

**The University of Western Ontario,  
London, Ontario, Canada  
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
Winter 2023**

**GSWS 2168B: Black Popular Culture Today**

We, at the GSWS, acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. We respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers.

**Instructor:** Anmol Dutta (she/her)

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Office hours: TBD

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**Course Description**

Black popular culture is concerned with pleasure, enjoyment, and amusement and is expressed through aesthetic codes and genres. Drawing on literature, film, television, and music, this course examines examples of popular culture created by and for Black individuals to consider Black cultural values, beliefs, experiences, and social institutions. This course aims to explore Black narratives in Popular Culture that dismantle, interrogate, and re-write normative representations. We will explore the intersectional ways in which these narratives skewer white privilege and re-write the Black experience.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Improve critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills.
- Have an overall understanding of the socio-cultural and political impact that specifically Black popular culture can have.
- Learn how engaging divergent perspectives of the gendered Black experience is a way of remembering the past, and of creating new ways of re-imagining the future.

**Readings and Asynchronous Learning**

This course will be taught asynchronously. Asynchronous learning is independent and relies on the student directly their own schedule. All materials will be provided on the course website on OWL via the Readings tab under "Resources." This does not mean that you have access to the entire course.

Readings and lectures will be posted weekly. Completing the course requirements, listening to lectures, etc. are the responsibility of the student. Please ensure that you plan your time accordingly.

**EVALUATIONS (Assignment instructions available on OWL)**

| Assignment  | Description   | Points | Deadline  |
|---|---|--------|---|
| Syllabus Quiz   | Open-book quiz about the syllabus   | 5%     | No later than Jan 19, 2024                      |
| Midterm Exam  | Multiple Choice Questions   | 25%    | Feb 12 – Feb 16                                 |
| <b>Analytical Responses</b>   |   |        |   |
| Analytical Response 1:<br><br>Recorded Video Analysis<br><br><b>WEEK 2-5</b>  | ONE <b>7-minute video analysis</b> assignment based on a <b>close reading</b> of an image, scene, or a quote from your critical readings from the syllabus. | 20%    | DUE Feb 26<br><br>(the week after reading week) |
| Analytical Response 2:<br><br>Recorded Video Analysis<br><br><b>WEEK 8-11</b> | ONE <b>7-minute video analysis</b> assignment based on a <b>close reading</b> of an image, scene, or a quote from your critical readings from the syllabus. | 20%    | DUE on March 31                                 |
| Final Exam  | Write a <b>300–350-word reflective analysis for each prompt (3)</b> about your learnings, and takeaways from the course.                                    | 30%    | TBD   |

**Grading Criteria (see GSWS Handbook for details):**

- A+ (90 to 100) – Excellent work
- A (80 and up) - Superior work
- B (70 to 79) Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C (60 and up) – Competent work, meeting requirements
- D (50 to 59) – Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F (49 and down) – Assignment does not apply to course; basic requirements are unmet; plagiarism

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

| Week |  | Topic   | Dates (Mon-Sun) |   |
|------|--|---|-----------------|---|
| 1    | Analytical<br>Response 1:<br><br>Recorded Video<br>Analysis<br><br>(DUE: Feb 26) | Introduction: Course Welcome  | Jan 8-14        | FINAL<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>In April<br>(Date TBD) |
| 2    |  | “Black Looks” in Popular Culture  | Jan 15-21       |   |
| 3    |  | Performance and Blackness: Rap & Hip Hop                                  | Jan 22-28       |   |
| 4    |  | Performance and Blackness: Stand-Up Comedy                                | Jan 29- Feb 2   |   |
| 5    |  | Belonging and Visibility: Racialization of Black Hair                     | Feb 5 - 11      |   |
| 6    |  | MIDTERM EXAM  | Feb 12 - 18     |   |
| 7    | READING WEEK   |   | Feb 19 - 25     |   |
| 8    | Analytical Response 2:   | Belonging and Visibility: <i>Moonlight</i> and Queer, Black Masculinities | Feb 26- March 3 |   |
| 9    | Recorded Video Analysis<br><br>(DUE: Mar 31)                                     | Belonging and Visibility: Beyonce and Black Motherhood                    | March 4 – 10    |   |
| 10   |  | Re-Making Blackness: Horror and the Black Body in <i>Get Out</i>          | March 11 – 17   |   |
| 11   |  | Re-Making Blackness: Afro-futurism and <i>Black Panther</i>               | March 18 - 24   |   |
| 12   |  | Black Futurisms: Where are we Headed?                                     | March 25 – 31   |   |
| 13   |  | Catch Up Week   | April 1 - 7     |   |