

Fall 2013
The University at Buffalo
Department of Transnational Studies, Clemens 732

Hip-Hop and Social Issues

AAS 117

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9:00 – 9:50 AM

Section: JD

Norton 214

North Campus

Course Syllabus

CONTENTS

Instructor Information	2
Required Course Texts	2
Course Description	2-3
Course Aims	3
Course Objectives, Outcomes, and Assessment Methods	3-5
Instructor's Responsibilities and Teaching Philosophy	5
Course Policies	(Appendix I)
Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading Criteria	(Appendix II)
Snapshot of Weekly Requirements	7
Grading Policies and Expectations	7-9
Course Content	9-10
Tentative Course Schedule	11-15
Suggested Readings and Bibliography	15-16
Appendix I	17-21
Appendix II	22-30

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Justin De Senso
Office: 1002 Clemens Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 – 11:00 AM and by appointment
Email Address: jmdesens@buffalo.edu
Online class forum: URL to be announced

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

-  Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2010. Print. (2012 version is OK as well)
-  Butler, Paul. *Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice*. New York: New Press, 2009. Print.
-  Ogbar, Jeffrey O. G. *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. Print.
-  Rose, Tricia. *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop—and Why It Matters*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2008. Print.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine hip-hop's place in America and the world. We will begin the course with a simple question: Where does hip-hop¹ come from? To answer this, we will place hip-hop in its larger historical and political contexts. We will visit hip-hoppers in a 1970s New York City and then trace its history from the Jim Crow South to Kingston, Jamaica and then forward to the supposed end of the civil rights era. We will think through the implications of hip-hop's addiction to James Brown, misogyny, and all-things keepin' it real. We will listen for hip-hop's African and African American sonic roots while placing hip-hop in its present context as a world cultural movement. We will then move to issues of social justice and mass incarceration²—phenomenon that hip-hoppers have been hell-bent on addressing and bringing to bear in their politics since the very beginning.

¹ In the broadest sense, **hip-hop** is the (global) historical child of the so-called postwar context of urban “renewal,” structural adjustment, deindustrialization, law-and-order rhetoric, “benign neglect” via Patrick Moynihan and Richard Nixon, and the rise of neoliberalism. In the most-narrow sense, **hip-hop** is an urban movement of mostly African American and Latino peoples that developed in the South Bronx, New York in the mid-1970s in response the evacuation of the social safety net amid a metropolitan terrain of abandonment and disrepair. **Hip-hop**, therefore, can be understood as a culture of hope and solidarity in the face of both local and global structures that perpetually keep the fruits of equality, justice, and egalitarian liberalism out of reach. Furthermore, **hip-hop** is grounded in four main creative expressions: 1) rapping or MC'ing; 2) graffiti art; 3) b-boying or b-girling; and 4) DJing. Our definition of **hip-hop** will encompass all of the above to the end of interrogating **hip-hop** as a culture, form of resistance, political orientation, and reflection of both local and global responses to corporate capitalism, white supremacy, practices of injustice, and all of their influences on democracy, cultural production, and social justice.

² An unprecedented phenomenon exclusive to late-twentieth and early twenty-first century America, **mass incarceration** is a current buzzword that intimates the larger and more complex political economy colloquially known as the “prison industrial complex.” With roots in Lyndon B. Johnson's 1963 legislation to address civil rights movement unrest, **mass incarceration** is mostly the result of the following tragic calculus: 1) law-and-order based policing beginning in the mid-1960s and accelerated after each subsequent decade—the 1990s as “high” water mark; 2) the rise of Richard Nixon's “War on Drugs” under Ronald Reagan's presidency; 3) a racist and bias justice system as seen in policing, sentencing, prosecutorial power, jury selection, and Supreme

To get at these and other ideas, we will focus on the following course questions: Considering its roots, how and why has hip-hop changed over the past 40 years? What does this change reveal about our world and our future? And what does hip-hop’s presence in the world tell us about race, class, gender, and American culture? We will pay special attention to the changing roles of race, class, gender, and nation as seen in hip-hop’s relationship to resistance as well as struggle for a more equal and just present.

COURSE AIMS

A graduate of this course will:

- Develop critical thinking skills, research skills, and media literacy;
- Hone oral presentation, writing, and group-work skills;
- Gain an appreciation for historical inquiry as a way to better understand the present and assess its potential to affect the future; and
- Be able to better analyze and recognize hip-hop’s social, cultural, and transnational complexities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT METHODS

By the end of the course, students should be able to...	Method of assessment & evaluation...
Determine and specify the real life consequences of race, gender, and class as seen in American and global hip-hop	Pre- and post-course (ungraded) essay examination (the latter being the final exam) in order to assess incoming and outgoing analytical competencies and knowledge in which students must respond to fundamental course questions (Demonstration of improved knowledge and analytical skills = outcome achieved)
Question and critique the limitations of master discourses that undergird racial, cultural, and social understandings or “common sense”	Robust, weekly class Participation as well as Group and Final Presentations that identify and analyze weekly course texts and questions. (Successful participation and presentations that fully answers presentation prompt questions and situates them within overarching themes = outcome achieved)
Construct analyses of—as well as recognize —hip-hop culture and music as racially fraught historical “texts,” political economies, and representations of material	A mid-term and final exam in which students must demonstrate their ability to explicate both concrete and theoretical implications for the problems and issues

Court decisions with roots in over a century of our raced criminal justice system; 4) transformation of American police forces into paramilitary units; and 5) the erosion of 4th Amendment rights. For the purposes of our class, we will contextualize hip-hop culture alongside the above tragic calculus in order to pay close attention to the “social issues” part of the course title.

<p>conditions</p>	<p>that hip-hop addresses, creates, reflects, and resists. (Students must offer novel, cited explanations for exam questions and successfully synthesize course readings to support their argument = outcome achieved)</p>
<p>Recognize and explain hip-hop's political, social, economic, and ideological significance throughout history</p>	<p>Forum posts and quizzes that hold students accountable for readings as well as assess their grasp of each week's key concepts. Posts and quizzes will also evaluate reading comprehension and their overall understanding of the central conceptual threads and connections between course materials. (Student answers post and quiz questions accurately and offers substantive analysis in regard to assigned reading = outcomes achieved)</p>
<p>Analyze and interpret the merits of hip-hop scholarship as an interdisciplinary and insurgent field of inquiry (Option 1)</p> <p>Analyze and interpret the culture of hip-hop as a significant representation of transnational, political, racial, and socioeconomic realities (Option 2)</p>	<p>Students must write two book reviews at 4 – 5 pages each <u>or</u> one research paper at 10 – 12 pages.</p> <p>Book reviews must summarize and critique a scholarly work related to course materials. Book reviews must pinpoint and discuss the author's central argument use of evidence. Book reviews must also demonstrate an understanding of key course concepts and connect to real world social issues. (Student must meet minimum requirements articulated in the syllabus as well as deliver a coherent argument supported by good reasons and sound evidence while engaging with and expanding central course questions = outcome achieved)</p> <p>Students must construct a final research paper of 10 – 12 pages that answers a central student-generated research question. The student must conduct original research, address a key issue of race, class, gender, or identity in hip-hop, and demonstrate an understanding of theoretical course concepts. (Student must meet minimum requirements articulated in</p>

	the syllabus as well as deliver a coherent argument supported by good reasons and sound evidence while engaging with and expanding central course questions = outcome achieved)
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INSTRUCTOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES & TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Above all, I am committed to you as a student, learner, human being, and member of our classroom’s intellectual community. This means that I will do my best to ensure that my methods, assignments, assessments, and class activities are meeting and exceeding the course aims, objectives, and outcomes. I use diverse learning modules while adhering to an ethos of “asking the right questions.” To discover and find such questions, I maintain a high level of rigor in thinking, reading, and writing—all to the ends of getting a full sense of the historical, cultural, social, economic, and political contexts that we strive to understand.

COURSE POLICIES

Code of Conduct

See Appendix I below under “CODE OF CONDUCT.”

My Plagiarism Policy

See Appendix I below under “MY PLAGIARISM POLICY.”

Attendance Policy

See Appendix I below under “ATTENDANCE POLICY.”

Submission of Assignments

See Appendix I below under “SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS.”

Late Work

See Appendix I below under “LATE WORK.”

Make-up Work

See Appendix I below under “MAKE-UP WORK.”

Extra-credit Work

See Appendix I below under “EXTRA-CREDIT WORK.”

Email

See Appendix I below under “EMAIL.”

Change in Class-size OR Enrollment

See Appendix I below under “CHANGE IN CLASS-SIZE OR ENROLLMENT”

UB’s Academic Integrity Policy

See Appendix I below under “UB’S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY.”

Students with Disabilities

See Appendix I below under “STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.”

UB’s Policy on Incomplete (“I”) Grades

See Appendix I below under “UB’S POLICY ON INCOMPLETE (“I”) GRADES.”

My Grading Philosophy

See Appendix I below under “MY GRADING PHILOSOPHY.”

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, REQUIREMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA

A Note on Assignments

As a student in this course, you are expected to complete **all** assignments. If you fail to fully complete any assignment, I reserve the right to fail you for the course. Note that this pertains to only major assignments—exams, research papers, and discussion board posts. In short, if you fail to complete what’s expected of you, you risk failing the course. Finally, note that for your larger written assignments, **you have a choice of either two book reviews (Option 1) or a single research paper (Option 2). It is up to you to choose.**

Book Reviews: a “How To”

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “BOOK REVIEWS: A ‘HOW TO’” assignment.

Research Paper³

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “RESEARCH PAPER” assignment.

Research Paper Pyramid

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “RESEARCH PAPER PYRAMID.”

Topic Proposal

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “TOPIC PROPOSAL” assignment.

Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “TENTATIVE THESIS, OUTLINE, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY” assignment.

³ As you will learn, doing “research” is not simply going to Google or Wikipedia and smashing some ideas together. Research is, to be honest, painful, frustrating, and sometimes may lead you to a dead-end. However, at the same time, you must go through this struggle over the course of several months so as to ensure that you’ve fully explored your chosen topic and come up with a substantive and robust research question. To help you through this process, beyond what we will do in class, I recommend visiting the University at Buffalo’s “research tips” site that is part of the SUGGESTED READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY section of the syllabus (below). Also, make sure you get started *early* on your research topic. One way to get started is to visit Lockwood Library on North Campus and make an appointment with one of our research librarians. For American Studies, contact Librarian Tiffany Walsh at trwalsh2@buffalo.edu. For History, contact Librarian Charles D’Aniello at lclcharl@buffalo.edu. For African American Studies, contact Librarian Glendora Johnson-Cooper at gicooper@buffalo.edu. They will be more than happy—as well as me!—to help you work through the research process. And, remember, above all else, your research paper is a process and is a demanding on your time, energy, intellect, and critical thinking. This, of course, is the very point! ☺

Mid-Term and Final Exams

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS” assignments.

Quizzes

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “QUIZZES” assignments.

Class Participation

See Appendix II below for a full description of “CLASS PARTICIPATION” expectations.

Group and Final Book Review/Research Paper Presentations

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “GROUP AND FINAL BOOK REVIEW/RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS” assignments.

Presentation Grading Criteria

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “PRESENTATION GRADING CRITERIA.”

Class Forum

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “CLASS FORUM” assignments.

Forum Posts Grading Criteria

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “FORUM POST GRADING CRITERIA.”

Tips for your Forum Posts

See Appendix II below for a full description of the “TIPS FOR YOUR FORUM POSTS.”

A SNAPSHOT OF WEEKLY REQUIREMENTS

What are you responsible for each week? Well, here is what you need to keep up on each week in this class:

- 1) Assigned readings, viewings, or listening
- 2) **Forum posts** if you are presenting that week or want to post/comment
- 3) Researching, drafting, reading, re-reading, and drafting your writing project(s)
- 4) Checking for any and all updates via email

GRADING POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

A Note on Grading

You will begin this class with zero (0) points. As we go along, you will have opportunities to earn points—with the maximum amount at 1,000. Although 1,000 points may seem like a lot, it is in your best interest to make every point matter. This means that assignments as short as in-class quizzes, discussion board posts, or even group work will have a lasting and cumulative impact on your overall grade. Below, you will find the specific point value to each assignment as well as how many points constitute an A, B, C, D, and F grade.

Final Grade Breakdown

Assignment (due date)	Point Value (1000 pts. total)
Book Review Option (400 pts.)	400 Total
1. Book Review #1 (DUE: 10/11)	200
2. Book Review #2 (DUE: 12/6)	200
Research Paper Option (400 pts.)	
1. Topic Proposal (DUE: 9/27)	50
2. Tentative thesis, outline, and bibliography (DUE: 10/18)	100
3. Final Paper (DUE: 12/6)	250
	400 Total
In-Class Mid-Term Exam (10/21)	100
Final Exam (12/11)	150
Group Presentations (TBD)	50
Class Participation	100
Book Review/Research Paper Presentation (Final Week of Classes)	50
Quizzes (25 @ 4 pts ea.)	100

Forum Posts (5 @ 10 pts ea.) (One due the Wednesday before your presentation; the other four must be spread across course UNITS)	50 (2 Original Threads + 3 Critical Responses)
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Final Grade Point Values

A	930-1000	B-	770-799	D+	650-679
A-	900-929	C+	741-769	D	600-649
B+	870-899	C	700-740	D-	550-599
B	800-869	C-	680-699	F	549 and below

COURSE CONTENT

A Note on our Course Content

This course is broken down into four units. Each unit (see below) will provide related yet distinct ways for us to accomplish our course aims and objectives. For each week, you will be responsible for about 100 pages of reading. You will constantly be writing, taking quizzes, and thinking through the course materials in diverse class activities.

A Note on how to Approach Course Readings

As you will see below, our course is split into four units. As you go through the readings each week, keep the following ideas in mind:

- 1) Read for the gist or main point
- 2) Take careful notes as you read, with writing utensil in hand
- 3) Make note of key words that you don't understand
- 4) Make note of key words that continue to come up in this class
- 5) Come to class with one to three questions related to the day's reading
- 6) Don't try to memorize all of what you read. Our goal, again, is to get a broad sense of "what's going on" and to let our class discussions do most of the heavy lifting
- 7) Make note of what interests you. Such topics, questions, or issues may be a good start to get you going on your book reviews and group work

Course Units

This course is organized into four units. Each unit will explore hip-hop from different angles and be guided by key concepts. Our units, understood roughly as three to six week blocks, are explicated below:

Unit 1: Historical Contexts

We will begin the class in the socio-historical context of a postwar era New York City. For readings, we will consider chapters from Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop Won't Stop* and Tricia Rose's *Black Noise*. We will also watch the seminal hip-hop documentary film *Style Wars** (available [here](#)) as well as the film *Man Alive: The Bronx is Burning* (available [here](#)). These texts will allow us to fully understand what we mean when we use the term "hip-hop" and the social, economic, spatial, cultural, and political context from which it emerges.

Unit 1 Key Words: hip-hop, deindustrialization, postwar city, urban crisis, urban renewal, tower-in-a-park, Cross Bronx Expressway, the four elements of hip-hop

***If the links do not work, search for both films on Youtube.com**

Unit 2: Race, Politics, and Identity

For this Unit, we will first read Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar's *Hip Hop Revolution* in its entirety. This text will force us to discuss race, identity, and authenticity. Most importantly, this book will serve as a prelude for the second-half of the semester. Specifically, Ogbar will introduce us to the current hip-hop debates and issues that we will examine in Units 3 & 4. You will also be required to view *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.

Unit 2 Key Words: critical race theory, race, political economy, minstrel show, African American folk tradition, "cult of authenticity," whiteness, realness, n-word

Unit 3: Misogyny, Blood Money, and Hip-Hop's Political Economies

Building on Ogbar's ideas, we will interrogate the overwhelming presence of misogyny in hip-hop (and American!) culture. We will read Tricia Rose's *Hip Hop Wars* alongside Byron Hurt's Documentary *Beyond Beats and Rhymes** (available [here](#)). This Unit will give us a broad sense of the debates surrounding the study and culture of hip-hop.

Unit 3 Key Words: gender, misogyny, sexual economy, Telecommunications Act of 1996, political economy, hyper-materialism, neoliberalism, "blood money"

***If links do not work, search on Youtube.com**

Unit 4: Criminal, Racial, and Social (In) Justice:

Again, using Ogbar as an entry point, this final unit will connect hip-hop to the American criminal justice system. Using Michelle Alexander's controversial *The New Jim Crow* as our anchor, we will read Paul Butler's personal *Let's Get Free* and focus our attention towards America's criminal justice system and its connection to social justice, rap music, cultural myth, and larger socio-cultural implications. (Think: Trayvon aftermath.) Alexander will provide well-needed texture to Butler's arguments, coercing us to reconsider hip-hop's role and relevance in one of 2013 America's most pressing issues: mass incarceration.

Unit 4 Key Words: hip-hop worldview, hip-hop justice, school-to-prison pipeline, Rockefeller Drug Laws, War on Drugs, black criminalization, Trayvon Martin, stop-and-frisk

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE⁴

UNIT 1

Hip-Hop's Historical Contexts: Postwar America and Hip-Hop's Origins

Week 1: Aug 26 – Aug 30 (UNIT 1 READINGS ON UBLEARNS)

WEEK 1 KEYWORDS: hip-hop, postwar America

- M **In Class:** Review syllabus, expectations, and assignments
- W **In Class:** Ice breakers & assessment essay
- F **In Class:** Hip-hop as critical method: myths, approaches, and assumptions
Writing Due: Tag my office door! (1002 Clemens, 10th Floor)

Week 2: Sept 2 – Sept 6

WEEK 2 KEYWORDS: Cross-Bronx Expressway, urban renewal, four elements

- M **LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**
- W **In Class:** Hip-Hop's Origins
Reading Due: Chapter 1 from Tricia Rose's *Black Noise* (on UB Learns)
Film Due: *Style Wars* (full film available on YouTube)
- F **In Class:** Hip-Hop's Origins, cont'd.
Reading Due: Chapter 1 from Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop* (on UB Learns)

Week 3: Sept 9 – Sept 13

WEEK 3 KEYWORDS: fires of abandonment, the break, gangs

- M **In Class:** Hip-Hop's Origin, cont'd.
Reading Due: Chapter 2 from Chang (on UB Learns)
- W **In Class:** Hip-Hop's Origins, cont'd.
Reading Due: Chapter 3 from Chang (on UB Learns)
- F **In Class:** Hip-Hop's Origins, cont'd.
Reading Due: Chapter 4 from Chang (on UB Learns)
GROUP 1 PRESENTATION

⁴ It is important to note that while I am not “requiring” you to listen to particular rap albums or songs, I highly encourage you to listen to the artists and rap songs mentioned in our course readings. If you feel that we should be listening to a particular album or song alongside a particular week's readings, please tell me and I'll put it on the syllabus. Otherwise, I expect you to be listening, viewing, reading, and thinking critically all at once.

UNIT 2
Race, Politics, and Identity: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Authenticity

Week 4: Sept 16 – Sept 20

WEEK 4 KEYWORDS: minstrel show, race, authenticity, gender

- M **In Class:** Begin Jeff Ogbar's *Hip-Hop Revolution*
 Reading Due: pp. 1-36
 Viewing Due: PART 1 of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*
 (Video streams live on UB Libraries e-reserve)
- W **Reading Due:** pp. 37-71
 Viewing Due: PART 2 of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*
 (Video streams live on UB Libraries e-reserve)
- F **Reading Due:** TBD
 Writing Assignment Due: TBA week of class

Week 5: Sept 23 – Sept 27 (STUDENT CONFERENCES)

Writing Option 2: Topic Proposal Due (9/27)

WEEK 5 KEYWORDS: gangsta rap, mass incarceration, culture wars

- M **Reading Due:** pp. 72-104
- W **Reading Due:** pp. 105-138
 Viewing Due: PART 3 of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*
 (Video streams live on UB Libraries e-reserve)
- F **Reading Due:** pp. 139-end
 GROUP 2 PRESENTATION

UNIT 3
Misogyny, Blood Money, and Hip-Hop's Political Economies

Week 6: Sept 30 – Oct 4

WEEK 6 KEYWORDS: social responsibility, political economy

- M **In Class:** Begin Rose's *Hip Hop Wars*
 Reading Due: pp. ix-30
 Viewing Due: 2009 *Congressional Hearings on Hip-Hop* (see [here](#)) & other videos TBA
- W **Reading Due:** pp. 33-60
 Viewing Due: *Hip Hop on Trial* (see [here](#))

F **Reading Due:** pp. 61-94
GROUP 3 PRESENTATION

Week 7: Oct 7 – Oct 11

Writing Option 1: First Book Review Due (10/11)

M **Reading Due:** pp. 95-131
Viewing Due: *Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, a film by Byron Hurt (full film available on YouTube—make sure to watch all parts!)

W **Reading Due:** pp. 131-165

F **Reading Due:** pp. 167-185
Writing Due: First Book Review Due!!!
GROUP 4 PRESENTATION

Week 8: Oct 14 – Oct 18

Writing Option 2: Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography Due (10/18)

M **Reading Due:** pp. 187-213

W **Reading Due:** pp. 217-241

F **Reading Due:** pp. 241-end
Writing Due: Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography

Week 9: Oct 21 – Oct 25

M **In Class Mid-Term (ALL MATERIALS UP TO THIS DATE ARE FAIR GAME FOR THE EXAM)**

W **Reading Due:** Heather Ann Thompson's 2010 "Why Mass Incarceration Matters"
(On UBLearns)

In Class: Brief Review of Mid-Term

UNIT 4

Criminal, Racial, and Social (In) Justice: Defining Hip-Hop's Role

F **In Class:** Justice and hip-hop: roots, meanings, implications

Reading Due: Butler, pp. 1-22

Listening Due: TBD

GROUP 5 PRESENTATION

Week 10: Oct 28 – Nov 1

WEEK 10 KEYWORDS: social justice, War on Drugs, jury nullification

M **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 1-19 (Intro)

W **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 23-41

F **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 20-58 (Chp. 1)
GROUP 6 PRESENTATION

Week 11: Nov 4 – Nov 8

WEEK 11 KEYWORDS: hip-hop justice, school-to-prison pipeline, Rockefeller Drug Laws

M **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 42-79

W **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 59-95 (Chp. 2)

F **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 78-101
GROUP 7 PRESENTATION

Week 12: Nov 11 – Nov 15

WEEK 12 KEYWORDS: stop-and-frisk, black criminalization, hip-hop nation, hip-hop's political power

M **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 96-137 (Chp. 3)

W **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 102-123

F **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 137-173 (Chp. 4)

Week 13: Nov 18 – Nov 22

WEEK 13 KEYWORDS: structural racism, teleological arguments, racial profiling, “wires of the birdcage”

M **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 123-167

W **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 174-209 (Chp. 5)

F **Reading Due:** Butler, pp. 167-187
GROUP 8 PRESENTATION

Week 14: Nov 25 – Nov 29

M **Reading Due:** Alexander, pp. 209-250 (Chp. 6)

W **NO CLASS – FALL BREAK**

F **NO CLASS – FALL BREAK**

Week 15: Dec 2 – Dec 6

Writing Option 1: Final Book Review Due (12/6)

Writing Option 2: Final Research Paper Due (12/6)

M **FINAL BOOK REVIEW/RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

W **FINAL BOOK REVIEW/RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

F **FINAL BOOK REVIEW/RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

Writing Due: Final Book Review/Research Paper

Week 16: Dec 9 – Dec 16 | FINAL EXAM WEEK

OUR FINAL EXAM DAY & TIME:

DECEMBER 11, 2013 | 214 NORTON | 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

SUGGESTED READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chang, J. (2006). *Total chaos: The art and aesthetics of hip-hop*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dimitriadis, G. (2001). *Performing identity/performing culture: Hip hop as text, pedagogy, and lived practice*. New York: P. Lang.
- Hackworth, J. R. (2007). *The neoliberal city: Governance, ideology, and development in American urbanism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hill, C. P. (2006). *From Black power to hip hop: Racism, nationalism, and feminism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kelley, R. D. G. (2012). *Africa speaks, America answers: Modern jazz in revolutionary times*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Keyes, C. L. (2002). *Rap music and street consciousness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Kusmer, K. L., & Trotter, J. W. (2009). *African American urban history since World War II*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Neal, M. A., & Forman, M. (2011). *That's the joint!: The hip-hop studies reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Perry, I. (2004). *Prophets of the hood: Politics and poetics in hip hop*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Prashad, V. (2007). *The darker nations: A people's history of the third world*. New York: New Press.
- Rabaka, R. (2011). *Hip hop's inheritance: From the Harlem renaissance to the hip hop feminist movement*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books.

_____. (2012). *Hip hop's amnesia: From blues and the black women's club movement to rap and the hip hop movement*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Rose, T. (1994). *Black noise: Rap music and black culture in contemporary America*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.

Thompson, H. A. (January 01, 2010). Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History. *Journal of American History* *Bloomington*, 97, 3, 703-734.

Toop, D. (2000). *Rap attack 3: African rap to global hip hop*. London: Serpent's Tail.

SYLLABUS APPENDIX I: COURSE POLICIES

Code of Conduct⁵

As members of our intellectual community, we are to always maintain a high level of respect for each other's ideas, differences, orientations, and creativities. We are all here to work together toward becoming better readers, writers, and thinkers, so inappropriate or demeaning jokes, remarks, posts, or links that detract from this primary goal will not be tolerated. We are adults with a common goal: to learn in a safe and comfortable environment. Thus, any student who takes away from this mission will be asked to drop the course.

My Plagiarism Policy⁶

Copying another's work and submitting it as your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is plagiarism. Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by careful citation of all sources. Failure to properly cite may result in a failing grade for the assignment or could cause you to fail the course entirely. Always give credit to the author of any outside material you may incorporate into your own work.

All plagiarized assignments will receive zero points toward the final course grade. In all cases of plagiarism, I will follow the University at Buffalo academic dishonesty procedures: the student will be notified of the infraction; he/she will discuss with me (the instructor) the specifics of the plagiarized document; and he/she will be given an opportunity to accept or contest the violation – if a judgment of plagiarism is warranted.

One infraction = "F" for the course.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend classes for which they are registered. Students making satisfactory progress in their classes will be excused from classes *only when* they are representing UB on a university sponsored event or (e.g. student athletes competing in UB scheduled athletic events, or students attending educational field trips and conferences). If students are ill, complete documentation must be provided in order to excuse the absence. Authorized absences do not relieve the student of class responsibilities. Prior written notice of the authorized absence must be provided to the instructor by the sponsoring department or student. If you miss class for any other reason, your **Participation and Coursework** grade will be penalized in the following manner:

3 or fewer absences = eligible for 100% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade

⁵ Note that both teaching and learning are *morally bound* enterprises with life-long consequences and implications. Just as I dedicate myself to making this course as robust, educational, rigorous, and meaningful as possible, I entrust that you will do the same with your effort, participation, punctuality, and professionalism.

⁶ Please note that I abide by both UB's as well as my own plagiarism policy. They are, in effect, complementary. Recognize, however, that UB's policy on "academic integrity" is much more comprehensive and gives you a clear sense of what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. In the event that a student is "caught" plagiarizing, I will follow both my and UB's policy. For me, your instructor, you will earn an F for the course. For the sake of university and academic integrity, I may seek that you are officially reprimanded and even expelled—depending on the degree of severity and egregiousness.

4 absences = only eligible for 90% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade
5 absences = only eligible for 80% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade
6 absences = only eligible for 70% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade
7 absences = only eligible for 60% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade
8 absences = only eligible for 50% for **Participation and Coursework** final grade
9 or more absences = F for **entire class**

Submission of Assignments

Unless instructed otherwise, all assignments must be in 12 pt. font, double-spaced, have 1-inch margins, and be in MLA, APA, Chicago, or another recognized citation format. Note that all written assignments *must have at least two explanatory footnotes.*⁷

Late Work

Projects and assignments are due on the dates and times specified. *Late assignments will receive a full letter grade penalty for each business day (M-F) past the due date.* To stay on top of your assignments, anticipate intellectual detours and challenges vis-à-vis planning, drafting, and conferring with me with any and all questions and concerns.

Make-up Work

In the event that you miss class for a university- or instructor-permitted reason, you may make up the following assignments for credit *only*: quizzes and exams. Please note that *it is your responsibility* to find out what you missed. *Finally, you may only make up missed work up to one (1) week past the original assignment date.*

Extra-credit Work

I rarely give extra-credit opportunities. However, there may be a local film, performance, or related assignment that may fit well with our course objectives, questions, and readings. If that's the case, I will send out an email that details my expectations for the extra-credit assignment. Either way, make it your business to make every point count in this class—from quizzes to papers.

Email

I reserve the right to wait 48 business hours (M - F) before responding to your emails. If you are emailing me at 3:00 AM and want to ask about an assignment, do not expect me to immediately respond. Plan ahead. Also, in terms of email **etiquette**, I will not respond to your emails if they are written like text messages. In other words, when you contact me via email, address me with a courteous greeting and end the email in similar fashion. Begin your emails with the phrase “Dear Instructor De Senso” and end them with “Sincerely,” “Truly,” “Kind regards,” or similar phrases. These are the little things that will make all the difference as you progress in your professional lives.

⁷ Footnotes give you an opportunity to further explain, clarify, and contextualize your ideas (see footnote #1 above). My goal in requiring footnotes is to encourage both depth and breadth of thinking. However, you must *not* dismiss footnotes as simple blurbs on the bottom of the page. On the contrary, footnotes will be your way to better reach, inform, and educate your reading audience. In other words, take your footnotes seriously.

Change in Class-size or Enrollment

In the event that our class enrollment increases and therefore the dynamics—spatial and pedagogical—change, I reserve the right to adjust the course expectations, assignments, and overall course approach. In the broadest sense, a larger class would be more exam-focused while a smaller (25 or below) one will warrant the exact assignment described above.

UB's Academic Integrity Policy

The following description is taken from the UB 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog:

Preamble

Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas.

When an instance of suspected or alleged academic dishonesty by a student arises, it shall be resolved according to the following procedures. These procedures assume that many questions of academic dishonesty will be resolved through consultation between the student and the instructor (a process known as consultative resolution, as explained below). It is recommended that the instructor and student each consult with the department chair, school or college dean, or the Office of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education if there are any questions regarding these procedures.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Previously submitted work. Submitting academically required material that has been previously submitted—in whole or in substantial part—in another course, without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.

Plagiarism. Copying or receiving material from any source and submitting that material as one's own, without acknowledging and citing the particular debts to the source (quotations, paraphrases, basic ideas), or in any other manner representing the work of another as one's own.

Cheating. Soliciting and/or receiving information from, or providing information to, another student or any other unauthorized source (including electronic sources such as cellular phones and PDAs), with the intent to deceive while completing an examination or individual assignment.

Falsification of academic materials. Fabricating laboratory materials, notes, reports, or any forms of computer data; forging an instructor's name or initials; resubmitting an examination or assignment for reevaluation which has been altered without the instructor's authorization; or submitting a report, paper, materials, computer data, or examination (or any considerable part thereof) prepared by any person other than the student responsible for the assignment.

Misrepresentation of documents. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University or Official document, record, or instrument of identification.

Confidential academic materials. Procurement, distribution or acceptance of examinations or laboratory results without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.

Selling academic assignments. No person shall sell or offer for sale to any person enrolled at the University at Buffalo any academic assignment, or any inappropriate assistance in the preparation, research, or writing of any assignment, which the seller knows, or has reason to believe, is intended for submission in fulfillment of any course or academic program requirement.

Purchasing academic assignments. No person shall purchase an academic assignment intended for submission in fulfillment of any course or academic program requirement.

Students with Disabilities

Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the University at Buffalo Board of Regents, its faculty and staff provide equal opportunity for qualified applicants, employees and students. It is the policy of UB to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose undue hardship. In order to receive reasonable accommodations, self-disclosure of your disability by filing with the appropriate Administrative Office is absolutely necessary.

UB's Policy on Incomplete ("I") Grades

The following description is taken from the UB 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog:

A grade of incomplete ("I") indicates that additional course work is required to fulfill the requirements of a given course. Students may only be given an "I" grade if they have a passing average in coursework that has been completed and have well-defined parameters to complete the course requirements that could result in a grade better than the default grade. An "I" grade may not be assigned to a student who did not attend the course. Prior to the end of the semester, students must initiate the request for an "I" grade and receive the instructor's approval. Assignment of an "I" grade is at the discretion of the instructor.

The instructor must specify a default letter grade at the time the "I" grade is submitted. A default grade is the letter grade the student will receive if no additional coursework is completed and/or a grade change form is not filed by the instructor. "I" grades must be completed within 12 months. Individual instructors may set shorter time limits for removing an incomplete than the 12-month time limit. Upon assigning an "I" grade, the instructor shall provide the student specification, in writing or by electronic mail, of the requirements to be fulfilled, and shall file a copy with the appropriate departmental office. Students must not re-register for courses for which they have received an "I" grade
Applicable dates regarding the 12-month provision:

Courses taken in (semester):	Will default in 12 months on:
Fall	December 31

Spring	May 31
Summer	August 31

The “I” must be changed to a grade before the degree conferral date if the student plans to graduate in that semester. At any time prior to the default date, students may elect to change the “I” grade to the default grade using the Grade Retrieval Form.

A default grade can be "B," "C," "D," or "F." (If a student selected an S/U grading option, it will replace the default letter grade when the grade defaults.)

My Grading Philosophy⁸

A grade of ‘C’ is “average.” A grade of a ‘C’ indicates that a student has completed the assignment in an ordinary manner. In all likelihood, the assignment probably does not meet all requirements but is not so deficient as to warrant a ‘D’ which is, of course, below average. In contrast, a ‘B’ signifies that the assignment being graded was merely sufficient in its completion. All requirements were fulfilled. (Yes, even though “all requirements were fulfilled,” this does not automatically lead to an A). A grade of an ‘A’ on any assignment means that the student went *beyond the requirements* to present an interesting insight or a high level of synthesis of course material, which reflects sophisticated analysis.

As the semester unfolds, I will communicate specific grading criteria for your quizzes, exams, journals, research paper, and coursework and participation grade.

⁸ Note that this section is indebted to Georgetown University Professor Michael Eric Dyson’s *Sociology of Hip-Hop* syllabus, 2008.

SYLLABUS APPENDIX II: DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Book Reviews: a “How To” (Writing Option 1)

A book review tells not only what a book is about, but also how successful it is at what it is trying to do. Professors often assign book reviews as practice in careful analytical reading. As a reviewer, you bring together the two strands of accurate, analytical reading and strong, personal response when you indicate what the book is about and what it might mean to a reader (by explaining what it meant to you). In other words, reviewers answer not only the WHAT but the SO WHAT question about a book. Thus, in writing a review, you combine the skills of **describing** what is on the page, **analyzing** how the book tried to achieve its purpose, and **expressing** your own reactions.

Step 1: Reading the Book

As you're reading or preparing to write the review, ask yourself these questions:

1) What are the author's viewpoint and purpose?

The viewpoint or purpose may be implied rather than stated, but often a good place to look for what the author says about his or her purpose and viewpoint is the introduction or preface.

2) What are the author's main points?

Again, these will often be stated in the introduction.

3) What kind of evidence does the author use to prove his or her points? Is the evidence convincing?

Why or why not? Does the author support his or her points adequately? Here, flip to the back of the book and scan the author's sources, bibliography, and other research materials.

4) How does this book relate to other books on the same topic?

Is the book unique? Does it add new information? What group of readers, if any, would find this book most useful?

5) Does the author have the necessary expertise to write the book?

6) How successful do you think the author was in carrying out the overall purposes of the book?

Depending on your book's purpose, you should select appropriate criteria by which to judge its success. Use any criteria your instructor has given you in lecture or on your assignment sheet. Otherwise, here are some criteria to consider. For example, if an author says his or her purpose is to argue for a particular solution to a public problem, such as school reform or

international relations, then the review should judge whether the author has defined the problem, identified causes, planned points of attack, provided necessary background information and offered specific solutions. A review should also indicate the author's professional expertise.

In other books, however, authors may argue for their theory about a particular phenomenon. Reviews of these books should evaluate what kind of theory the book is arguing for, how much and what kind of evidence the author uses to support his/her scholarly claims, how valid the evidence seems, how expert the author is, and how much the book contributes to the knowledge of the field.

Step 2: Writing the Book Review

Although you should include what you feel is appropriate for explaining your assessment of a book, reviews generally include the following kinds of information.

Most reviews start off with a **heading** that includes all the bibliographic information about the book. If your assignment sheet does not indicate which form you should use, you can use the following:

Title. Author. Place of publication: publisher, date of publication. Number of pages.

Like most pieces of writing, the review itself usually begins with an **introduction** that lets your readers know what the review will say. The first paragraph usually includes the author and title again, so your readers don't have to look up to find the title. You should also include a very brief overview of the contents of the book, the purpose or audience for the book, and your reaction and evaluation.

Reviews then generally move into a section of **background information** that help place the book in context and discusses criteria for judging the book.

Next, the review gives a **summary** of the main points of the book, quoting and paraphrasing key phrases from the author.

Finally, reviewers get to the heart of their writing—their **evaluation** of the book. In this section, reviewers discuss a variety of issues:

- How well the book has achieved its goal,
- What possibilities are suggested by the book,
- What the book has left out,
- How the book compares to others on the subject,
- What specific points are not convincing, and
- What personal experiences you've had related to the subject.

It is important to carefully distinguish your views from the author's, so that you don't confuse your reader.

Like other essays, book reviews usually end with a **conclusion** that ties together issues raised in the review and provides a concise comment on the book.

There is, of course, no set formula, but a **general rule of thumb is that the first one-half to two-thirds of the review should summarize the author’s main ideas and at least one-third should evaluate the book.**

Each book review will count as 20% of your overall course grade. Since you must write two (2), your book reviews will count, in total, for 40% of your overall course grade.

Research Paper (Writing Option 2)

This paper is the primary assignment for the course. It is a research paper (12-15 pages) in which you make an argument about a problem you discover from our readings, listenings, discussions, and, most importantly, your independent research. Your **Research Paper** is a three-part assignment, including a “**Topic Proposal**” and “**Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography.**” You must use diverse peer-reviewed sources (i.e. scholarly articles, books, periodicals, interviews, etc.). **Your research paper will count for 40% of your overall grade.**

<u>Research Paper in 3 Parts</u>	<u>Point Values</u>
1. Topic Proposal (DUE: WEEK 5)	50
2. Tentative thesis, outline, and bibliography (DUE: WEEK 8)	100
3. Final Paper (DUE: WEEK 15)	250
Total Points.....→	400

See below for descriptions of each one of these assignments. Note that we will come up with the **Research Paper** grading criteria as a class after the mid-term exam.

Research Paper Pyramid (Writing Option 2)

Please follow this pyramid from #'s 1 – 6 as you begin to think about and frame your research paper. This is a tool to help you imagine and approach your research paper step-by-step. Note that we will discuss this pyramid in detail throughout the semester:



4. TENTATIVE ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION (**THESIS!**)
- ↓
5. AT LEAST THREE (3) **REASONS** TO SUPPORT YOUR THESIS
- ↓
6. SPECIFIC **EVIDENCE** YOU WILL USE TO SUPPORT YOUR REASONS

Example **Research Paper Pyramid:**

- 1. RESEARCH TOPIC:**
Ice-T's career
- ↓
- 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM:**
Ice-T keeps to the “gangster” identity while posing as a philanthropist. This is what Tricia Rose calls “blood money.”
- ↓
- 3. GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTION:**
What does Ice-T's career reveal about African American identity in general and hip-hoppers in particular?
- ↓
- 4. THESIS:**
Ice-T's “gangster-philanthropist” identity demonstrates that there are limited identities available for African American males in the public sphere.
- ↓
- 5. GOOD REASONS (MY SUB-POINTS):**
1) Ice-T cannot break out of the gangster rapper identity he created in the 1980s and beyond; 2) African American male hip-hoppers usually play typical “ghetto/violent/gangster” film characters; 3) Even as a philanthropist, Ice-T keeps to the “Tracy Morrow” gangster ethos of his criminal past.
- ↓
- 6. SOLID EVIDENCE (WHAT I WILL ANALYZE):**
1) Ice-T's two memoirs; 2) Interviews of Ice-T on YouTube.com; 3) *New Jack City*, *Ice Loves CoCo*, and Ice-T's first three rap records; 4) Tricia Rose's *Hip Hop Wars*; 5) Ogbar's *Hip Hop Revolution*; 6) Perry's *Prophets of the Hood*; 7) Ice-T's *The Art of Rap* documentary film; 8) related scholarly articles.

Topic Proposal (Writing Option 2)

As you know, writing a research paper is a difficult process of trial and error, research and redirection, clarity and frustration. So to help you along the way, I am requiring that you submit a **Topic Proposal** by WEEK 5 of the semester (February 11th-15th). To receive full credit for your **Topic Proposal**, you must discuss and explain #'s 1 – 3 from the **Research Paper Pyramid**. In short, your **Topic Proposal** must:

- 1) State and explain the problem you are investigating
- 2) State and discuss two to three questions that will guide your research paper
- 3) State why you are interested in this topic
- 4) Discuss your preliminary thesis, reasons, and evidence

The format for your **Topic Proposal** should be about 1-3 pages of double-spaced writing that fully explains the above points. Anything less will not earn full credit. Your **Topic Proposal will count for 5% of your overall grade.**

Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography (Writing Option 2)

Due WEEK 8 of the semester, this assignment must discuss, explain, and detail #'s 4 – 6 from the **Research Paper Pyramid**. In order to earn the full 100 points, you must write a 2-5 double-spaced page document that must include the following:

- 1) Your tentative thesis for the final paper
- 2) A discussion of the implications of your thesis and how you will support this thesis
- 3) The reasons or sub-points you plan on using to support your thesis
- 4) The evidence and analysis you plan to use to support your reasons
- 5) A list of at least five sources (at least 2 books and 2 articles) that you plan to use

I will be flexible on how you present this assignment, but keep in mind that you will fail this assignment (60% or below) if you fail to meet the above criteria. Your **Tentative Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography will count for 10% of your overall grade.**

Mid-Term and Final Exams

For both exams, I will give you a mixture of essay, short-answer, and maybe even multiple-choice questions. Your written exam answers will be held to the **same exact grading criteria and standards** used for the **Book Review** and **Quiz** guidelines in this syllabus. Your **Mid-Term Exam** will be given in a single class session (50-minutes) while the **Final Exam** will be given on our scheduled exam day (180-minutes). The **Mid-Term (10%) and Final (15%) Exams will count for 25% of your overall grade.**

Quizzes

In this class, you will be quizzed every Monday and Wednesday on that day's readings. Quizzes are not meant to trick or dupe you. Rather, I use quizzes to not only assess who is keeping up with assigned reading, but also ground each class in one to three lead discussion questions. In other words, think of these quizzes as your way to put your thoughts down so you can coherently and clearly participate in our discussion. Some quizzes will be in groups while others may count double or even triple (8 or 12 points, that is). Note that you may only make up a quiz if you have a university-sanctioned excuse. Unexcused absences do not warrant make-ups. Please see my make-up work policy for more details. Finally, please note that **each quiz equals four (4) points. In total, all 25 quizzes will count as 10% of your overall course grade.**

Class Participation

Your class participation grade will be based upon how well you:

- 1) Successfully answer your quiz questions throughout the semester
- 2) Consistently answer, grapple with, and ask questions in class that move our conversations in constructive and interesting directions
- 3) Successfully contribute to our course blog according to blog grading criteria

- 4) Demonstrate that you are completing the course readings, reviewing required audio-visual materials, and taking it upon yourself to share materials relevant to the class's unit topics and questions
- 5) Challenge and engage your colleagues in regard to daily course discussions

In order to attain a minimum grade of “C” (70%) for your participation grade, you must meet all five of the above criteria. **Class Participation will count as 10% of your overall grade.**

Group & Final Book Review/Research Paper Presentations

For the entire semester, you will be responsible for completing two (2) presentations. One will be with a group (Group Presentation) and the other individual pertaining to your second book review or final research paper.

For your **Group Presentation**, you will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Handing in a single sheet of paper (double sided if necessary) that provides the rest of the class with:
 - A) 3 – 5 key words (defined, of course!) from that day's readings/materials
 - B) 2 – 3 open-ended discussion questions (answered, of course!) from the reading.

Think of this handout as a brief “study guide” for the day's materials

- 2) Doing what I call a “teaching activity.” This involves the following:
 - A) Constructing a Power Point (PP) or Prezi presentation that summarizes and expands upon the main ideas/arguments of the assigned readings/materials.
 - B) Linking the PP or Prezi presentations to the key words you have written on your handout.
 - C) Posting the PP or Prezi presentation on the course blog the **Thursday before you present.**

Above all, think of this “teaching activity” as **your group's way of getting the class interested** in the assigned readings/materials. Think outside the box. Be creative, have **fun**, and make sense!

For your **Final Book Review/Research Paper Presentation**, you must do exactly the same as the **Group Presentation**. The only exceptions are that you must also:

- A) Tell the class about your chosen book/research topic and why you chose it
- B) Talk honestly about your reading/research process and what you learned
- C) Discuss your reasons and the evidence you use to support your position/argument on your chosen book or research topic
- D) Link your book review/research paper to some of the overall themes of the course as well as explain how the book fits with some of the central course questions

Presentation Grading Criteria

Your **Group Presentations** must be between 8 – 10 minutes, while your **Final Book Review/Research Paper Presentation** must be between 5 – 7 minutes.

Note that your presentations will be a vital part of our overall teaching and learning experience. In addition to the “handout,” you will earn a minimal grade of “C” (70%) on your presentation **only** if you provide:

- 1) Thoughtful discussion questions that actually get your colleagues talking about the reading and responding. If you hear crickets once you finish, you need to think of ways to get your colleagues into the readings/materials.
- 2) A creative way to get us talking and thinking. You will fail your presentation if you simply stand in front of the class and dump information on us or read from the screen. Don't do that. Summarize briefly of course, but then ask some larger question(s) that get us going. Tell us to work in groups. Tell us to draw something. Bring in a prop/object. Think outside the box.
- 3) Links to the larger course questions, materials, and content.

Anything less than the above will result in a failing grade. Anything more, a “C” or higher. **Your presentations will count for 10% of your overall grade.**

Class Forum

During the week you are presenting, you are responsible for posting one (1) **Original Thread** on the class forum. You must post at least one additional **Original Thread** during the semester for a total of two (2) for the entire class. You must also post at least three (3) **Critical Responses**. All posts are worth ten (10) points each. For a more detailed description of how your posts will be evaluated, please see **Forum Post Grading Criteria** below. **Participation in the forum will be count for 5% of your overall grade.**

Forum Post Grading Criteria

Our online discussion forum is a corollary life force for the course. There, you will further our in-class conversations by posting questions, videos, or other media related to each week's course questions and your group presentation.

To be eligible for full discussion forum points (10 points per post!), **you must meet or exceed the following:**

A minimum of:

- 2 **Original Threads** for the entire semester
- 3 **Critical Responses** for the entire semester

In order to receive the minimum passing discussion post grade, your **original threads** must:

- 1) Be between 150 – 300 words (No more or less! Yes, I will count!)
- 2) Be properly paragraphed and heed the rules of English grammar protocol
- 3) Offer insight and analysis on the readings/texts

- 4) For your “presentation post,” you must post questions, content, or analyses that preview what you’ll be discussing in class. **You may not post as a group, meaning you will be responsible for your own individual post.**
- 5) Reference the readings/materials using correct format methods (MLA, CMS, etc.)

In order to receive the minimum passing grade on your **critical responses**, you must:

- 1) Be between 50 – 150 words
- 2) Be titled with your last name and response number. For example, “Smith: CR1” or “Jones: CR3.”
- 3) Offer insight, analyses, and commentary **relevant** to the original thread
- 4) Make a coherent, cohesive, and logical point relevant to the class questions and materials

Please note that discussion board posts **must never**:

- 1) Rely on colloquial “web-isms” or shorthand (terms such as LOL, OMG, etc.)
- 2) Be used to insult or demean. If you disagree, rebut respectfully with reasons and evidence.
- 3) Be short quips like: “That’s what I was saying!” or “Oh my – what a lame idea!” This type of energy must be channeled in your official responses. No platitudes please.
- 4) Repeat another’s ideas, be plagiarized, or solely paraphrase the reading
- 5) Be without reference and citation.
- 6) Contain unnecessary profanity (unless used by the text)
- 7) Ramble on without a main point.
- 8) Be used to air one’s political, personal, or academic “dirty laundry.” Our discussion board is just like our classroom—it’s a safe space for reasonable and intellectual exchange. Treat it with respect or you will be permanently banned and asked to drop the course.

If you ignore any of the above parameters, you will earn a zero out of ten (0 out of 10) points for your post. Note that I will not award partial credit for the forum.

Tips for your Forum Posts

To be sure, you will probably run into very similar statements, positions, ideas, and analyses throughout the semester. That’s a good thing. However, do not let that discourage you from commenting on your colleagues’ posts. To avoid feeling as if you are “just repeating what my colleague is saying,” find **a single** point from your colleague’s thread that you:

- 1) Disagree with
- 2) Want to elaborate or expand on
- 3) Want to challenge
- 4) Want to make a connection to your own knowledge and personal experience
- 5) Want to agree with
- 6) Want to include others in the class to comment and respond
- 7) Want to make connections to previous posts and responses

Feel free to be creative, post videos, links to articles, or take videos of yourself. As we explore together, we will hone our writing, thinking, and analytical skills. Try your best, read all of your colleagues' posts the best you can, and critically respond with honesty, precision, and a willingness to heighten our in-class conversations in new and unexpected ways.