

BELLEVUE COLLEGE  
SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL & ETHNIC STUDIES  
**CES 210: Ethnic Experiences in Art & Music**  
**HIP-HOP THEORY & CULTURE**

**Syllabus**

*“Beyond the walls of intelligence life is defined...”*

--Nas

**Instructor:** Dr. Daudi Abe

**Quarter:** Spring 2014

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**Course Description:** Hip-hop culture, and rap music in particular, has emerged as the signature medium for transformative expression in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Today hip-hop culture is firmly entrenched within the larger global community. Music, entertainment, fashion, politics, and education are just some of the areas that have become increasingly influenced by hip-hop culture.

This course strives to identify and critically examine the theoretical foundations of hip-hop culture and rap music. Through a rigorous interrogation of the evolution within this genre, students will develop a clear understanding of the conceptual fundamentals of hip-hop philosophy and the community from which it originated. Further consideration will be given to the implications that the background, music, style, and influence of the hip-hop generation have upon a multicultural nation and world.

**Course Objective:** Since the 1970s, rap music has grown into a steady and undeniable voice of protest, change and celebration for young people worldwide. What gives this art form added significance, however, is that it was created, authored, and today is still dominated primarily by young African American males, who have perennially maintained a status as one of the most disenfranchised groups in the short history of the United States. Rap music and hip-hop culture have provided a platform of expression with mass appeal that has given a voice to a segment of

society often left silent. This course will employ the transformative nature of hip-hop culture as a lens for teaching and learning about how important issues such as race, gender and class affect people's lives. The use of this particular lens in approaching these problems will attempt to promote further development of critical analysis and thinking skills within the student, which is the primary goal of this course.

**Student Outcomes:** The United States is highly unique in the incredible amount of racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity it possesses. Thus, it is imperative that its citizens possess the willingness and ability to relate to and understand individuals with different backgrounds. The inclusive nature and broad appeal of hip-hop culture and rap music make it an ideal conceptual tool to explore the dynamics of oppression within society at large. A successful student in this course will:

1. Increase his or her skill development in critical thinking, reading, and writing
2. Further her or his knowledge base of social issues and ideas within an increased frame of reference
3. Develop the ability to sort and decode messages of transformation and oppression
4. Become familiar with the role and contributions of hip-hop culture to humanity
5. Understand his or her own place as a potential difference maker and positive contributor in the world

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND POINT VALUES**

- Class Discussion & Participation-----500 points
- Music Journals-----150 points
- Reflection/Response Papers-----350 points
- Midterm Exam-----100 points
- Final Research Paper-----100 points
- Final Paper Presentation-----100 points

## **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**1. Class Discussion and Participation:** All students are expected to participate in the course regularly. Failure to do so can have an adverse affect on a student's ability to remain informed and connected to the inner workings of the course. During the class it is the student's responsibility to keep a critical eye and ear tuned to the materials presented and topics discussed. Assigned readings should be completed in advance of the time they appear on the course calendar.

**In order to earn full participation credit for the week, each student must post initial discussion comments and questions on the week's material by Wednesday (with the exception of the first week of the quarter).**

**In addition, each student must engage in class discussions by posting at least five (5) responses to classmate's postings by the end of the week (Sunday evening.) AND PLEASE NOTE, simply saying "Yes, I agree with you" and "I disagree with you" are not sufficient responses to a post. Back up your points, arguments and opinions by citing course readings and/or your personal experiences.**

**2. Music Journal:** Students will complete 2 Music Journals from 2 audio textbooks containing selected rap artists and songs. The content of this discography comes with two purposes. One is to highlight songs and artists that made original and significant contributions to hip-hop music and culture. The second purpose is to use the music to gain insight into what the important issues of that particular period were, both for hip-hop culture as well as the greater world. Each disc/folder will feature songs that require the student to listen, reflect, and complete brief journal entries for each track. **Journal entries should be approximately 1-3 paragraphs for each song and must include a mixture of summary, critical analysis, and opinion and reaction, and quotes from the song to receive full credit.** Each journal should be turned in as a single document. Lyrics can be found using a variety of internet sources, including [www.rapgenius.com](http://www.rapgenius.com).

**NOTE:** Be aware that your connection speed may impact your ability to listen to songs and view video online.

**3. Reflection/Response Papers:** Throughout the quarter students will interact with various materials focusing on past, current, and future issues involving hip-hop culture, as well as related points. Students will prepare assigned responses to these portions of the curriculum that will generally range between 2-4 pages. Not simply a summary, these assignments are exercises in critical evaluation and discussion on the part of the student.

**NOTE: Inclusion of references and/or quotes from assigned course readings is required in order to earn full credit on these assignments.**

**4. Mid-Term Exam:** Details TBA (To Be Announced)

**5. Final Research Project:** Instead of a final exam each student must select a topic within the hip-hop field and prepare a 6-9 page research paper on it. This could include, for example, a live hip-hop related event or an investigation into a local hip-hop element. **ALL TOPICS MUST BE CLEARED THROUGH THE INSTRUCTOR.** The essay must include four (4) sections:

**OUTLINE FOR FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

SECTION 1:

- Introduction
- A statement of relevance as to why this topic is worthy of this assignment and how it relates to hip-hop culture
- Brief statement on how you will conduct your research

SECTION 2

- Inclusion and discussion of quotes from at least 4 (four) outside sources covering what was said and/or written about your topic (APA or MLA citation style acceptable)

SECTION 3:

- Critically analyze your research topic
- Did your experience match your expectations?
- How was hip-hop culture presented in what you researched?
- What cultural symbols were present in your research, and what did each symbol represent in your view?

SECTION 4:

- Full citation of all sources included in the paper (APA or MLA reference style acceptable).

**Be sure to label each section, include a cover page, spell check, correct grammar, etc. The grading rubric that will be used to score the exam is included at the end of the syllabus.**

**6. Research Paper Presentation:** Each student will be responsible for creating a 5-8 slide multimedia presentation based on your final research topic to the class at the end of the quarter. These presentations will be on display during the last week of class.

**All assignments must be typed, double spaced (music journals can be single spaced), spell checked, and submitted in a timely manner. Late assignments will receive only half credit unless prior arrangements are made.**

**All headings on written assignments must include the following:**

Student's Full Name

Course Title and Number

Date Submitted

A short, concise, and meaningful title

**NOTE:** There may be language in some course materials that some people might find objectionable. Be that as it may, I wish to state that I feel the issues discussed within these materials are important enough to the culture of the course to warrant this exercise of my discretion.

- **All reading, viewing and listening materials will be available on the course website.**

## **COURSE CALENDAR**

### **WEEK 1:**

**Reading:** Week 1 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #1: Music Autobiography

### **WEEK 2:**

**Reading:** Week 2 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #2: The Beginnings of Hip-Hop

### **WEEK 3:**

**Reading:** Week 3 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Music Journal #1

### **WEEK 4:**

**Reading:** Week 4 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #3: The Crack Epidemic

### **WEEK 5:**

Mid-Term Exam

WEEK 6:

**Reading:** Week 6 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #4: The West Coast

WEEK 7:

**Reading:** Week 7 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Music Journal #2

WEEK 8:

**Reading:** Week 8 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #5: Gender & Hip-Hop

WEEK 9:

**Reading:** Week 9 Course Readings

**Assignment:** Reflection Paper #6: Seattle Hip-Hop

WEEK 10:

Final Paper Presentations

**Criteria used for evaluating Final Research Paper in**  
**CES 210 Ethnic Experiences in Art & Music**

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1. The extent to which your paper is organized into sections and labeled according to the outline provided in the course syllabus.

Rating	0	10	20
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2. The extent to which your paper incorporates outside research, theory, and/or established opinions of others.

Rating	0	10	20
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3. The extent to which you critically discuss and review your selected topic.

Rating	0	10	20
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4. The extent to which you properly cite and give credit for the ideas of the authors and researchers that are incorporated into your paper.

Rating	0	10	20
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5. The extent to which your paper is properly presented (including a cover page, use of 12-point font, double spacing, use of correct grammar, proofing, and spelling).

Rating	0	10	20
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TOTAL POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 100



## **CES 210: Ethnic Experiences in Art & Music**

### **Grade Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Qtr/Year Spring 2014

1. Attendance & Participation \_\_\_\_\_ 500 points

2. Music Journals \_\_\_\_\_ 150 points

3. Reflection/Response Papers \_\_\_\_\_ 350 points

4. Mid-Term Exam \_\_\_\_\_ 100 points

5. Final Research Paper \_\_\_\_\_ 100 points

6. Final Paper Presentation \_\_\_\_\_ 100 points

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_ 1300 points

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

## **PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION**

Revised Summer 2007

### **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing\***

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services.

### **Incomplete**

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").

### **F Grade**

Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."

### **Final Examination Schedule**

The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times. Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be present at any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.

### **Withdrawal From Class**

College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.

## **Hardship Withdrawal**

Instructors may assign the grade of “HW” (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

## **Students Who Require Disability Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are encouraged to meet with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DSS office will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter. Students who require accommodation in class should review the DSS accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.

Students with mobility challenges who may need assistance in case of an emergency situation or evacuation should register with Disability Support Services, and review those needs with the instructor as well.

## **Distribution of Grades**

Grades will not be posted in the Social Science Division or in faculty offices, and secretaries will not give out grades. Students should access their grades through the BC Web site.

## **Return of Papers and Tests**

Paper and/or Scantron score sheet returns will be arranged in the following ways ONLY: by mail, if student supplies the instructor with stamped, self-addressed envelope (with appropriate postage); or by the instructor designating a time and place whereby the student may retrieve his/her papers. Unclaimed papers and/or Scantron score sheets must be kept by the instructor for a minimum of sixty (60) instructional days following the end of the quarter.

\*If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.