

## Hip Hop Culture, Communication, & Social Change

Fall 2017: MWF 12:35-1:25, SOC room 100

**Instructor:** Dr. George Villanueva

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**Office Hours:** Monday or Wednesday, 2-3pm or by appointment in Lewis Towers 909



## **Course Description**

Can hip hop embody a culture that communicates positive social change into the world? If so, what academic perspectives and cultural practices advance this goal? These are the questions that drive this course. Grounded in Black studies, communication studies, social theory, critical cultural studies, political advocacy, popular culture, and the growing field of hip hop studies, we will investigate hip hop's evolving relationship with social change in the United States and globally. Particular attention will be paid to Chicago's hip hop scene and its dynamic contributions to community building, culture change, and advocacy. In addition to academic literature that will be part of weekly reading assignments, we will follow the spirit of hip hop by "sampling" a range of cultural production from its five elements of rapping, djing, graffiti, b-boying, and knowledge.

### **Loyola IDEA Objectives:**

- Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
- Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
- Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)

### **Participation in Our Cypher:**

Hip hop culture from its origins has always been about community participation. Hip hop culture is also, more than ever, an American and global culture—therefore you, I, and us. One thing we will learn in this class is that if you are growing up or living in the 2000's, we are all shaped by hip hop culture, have an obligation to understanding its socio-cultural context, and have something to contribute. Therefore, your participation in the class cypher is encouraged and we will all benefit if we participate through words, questions, comments, dance, art, spiritual being, reflection—all in the name of hip hop culture.

Hip hop culture also originates from **crews**—groups of link-minded individuals expressing life, culture, fun, what's on their mind, and critiques about society. You will be placed in groups of 4-5 in Week 1 and as a crew you will work on several group assignments on top of your individual assignments. At the end of the semester, you will assess all your classmate's participation in your crew based on a peer evaluation sheet that will be given to you. This sheet will be considered when I grade your **crew participation grade**.

That said, regular attendance, being on time, staying the duration and participation in discussions and activities is required to pass this course. As you cannot participate when you are not in class, excessive absences will result in a failing grade. Two tardy marks will equal an absence and every two times you arrive late/leave early will also equal an absence. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion, online Sakai discussion, and come to class prepared by doing assigned readings. Failure to do so will result in a "Fail" for this class. Discussion and debate are ways of assuring your understanding and adding valuable perspectives to a topic.

Deadlines are firm. Points will be taken off if your work is late. Written assignments must be submitted on **Sakai and in stapled paper format** at the beginning of class on the date indicated on the syllabus (unless adjusted by prior agreement with me).

One exception will be the weekly Sakai posts, which are to be submitted on Sakai by **Friday at 10pm** for each upcoming week's themes and readings. Weekly Sakai posts start the first Friday of the semester and you will be required to submit reflections for readings for week 2. Each Friday thereafter submit reflections for readings for subsequent weeks. Be prepared to present your ideas in the class cypher.

**Our Cypher Ground Rules** (adopted from Sacramento Area Youth Speaks):

- ❖ 1 Mic
- ❖ Loud-N-Proud
- ❖ Step Up ... Step Back
- ❖ Freedom of Speech With Propriety
- ❖ Create Community...No Snitchin
- ❖ Standard is Yourself: Be You and Do You
- ❖ Respect ... Self, Others, and the Space Patience, Perseverance, and Full Participation
  
- ❖ Above All: *Love*

**Assignments and Points:**

Written assignment and crew assignments instructions will be posted on Sakai and handed out in class.

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|--|------------------|
| A. Individual Participation & Attendance in cypher   | <i>50 points</i> |
| B. Weekly reading reflections (Posted to Sakai).   | <i>65 points</i> |
| C. Crew Participation Grade (based on peer evaluation sheets)  | <i>50 points</i> |
| D. Chicago hip hop culture field communication asset mapping project and in-class presentation.  | <i>50 points</i> |
| E. Transcription of Hip Hop Culture in Chicago research interview  | <i>50 points</i> |
| F. Friday, October 20 <sup>th</sup> , 7-10pm AirGo to Loyola Damen North multipurpose room event attendance & Sakai reflection   | <i>30 points</i> |
| G. Thursday, October 26 5:00pm-6:30pm, Damen Den. Attend and submit a Sakai reflection on:<br>A People's History of Chicago reading, hosted by author Kevin Coval.   | <i>15 points</i> |
| H. Final group presentation (connects your crew book review, research interview Transcriptions, asset mapping, and class reflections on key social & Cultural issues related to hip hop's complicated context. | <i>75 points</i> |
| I. Final 4-page individual paper on hip hop culture's relationship with race, class, gender, and politics/power<br><i>Due Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> 5pm in my office Lewis Towers 909</i>              | <i>75 points</i> |

**Total 460 points**

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. Failure to complete ONE OR MORE of them will result in an F in the class. **No Extra Credit will be assigned to make up any assignments you have missed.**

**Sakai reflection guide (post by Friday, 10pm):**

- a) What resonated with you the most from the readings/ listening/ watching and why?
- b) Find something from hip hop culture in your life or online that relates to week's topic. This might be a music video, image, rap verse, graffiti piece, break dance battle, DJ set, speech,

historical act, etc. Post a link or an attachment along with a reflection on why you choose your example. Be prepared to discuss in the class cypher.

### **Textbooks/ Course Materials:**

As a crew, you will select (on a first-come first-serve basis) one of the books below to be part of your final group presentation. More details on the crew assignment and final presentation will be given to you in class. As a crew, you are responsible for either purchasing the book you select collectively or renting the book from the library.

- Coates, T. N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. Text publishing.
- Davis, A. Y. (2016). *Freedom is a constant struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement*. Haymarket Books.
- Chang, J. (2016). *We Gon'be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*. Macmillan.
- Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press.
- Taylor, K. Y. (2016). *From #BlackLivesMatter to black liberation*. Haymarket Books.

*Weekly course readings will be made available on Sakai or in class as appropriate.*

### **Hip Hop Culture Communication Asset Mapping in Chicago**

As a crew, you will select one of these sites (on a first-come first-serve basis). Details of the assignment will be given to you and discussed in class.

- Tuesday night Open Mic 606 at Sub-T lounge in Wicker Park
- Tuesday Wordplay at Young Chicago Authors in Wicker Park/ Bucktown
- Project Logan graffiti wall project in Logan Square
- Gramophone Records in Lakeview or Hyde Park Records in Hyde Park

### **Hip Hop Culture in Chicago research interview transcription**

Each student will be given an audio file of a research interview that each student will be required to transcribe and type out in Word file. More details of the assignment will be given out in class. The transcripts will also be data and information your crew will incorporate into the final group presentation.

**Final individual paper guidelines:** 4 pages MAX (not including references, endnotes, appendices, or figures/ images) 12-point font, Times New Roman, Double-Spaced, 1-inch margins, page numbers and student name. Paper must include 6 outside sources (3 of these must be academic journal articles or books). APA or MLA citation. Keep to the page requirements and do not go over.

### **Grading Policy:**

Scale: A=93%+ A-=90+ B+=88+ B=84+ B-=80+ C+=77+ C=74+ C-=70+ D+=67+ D=64+ D-=60+ F=59-

'A' work signifies excellence in both design and implementation of work. This material can be considered outstanding and should be understood as far superior to the average effort. Simply completing the assignment prompt does not automatically constitute A quality work.

'B' work signifies above average work. Strong effort is involved and visible through clear organizational planning and attention to detail.

'C' work signifies average and adequate work. This grade is earned when material completes the minimum threshold of an assignment, even though conceptual, organizational or writing problems may exist.

'D' work signifies below average work. This is usually the product of either a substantial problem adhering to the nature of the assignment or a substantially problematic effort.

'F' work signifies an unacceptable level of work. This is usually the product of an incomplete assignment or a fundamental failure to engage the nature of the assignment.

### **In-Class Technology Rules:**

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today's technological culture, but they also can distract you from the class discussion and dampen participation. You may bring your laptops to class for note-taking and finding hip hop culture examples to bring up in class, but please refrain from browsing the internet, updating your Facebook profile, playing games, instant messaging, shopping, etc. Although you may think you are being discreet, 90% of the time students engaging in such behavior give themselves away (through inappropriate facial expressions, lack of eye contact, out of sync typing, etc.). Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. If you abuse this privilege, you will be marked absent for that class period and laptops may be banned from the classroom.

### **School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity:**

The penalties for academic dishonesty are a grade of F for the course and notification of the dean's office. All students must read the academic integrity policy of the [School of Communication](#). If you have questions concerning acceptable practice, consult with me prior to submitting your work. (1) Never present another person's work as your own. (2) Always provide full citation information for direct quotations. (3) Always provide full citation information when presenting the argument, interpretation, or claim of another, even if you are paraphrasing.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentiality to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

***This syllabus and the course schedule is subject to change by the instructor.***

Week 1 August 28: Introduction—Hip Hop Culture, Black Studies, Racial Justice, Youth, Urban Inequity, and Communicating Social Change

#### **Readings:**

Forbes article: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hughmcintyre/2017/07/17/hip-hoprb-has-now-become-the-dominant-genre-in-the-u-s-for-the-first-time/#537e63f15383>

Chicago Reader article: <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/hip-hop-rap-haters-chance-noname-saba-mensa-jenkins-community/Content?oid=24737750>

“i”—Owning up to our authentic selves, identity, privileges, oppressions.

“crews”—break out into your crews

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 2 readings.*

Week 2 September 4: Youth Culture and Hip Hop's Foundational Elements

**9/4: Labor Day--No Class**

#### **Readings:**

Kitwana, Bakari (2002) The New Black Youth Culture: The Emergence of the Hip-Hop

Generation

**In-class viewing**—Hip Hop Evolution: The Foundation

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 3 readings.*

Week 3 September 11: The Elephant in Our Country—RACE

**Readings:**

Neal, Mark Anthony (2004) No Time for Fake Niggas: Hip Hop Culture and the Authenticity Debates

Harrison, Anthony Kwame (2015) Hip-hop and racial identification: an (auto)ethnographic perspective

**Guest speaker: Mazi Matufa, Words, Beats, & Life.** <http://www.wblinc.org>

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 4 readings.*

Week 4 September 18: Where you from? Repping your Block, Set, Hood, & City

**Readings:**

Forman, Murray (2004) Represent: Race, Space, and Place in Rap Music

**In-class viewing**—Hip Hop Evolution: The Birth of Gangsta Rap

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 5 readings.*

Week 5 September 25: Sampling and Hip Hop Aesthetics

**Readings:**

Bartlett, Andrew (2004) Airshafts, Loudspeakers, and the Hip Hop Sample

George, Nelson (2004) Sample This

**Guest speaker: Pastor Phil Jackson, Tha Firehouse Community Arts Center:**

<https://www.thafirehouse.com>

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 6 readings.*

Week 6 October 2: Chi Hip Hop Culture Communication Asset Mapping Presentations

**Listen/ Observe/ Feel:**

Find a Chicago hip hop artist and listen, observe, feel the person/ group's artistic output and post a Sakai reflection. We will discuss your examples in our cypher.

**Monday and Wednesday:** Group presentations.

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 7 readings.*

Week 7 October 9: All things Kanye/ Yeezy/ Ye/ Mr. West/ Kardashian-related

**Readings:**

Curry, Thomas (2014) Pessimistic Themes in Kanye West's Necrophobic Aesthetic: Moving beyond Subjects of Perfection to Understand the New Slave as a Paradigm of Anti-Black Violence

**Listen/Watch:** To any Kanye albums, videos, performances, interviews, songs, production and reflect on this Chicagoan's impact

on hip hop and society—whether positive, negative, or confusing.

**10/9-10/10: Mid-Semester Break--No Class**

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 8 readings.*

Week 8 October 16: Storytelling hip hop and the Mainstream Media

**Readings:**

George, Nelson (1998) Hip Hop America introduction  
Chang, Jeff (2005) Becoming the Hip-Hop Generation: *The Source*, the industry  
and the Big Crossover

**Guest speakers: Damon Williams and Daniel Kisslinger, AirGo Radio:**

<https://airgoradio.com>

**Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> 7:00-10:00pm, Damen North Multipurpose Room.** Attend AirGo to Loyola live interview discussion and concert. AirGo hosts will also come into our class earlier in the day to present an arts, hip hop, and storytelling workshop.

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 9 readings.*

Week 9 October 23: The O.J. Story—Using Jay Z’s 4:44 to Talk about Hip Hop and Class

**Readings:**

Watkins, Craig (2004) Black Youth and the Ironies of Capitalism

**Listen:** to Jay-Z’s 4:44 album online through free streaming services or YouTube

**Thursday, October 26 5:00pm-6:30pm, Damen Den.** Attend and submit a Sakai reflection on: *A People’s History of Chicago* reading, hosted by author Kevin Coval.

**10/27: No Class due to Faculty Development obligation.**

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 10 readings.*

Week 10 October 30: Gendering and troubling hip hop’s misogyny

**Readings:**

Rose, Tricia (2008) “Hip Hop Demeans Women” and “Hip Hop is Not Responsible for Sexism”

**In-class viewing:** Beyond Beats and Rhymes

**Guest Speaker: Amina Norman-Hawkins, Artist, Educator, and Community**

**Builder:** <http://www.urbanizedmusic.com>

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 11 readings.*

Week 11 November 6: Multi-ethnicity, Diasporas, and the Global impact of hip hop

**Readings:**

-Wang, Oliver (2015) Introduction to Legions of Boom: Filipino American Mobile DJ Crews in the San Francisco Bay Area.

-Alim, H. Samy (2009) Straight Outta Compton, Straight Aus München: Global Linguistic Flows, Identities, and the Politics of Language in a Global Hip Hop Nation.

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Oliver Wang, Assoc. Prof. & music journalist.**  
<http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/sociology/faculty/dr-oliver-wang/>

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 12 readings.*

Week 12 November 13: Hip hop's political message and cultural resistance

**Readings:**

Dies, Christopher (2015) Hip-hop and politics  
Clay, Andreana (2012) Sampling Activism

**Guest Speaker: Miles Comiskey, Artist & Educator, Lane Tech High School and Happiness Club:** <http://www.thehappinessclub.com/home.html>

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 13 readings.*

Week 13 November 20: Hip Hop Saved My Life—Giving Thanks & Love

**Readings/ Listen/ Watch/ Feel:**

Anything hip hop related that had an impact on you personally. Post it and explain why, and be ready to discuss in our cypher as we ready ourselves for a week of giving thanks.

**11/22-11/25: Thanksgiving Holiday--No Class**

*Friday, submit reading reflection for Week 14 readings.*

Week 14 November 27: Hip Hop Education's Transformative Potential

**Readings:**

-Watson, Vajra (2012). #schoolismyhustle: a youth movement to transform education  
-Watson, Vajra (2016). Literacy Is a Civil Write: The Art, Science, and Soul of Transformative Classrooms

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Vajra Watson, UC Davis and Sacramento Area Youth Speaks:**  
<http://www.says.ucdavis.edu>

*Friday, submit by e-mail the title and artist of the hip hop music track that you feel personifies you in this current moment, current groove, current vibe...*

Week 15 December 4: Final Group Presentations and Outro

*Final group presentations and IDEA evaluations (please bring your laptop as we will reserve 10 minutes for the class to complete the course evaluation online).*

**Outro:** Allow me to (Re)introduce myself and Toward a Knowledge of Self...

**Final individual paper: Due Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> 5pm in my office Lewis Towers 909**