will submit a one-page paper/project description by **5pm Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**. I will post detailed instructions for the paper/project to TED.UCSD.EDU.

**Final Paper/Project Presentation: 10%**

- We will hold a special session for presentations during our allotted final exam time: **Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:59pm**. Students will do very brief presentations on their final paper/project. I will post detailed instructions for the presentation to TED.UCSD.EDU.

**\*\*\*\*\*This course will have *grader* who is an Advanced Graduate Student in Ethnic**

**Studies who has demonstrated expertise in the subject matter of the course. The grader and instructor will alternate grading responsibility for each student's work.\*\*\*\*\***

### **General Grading Standards:**

A = **Superior** performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates exceptional execution of those requirements (meaning that your work exceeds the ordinary effort and execution); reflects outstanding insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically excellent; would be considered a model example of assignment completion.

B = **Good**, solid performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates competent execution of those requirements; reflects insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically strong; may have one or more problem areas.

C = **Average** performance; meets assignment requirements, minimally; grammatically and stylistically adequate; may have two or more problem areas; papers have more than two factual, typographical, or grammatical errors per page.

D = **Below average** performance; does not meet minimal assignment requirements; has several fundamental problem areas; has several errors throughout the paper.

F = **Inferior** performance; does not meet assignment requirements; not deserving of credit.

**\*\*\*If you are taking this course P/NP, you must take the quizzes, take the midterm, and submit a final paper, attend class and participate in order to get a passing grade\*\*\***

**And, the same goes for those enrolled for a letter grade.**

### **REQUIRED TEXTS (Available at the UCSD Bookstore)**

Listed in the order in which we'll read them.

- Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
- William Jelani Cobb, *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2007).
- Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Duke University Press, 2004).
- Antonio Tiongson, Jr., *Filipinos Represent: DJs, Racial Authenticity, and the Hip-hop Nation* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

**All other required reading will be posted to TED as PDF files.**

### **Course Schedule (Subject to change, with advance notice):**

**\*\*\*\*\*(The key to making your way through the reading is time management. Obtain or generate a weekly calendar and block off at least 6 of the 128 hours in the week to devote to this course's assigned reading.)\*\*\*\*\***

### **Week 1—April 2<sup>nd</sup>—“First Things First...”**

- Robert Farris Thompson, “Hip Hop 101,” in Perkins, ed., *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Temple University Press, 1996), 211-19.
- Marcyliena Morgan & Dionne Bennett, “Hip-Hop & the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form,” *Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 140 (2) Spring 2011: 176-96.

- Supplemental: R. Scott Heath, "True Heads: Historicizing the Hip\_Hop 'Nation' in Context," *Callaloo*, 29:3 (2006), 846-866; H. Samy Alim, Hi-Tek, "'The Natti Ain't No Punk City': Emic Views of Hip Hop Cultures," *Callaloo*, 29:3 (2006), 969-990.
- Viewing: *Scratch* (2001); *Style Wars* (1983); *NY77: The Coolest Year in Hell* (2007)

### **Week 2—April 9<sup>th</sup>—“The Original Repetitive...”**

- Simon Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music," in Leppert and McClary eds., *Music and Society: the Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 133-49.
- James A. Snead, "On Repetition in Black Culture." *Black American Literature Forum* 15.4 (1981): 146-54.
- Stuart Hall, "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture," in Gina Dent (ed.), *Black Popular Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), 21-33.
- Supplementary: Cornel West, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," in Trinh Minh Ha, et. al., eds. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991), 19-36; George Lipsitz, "Popular Culture: This Ain't No Sideshow," in *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3-20; Dick Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony," in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1979), 5-19.
- Viewing: *Copyright Criminals* (2009)

### **Week 3—April 16<sup>th</sup> –“Let’s Take a Sec to Think Back”**

- Zora Neale Hurston, "The Characteristics of Negro Expression," in Gates, et. al., eds. *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, 1019-32.
- Le Roi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1963), Selections: "African Slaves/American Slaves: Their Music" and "Swing—From Verb to Noun."
- Ralph Ellison, "Blues People," in *Shadow and Act* (1964), 247-58.
- Henry Louis Gates, "The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(g): Rhetorical Difference and the Orders of Meaning," in *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 44-88.
- Adam Bradley, "Rhythm," in *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop* (Basic Civitas Books, 2009), 3-47.
- Viewing: *Something from Nothing: The Art of Rap* (2012)

### **Week 4—April 23<sup>rd</sup> —Goin’ Way Way Back to the Early Days...”**

- Tricia Rose, "'All Aboard the Night Train': Flow, Layering, and Rupture in Postindustrial New York," in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
- William Jelani Cobb, Intro, Chapter 1: "The Roots" in *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2007).

- Imani Perry, “Hip Hop’s Mama: Originalism and Identity in the Music,” in *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Duke University Press, 2004).
- Supplementary: Dick Hebdige, “Rap and Hip Hop: the New York Connection,” in *Cut ‘N’ Mix: Culture, Identity, and Caribbean Music* (Methuen & Co., 1987), 136-48; Juan Flores, “Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots, and Amnesia,” in *From Bomba to Hip Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 115-39.
- Viewing: *Rockers* (1977); *The Freshest Kids: The History of the B-Boy* (2002); *Beat This: A Hip Hop History* (1984)

#### **Week 5—April 30<sup>th</sup> –“It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back...”**

- Tricia Rose, “Prophets of Rage: Rap Music and the Politics of Black Cultural Expression,” in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
- George Lipsitz, “Diasporic Noise: History, Hip Hop, and the Postcolonial Politics of Sound,” in *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso Books, 1994), 23-48.
- William Jelani Cobb, “The Score,” in *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2007), 47-62.
- Supplemental: Paul Gilroy, “Diaspora, Utopia and the Critique of Capitalism” in *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (University Of Chicago Press, 1991); Sohail Daulatzai, “Return to Mecca: Public Enemies, Reaganism, and the Birth of Hip Hop,” in *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minnesota, 2012), 89-136.
- Viewing: *Rhyme & Reason* (1997)

#### **Week 6—May 7<sup>th</sup>—“Straight Up Menace...”?**

- Robin D.G. Kelley, “Kickin’ Reality, Kickin’ Ballistics: ‘Gangsta Rap’ in Postindustrial Los Angeles, in *Race Rebels* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 183-228.
- Imani Perry, “B-Boys, Players, and Preachers: Reading Masculinity,” in *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Duke University Press, 2004), 117-54.
- TaNehisi Coates, “Keepin’ It Unreal: Selling the Myth of Black Male Violence, Long Past Its Expiration Date,” *The Village Voice*, June 03, 2003.
- Supplemental: Norman Mailer, “The White Negro,” *Dissent Magazine* (1957)
- Viewing: *Boyz in the Hood*, *Fear of a Black Hat*, *8 Mile*, *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes* (2006)

#### **Week 7—May 14<sup>th</sup>—The Ladies will kick it, the rhyme that is wicked...”**

- Aisha Durham, Brittney C. Cooper, and Susana M. Morris, “The Stage Hip-Hop Feminism Built: A New Directions Essay,” *Signs*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Spring 2013), pp. 721-737.

- Jillian Hernandez, “Carnal Teachings: Raunch Aesthetics as Queer Feminist Pedagogies in Yo! Majesty’s Hip Hop Practice,” *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory*, (May 2014) 24:1, 88-106.
- Imani Perry, “The Venus Hip Hop and the Pink Ghetto” in *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Duke University Press, 2004), 155-90.

Supplemental: Tricia Rose, “Bad Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Rap Music,” in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

\*\*\*\*\***Special Guest Visit: Prof. Jillian Hernandez, 5:30-6:30pm**\*\*\*\*\*

**Week 8—May 21<sup>st</sup> —\*\*\*\*\*Special Event\*\*\*\*\***

- "Black Studies Beyond Respectability Politics: A Conversation" —4pm-6pm  
Professors LaMonda Horton-Stallings (Indiana University), Samuel Roberts (Columbia University), and Jennifer Nash (George Washington University)  
Class will continue 6:15-7:00pm.

Reading: LaMonda Horton-Stallings, “Im Goin Pimp Whores!": The Goines Factor and the Theory of a Hip-Hop Neo-Slave Narrative,” *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 3:3 (Fall 2003), 175-203.

**Week 9—May 28<sup>th</sup>—“Worldwide...Worldwide...”**

- Matthaues Ochmann, “The Notion of Authenticity in International Hip-Hop Culture,” in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows* (2013), 423-46.
- Ian Condry, “Yellow B-Boys, Black Culture, and Hip-Hop in Japan: Toward a Transnational Cultural Politics of Race,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 15:3 (Winter 2007), 637-71.
- Sunaina Maira, “We Ain’t Missing”: Palestinian Hip Hop—A Transnational Youth Movement,” *CR: The Centennial Review* 8:2 (Fall 2008), 161-92.
- Viewing: *La Haine* (1995)

**Week 10—June 4<sup>th</sup>—Conclusion**

- Antonio Tiongson, Jr., *Filipinos Represent: DJs, Racial Authenticity, and the Hip-hop Nation* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), selections tba.

### *Majoring or Minorin in Ethnic Studies*

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 do not 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, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact:

Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor

858-534-3277 or [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu) or visit [www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu](http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu)