

SOC386H1S
New Topics in Sociology: SOCIOLOGY OF HIP HOP
Winter 2021

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Office hours: Fridays 12-2PM on Zoom

Lecture materials posted every Tuesday at 12PM

Teaching assistant: TBD

Email:

Office hours: TBD



Course Description

In this course, we'll cover hip hop's complex social history.¹ Hip hop has been understood, by different people at different times, as a means for artists and consumers to express resistance to racist social structures, as a practice of cultural emancipation, as a culture that perpetuates sexist stereotypes, and as a cultural practice that "holds Blacks back."

By learning about the origins and history of hip hop culture we can engage about debates about import and impact of hip hop music in social life. And, beyond that, you can practice media literacy skills to understand the social forces shaping your cultural environment.

PREREQUISITE (no exceptions): successful completion of 1 SOC credit at the 200 or higher level

¹ You do not have to come into this course with extensive knowledge about hip hop culture. Some familiarity with hip hop history will enhance your experience of the course's reading materials. I encourage listening to the musical artists who are repeatedly mentioned in the course readings, if you aren't already familiar with them. There are student discounts for Spotify and Tidal. Take advantage of them if you haven't already!

<https://support.tidal.com/hc/en-us/articles/360002669818-Student-Discount>

<https://support.spotify.com/us/article/student-discount/>

What you can expect to do throughout this course:

- 1) Gain familiarity with hip hop history and scholarship
- 2) Develop your critical media literacy by applying sociological concepts to hip hop culture
- 3) Practice sociological research methods and analysis

What you can expect from me:

- 1) I will contextualize and explain the core contributions of the course readings in lecture
- 2) I will create assignments and test questions based on the assigned course readings
- 3) I will reply to messages in a timely manner during weekdays

What I expect of you

- 1) That you read all assigned readings every week before viewing the lecture
- 2) That you acknowledge and intend to meet reading schedule and assignment deadlines set out in this syllabus

Reading Materials

You do not need to buy any books for this course.

All reading materials are available through Quercus, links provided on this syllabus, and the University of Toronto's Library website.

The Culture of Our Virtual Classroom: Questions and Discussions

My intention for discussion boards on Quercus is two-fold:

- 1) To recreate a kind of classroom environment where you can seek clarification on the course content
- 2) to create a sense of community in the course

Each week, there will be a discussion thread to discuss the readings and lecture materials. You may use this space to ask me questions, to me and your peers, about the course content. If you have a question about the readings or the lecture, please consider posting your questions in these public discussion threads rather than privately. I hope that this space will support your learning and help you feel that you are not learning alone. If one of your peers poses a question you think you can answer, you are welcome to reply to your peers before I do. You may also use this space to simply share your reflections on that week's course materials.

You will **NOT** be graded on your participation in online discussions.

Regular Office Hours

I will hold regular office hours on Fridays from 12-2PM on Zoom. I expect that you have gone through the assigned readings and lecture materials for the week before this time each week. Students may participate in my office hours through audio or text-based forms of communication provided by Zoom

You will have to sign into Zoom using your UofT student account here: <https://utoronto.zoom.us>

OFFICE HOURS LINK: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/4337147437> **Password: sociology**

Assignments

February 8-10 Early Assessment (Available for 48 hours) — Short Answer Quiz (20%)

February 26 Assignment 1 Due — 1,000-word Lyrical Analysis 20%

March 26 Assignment 2 Due — 2,000-word Content Analysis 30%

April 19-22 Final Assessment (Available for 72 hours) — Multiple Choice, Short Answer 30%

Note about submission file types: You *must* submit assignments in either docx, doc, rtf or pdf formats.

Citation Style

All assignments are to be completed in ASA

<https://www.utoronto.ca/twc/sites/utoronto.ca/twc/files/resource-files/ASA.pdf>

Note: it is NOT necessary to include an abstract on your assignment submission)

Note about plagiarism: Don't do it. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the "[Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#)"). If you are using somebody else's ideas, do not present them as your own, whether you are quoting exact words, paraphrasing or summarizing. Use quotation marks if you are quoting.

Deadlines and Extensions

I expect you to do your best to adhere to the deadlines set out in this syllabus. I understand that our lives can be chaotic. However, if you fail to follow the following guidelines, 10% will be deducted each weekday after the due date.

If you are not able to meet a deadline for a course assignment or assessment, you **MUST DO TWO THINGS.**

- ❖ First, "declare an absence" in ACORN (for more info: <https://help.acorn.utoronto.ca/blog/uFAQs/declare-an-absence/>).
- ❖ Second, email me to notify me that you've declared an absence on ACORN (at: taylor.price@mail.utoronto.ca).

- ❖ Third, make sure you have done *both* and not just one.

Late penalties will not apply for students who have followed the above guidelines. 10% will be deducted each weekday after the due date.

Accessibility Services

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. I promise to work with you and UofT's Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course.

Course Schedule

JANUARY 26 — Sketching Hip Hop as Genre & Culture

Watkins, S. Craig. 2001. "A Nation of Millions: Hip Hop Culture and the Legacy of Black Nationalism." *The Communication Review* 4(3):373–98. doi: [10.1080/10714420109359475](https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420109359475).

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*: Introduction (p.xi-xvi); Chapter 1 "Voices from the Margins: Rap Music and Contemporary Black Cultural Production" (p.1-20). <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?12100728&uuid=3f44d8dd-67ad-47fa-bf9f-7652b10c4e65>

Lena, Jennifer. 2012. *Banding Together*: Chapter 1 "Music Genres" (p.1-22); Chapter 2 "Three Musics, Four Genres: Rap, Bluegrass, and Bebop Jazz" (p.27-64). <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?8837774&uuid=035138df-4999-4a7c-95f6-8f349a3b91cb>

SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEO

Big Fun in the Big Town. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kSsqWNSQqs>

FEBRUARY 2 — The incident at 66.6 FM b/w War at 33 1/3

McWhorter, John. 2003. "How Hip-Hop Holds Blacks Back." *City Journal* 133(3):66–75. <https://www.city-journal.org/html/how-hip-hop-holds-blacks-back-12442.html>

Morgan, Joan. 1995. "Fly-Girls, Bitches, and Hoes: Notes of a Hip-Hop Feminist." *Social Text* (45):151–57. doi: [10.2307/466678](https://doi.org/10.2307/466678).

Rose, Tricia. 2008. *The Hip Hop Wars*. Chapter 11 "Mutual Denials in the Hip Hop Wars" (p.217-240) <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?13478591&uuid=11aa1c78-3e68-4f91-a780-ade7c9353444>

SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEOS

MTV Documentary on Gangsta Rap. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOZhVwxwqp8>

FEBRUARY 9 — Learning from Lyrics

***Early assessment February 8-10 Early Assessment (Available for 48 hours)* 3 short answer questions
20% of final grade**

Allen, Tennille Nicole, and Antonia Randolph. 2020. "Listening for the Interior in Hip-Hop and R&B Music." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6(1):46–60. doi: [10.1177/2332649219866470](https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649219866470).

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1903. "Of the Sorrow Songs." in *The Souls of Black Folk* Chapter 14
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm#chap14>

Owens, Matthew. 2009. "A 'Man's Woman'?: Contradictory Messages in the Songs of Female Rappers, 1992-2000." *Journal of Black Studies* 39(5):786–802. doi: [10.1177/0021934707302454](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934707302454).

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Abrams, Nathan D. 1995. "Antonio's B-boys: Rap, Rappers, and Gramsci's Intellectuals." *Popular Music and Society* 19(4):1–19. doi: [10.1080/03007769508591604](https://doi.org/10.1080/03007769508591604).

Chaney, Cassandra, and Krista D. Mincey. 2014. "Typologies of Black Male Sensitivity in R&B and Hip Hop." *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 1(1):121–56.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1503127177/abstract/8D316751227D4309PQ/7>

Skeggs, Beverley. 1993. "Two Minute Brother: Contestation through Gender, 'Race' and Sexuality." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 6(3):299–322. doi: [10.1080/13511610.1993.9968358](https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1993.9968358).

Owens, Matthew. 2016. "'We Stick Out Like a Sore Thumb . . .': Underground White Rappers' Hegemonic Masculinity and Racial Evasion." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(3):372–86. doi: [10.1177/2332649215617781](https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649215617781).

Hunter, Margaret, and Kathleen Soto. 2009. "Women of Color in Hip Hop: The Pornographic Gaze." *Race, Gender & Class* 16(1/2):170–91. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41658866>

FEBRUARY 16 — READING WEEK — No Lecture

FEBRUARY 23 — Hip Hop & Authenticity

***Assignment 1 Due February 26* 20% of final grade**

Gibson, Michael. 2014. "'That's Hip-Hop to Me!': Race, Space, and Temporal Logics of Authenticity in Independent Cultural Production." *Poetics* 46:38–55. doi: [10.1016/j.poetic.2014.09.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.09.002).

McLeod, K. 1999. "Authenticity within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation." *Journal of Communication* 49(4):134–50. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02821.x>.

Harkness, Geoff. 2012. "True School: Situational Authenticity in Chicago's Hip-Hop Underground." *Cultural Sociology* 6(3):283–98. doi: [10.1177/1749975511401276](https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975511401276).

MARCH 2 — Social Science & Hip Hop

Kelley, Robin. 2004. "Looking for the 'Real' N****: Social Scientists Construct the Ghetto." Pp. 119–34 in *That's the Joint!* New York: Routledge. [https://www.taylorfrancis.com/myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/chapters/looking-real-nigga-social-scientists-construct-ghetto-murray-forman-mark-anthony-neal/10.4324/9780203642191-22](https://www.taylorfrancis.com/myaccess/library/utoronto.ca/chapters/looking-real-nigga-social-scientists-construct-ghetto-murray-forman-mark-anthony-neal/10.4324/9780203642191-22)

Lee, Jooyoung. 2009. "Battlin' on the Corner: Techniques for Sustaining Play." *Social Problems* 56(3):578–98. doi: [10.1525/sp.2009.56.3.578](https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.3.578).

Lena, Jennifer C. 2006. "Social Context and Musical Content of Rap Music, 1979–1995." *Social Forces* 85(1):479–95. doi: [10.1353/sof.2006.0131](https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0131).

MARCH 9 — Lyrics, Law, & Injustice

Killer Mike. 2019. Foreword to *Rap on Trial*.

Nielson, Erik, and Andrea L. Dennis. 2019. *Rap on Trial: Race, Lyrics, and Guilt in America*. Chapter 1

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO

Jooyoung Lee. 2012. *Guns, Rap, Crime* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUEoh2U6E5M>

MARCH 16 — Tracing Hip Hop's Historical & Social Trajectories

Engels, Dustin. 2014. "Baadassss Gangstas: The Parallel Influences, Characteristics and Criticisms of the Blaxploitation Cinema and Gangsta Rap Movements." *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 1(1):62–80.

Morgan, Marcyliena, and Dionne Bennett. 2011. "Hip-Hop & the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form." *Daedalus* 140(2):176–96.

Hunter, Margaret, and Alhelí Cuenca. 2017. "Nicki Minaj and the Changing Politics of Hip-Hop: Real Blackness, Real Bodies, Real Feminism?" *Feminist Formations* 29(2):26–46. doi: [10.1353/ff.2017.0015](https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2017.0015).

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO

Forty Years of Hip Hop featuring KRS-ONE. Available: <https://youtu.be/REpSdgORU5A>

MARCH 23 — Hip Hop & the Social World

***Assignment 2 due March 26 * 30% of final grade**

Bramwell, Richard, and James Butterworth. 2019. "‘I Feel English as Fuck’: Translocality and the Performance of Alternative Identities through Rap." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42(14):2510–27. doi: [10.1080/01419870.2019.1623411](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1623411).

Oware, Matthew. 2014. "(Un)Conscious (Popular) Underground: Restricted Cultural Production and Underground Rap Music." *Poetics* 42:60–81. doi: [10.1016/j.poetic.2013.12.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.12.001).

Janssen, Susanne, Marc Verboord, and Giselinde Kuipers. 2011. "Comparing Cultural Classification: High and Popular Arts in European and U.S. Elite Newspapers, 1955-2005." *Kölner Zeitschrift Für Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie* 63(51):139–68.

MARCH 30: Proofing Themes + Review for Final Assessment

APRIL: 19-22

****Final Assessment period (Available for 72 hours)* 30% of final grade***