SOC380H1F
New Topics in Sociology: SOCIOLOGY OF HIP HOP
Fall 2025
Schedule: TH 3:10-5pm
Location: See ACORN
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Introduction

What is Hip Hop? How does a sociological lens enhance our understanding of Hip Hop?

This is a "mash up" course. Like musical mash ups that blend different—and often quite distinct—musical genres together, this course will bring together different research traditions in Hip Hop studies *and* Sociology. This pairing will produce a nice dialogue between complementary fields of research.

I have two goals for you in this course:

(1) I want to give you a basic footing in *some* Hip Hop scholarship;
(2) I want to show you how a sociological lens can help us better understand and analyze Hip Hop culture.

Please keep in mind that this is *not* a comprehensive study of Hip Hop culture. Although we will spend time reading and thinking about different dimensions of Hip Hop culture, most of our substantive focus will be spent on MCing (rapping). Although breakin '(aka "Bboying/Bgirling"), graffiti art, and turntablism will make cameo appearances throughout our course, there is simply not enough time in a 12-week course to really delve into all "4 elements" of Hip Hop culture.

Also, please keep in mind that you do not have to be a seasoned Hip Hop fan or practitioner to do well in this course. While a basic familiarity with Hip Hop is always welcomed and may enhance our in-class discussions, I have designed the course so that the devout Hip Hop "head" and newcomer can both thrive and walk

away with fresh insights from the course. In other words, much like Hip Hop culture, this course is designed for everyone.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Dyson, Michael Eric. 2019. *Jay – Z: Made in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Lee, Jooyoung. 2016. *Blowin Up: Rap Dreams in South Central*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nielson, Erik & Andrea Dennis. 2019. *Rap on Trial: Race, Lyrics, and Guilt in America*. New York: The New Press.

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Wesleyan: Wesleyan Press.

NOTE: The prerequisite for SOC380H1F is successful completion of 1.0 SOC at the 200 or higher level. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

Important Health Resources

In case you don't know, here is information for the Health & Wellness Centre at U of T. The link gives an overview of the many different services available to you as students (e.g. wellness workshops, 1 on 1 counselling): https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/mental-health-care/

To book a virtual appointment, you can call 416-978-8030 or use their online booking system to do so.

Email

I can be reached via email: jooy.lee@utoronto.ca. I will do my best to respond within two business days.

Office Hours

Also, I'm available for open office hours **by appointment only.** Office hours will be held on Discord, which is a free messaging app. Please just download the app and then create an account with your name and email me to set up appointments.

Assignments

You will have 4 major grades for this course, which add up to 100% of your final grade
(the research paper will be discussed in class):

1) in-class midterm (25%)
2) creative project (30%)
3) in-class final (25%)
4) 4 in-class pop quizzes 5% x 4 = (20%)

The pop quizzes will be short, in-class assignments. During these assignments, I will play you a video clip or music. You will then write a short response piece (1 paragraph) on how the multimedia might connect with one of the themes that we have covered in class. These assignments are designed for you to make some connections between readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. Make-ups for these impromptu assignments will **NOT** be accepted. I will only make exceptions for students who provide me and the TA with email and medical documentation *before* the class in which quizzes are given.

Plagiarism: Avoid plagiarism. It 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. Give proper references if you are using somebody else's ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference--you are not going to be penalized for that.

Turnitin

Sometimes, students will be required to submit their assignments to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq).

We may be using Turnitin for some assignments. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Turnitin is integrated into Quercus. To learn more about Turnitin's privacy policy please review its Privacy Policy.

Students not wishing their assignment to be submitted through Turnitin will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

Generative AI

In this course, you may use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and GitHub Copilot, as learning aids and to do preliminary research on a topic. However, your primary sources of information for this course ought to come directly from readings and lecture. While some generative AI tools are currently available for free in Canada, please be warned that these tools have not been vetted by the University of Toronto and might not meet University guidelines or requirements for privacy, intellectual property, security, accessibility, and records retention. Generative AI may also produce content which is incorrect or misleading, or inconsistent with the expectations of this course. These tools may even provide citations to

sources that don't exist. Submitting work with false citations is an academic offense. These tools may be subject to service interruptions, software modifications, and pricing changes during the semester.

Generative AI is not required to complete any aspect of this course, and I caution you to not rely entirely on these tools for research. Our course will put a heavy emphasis on consulting primary sources, which will require you to provide in-depth citations for ideas gleaned from texts. Instead, I recommend treating generative AI as a supplementary tool only for preliminary research. Ultimately, you (and not any AI tool) are responsible for your own learning in this course, and for all the work you submit for credit. It is your responsibility to critically evaluate the content generated, and to regularly assess your own learning independent of generative AI tools. Overreliance on generative AI may give you a false sense of how much you've actually learned, which can lead to poor performance on assignments. Additionally, for each assignment you must submit a verbal and/or written log of how you used AI tools, which includes prompts and explanations of how you used AI. Assignments that do not specify these details will lose marks.

Late Assignments

Missed deadlines and tests: Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one of the following:**

Absence declaration via ACORN (**can only be used once during the semester**)
U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

Note: I do not permit make up marks for pop-quizzes or tutorial attendance/participation unless there are extenuating circumstances. I reserve the right with Tas to review such requests. Also, to ensure the integrity of assignments, I do not accept late assignments after marks have been handed back for said assignment.

Accessibility Services: If you have documentation that you are using accessibility services, please contact accessibility as soon as possible and have them contact me and the TA. We are willing to help. We just need to be in regular contact with your accessibility person.

A Note on Emailing: When emailing a professor, you should include a titled salutation (e.g. "Dear," "Greetings," "Hello"), their title (e.g. "Professor", "Dr.") and name of the person you are contacting, a signoff (e.g. "thanks", "sincerely," "best", etc.), and, of course, your own first and last name and student #. Please allow two business days for a response. I will not respond to emails that do not follow these guidelines.

1. September 8: Welcome!

2. September 15: Hip Hop Foundations

George, Nelson. 1998. *Hip Hop America* Intro-Ch.1
Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black* Noise. Introduction-Ch. 1
Perry, Imani. 2004. *Prophets of the Hood* Introduction-Ch.1

3. September 22: Rap as Resistance?

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise.* Ch. 4

Morgan, Joan. 1995. "Fly-Girls, Bitches, and Hoes: Notes of a Hip-Hop Feminist." *Social Text*
45: 151-157.

4. September 29: The Social World of Breaking

Schloss, Joseph. 2009. *Foundation*. Ch. 1-3

5. October 5: The Social World of Breaking 2

Schloss, Joseph. 2009. *Foundation*. Ch. 4-6

6. October 12: MIDTERM

7. October 19: Where Queens & Brooklyn At?

Selections from *Queens Reigns Supreme* by Ethan Brown
Biggie: I Got a Story to Tell (on Netflix)
Selections from *Jay Z* by Michael Eric Dyson

8. October 26: Gangsta, Gangsta

Selections from *Original Gangstas* by Ben Westhoff.
Kelley, Robin. "Kickin 'Reality, Kickin 'Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles" in *Race Rebels*.

******NO CLASS OCTOBER 27-31 READING WEEK******

9. November 5: The LA Underground

Morgan, Marcyliena. 2009. *The Real Hip Hop* Intro-Ch.2
"This is the Life" by Ava Duvernay (Netflix)

CREATIVE PROJECT DUE THIS WEEK

10. November 12: Project Blowed
Lee, Jooyoung. 2016. *Blowin Up.* Intro-Ch.4

11. November 19: Project Blowed part 2

Lee, Jooyoung. 2016. *Blowin Up.* Ch. 5-Methods Appendix
Lee, Jooyoung. 2016. "The King of Compton." *Contexts*

12. November 26: FINAL