

## **2415B: Black Studies: Hip-Hop Feminism**

**The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada  
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Fall/Winter 2023-2024**

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the roles of women in American hip hop, and the cultural discourses surrounding them. In this examination students will take into consideration elements of hip hop culture, its malleable media forms, its origins, history of production and reproduction, and interdisciplinary, transnational, and intersectional approaches to the study of this cultural form. In doing so, throughout the term, students will analyze the production and creation of hip hop by/featuring Black women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We will utilize texts including scholarly articles, music videos, visual albums, films (documentary and fiction) and social media networks to better grasp the commodification and politics of Black studies and hip hop feminism.

### **Information (see OWL):**

Instructor: Katrina Younes

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### **Course Objectives:**

- Develop and hone your understanding of Black literary, artistic, and other history.
- Develop an understanding of the concept of hip-hop feminism as well as its implications in its uses in Black creative and other expressions.
- Understand and analyze the intersection of hip-hop with gender, class, sexuality identity and spirituality.
- Understand and analyze the intersection of hip-hop with societal, political, and cultural issues.
- Critically analyze multiple mediums such as podcasts, films/documentaries, songs/lyrics/music, and other performances.
- Organize and create an informative and analytical artist portfolio that hones research skills, creative skills, and other academic skills (organization, analytical and argumentative skills)

### **Assignments: (creative options available)**

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Presentation: 20%

Artistic/Artist Portfolio ("Hype Project"): 30%

Final Exam: 35%

### January 10<sup>th</sup>

- **N.B. Please be aware of sensitive material and language in the readings/screenings/etc.**
- **N.B. Please be mindful and respectful when you speak and listen to others.**
- **N.B. Listen to all the assigned songs at-home.**
- *Questions to consider going into class: what is your current knowledge of Hip Hop? What is your expectation/hope in taking this course?*
- **Readings:**
  - o Watch *Nobody Knows My Name* by Rachel Raimist (58 minutes) <https://docuseek2-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/wm-noname>
- Course introduction and **presentation sign-up** (you can present in groups of two, but you'll receive the same grade)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XlpfjvVpaRciXdMBvUnixA0k1zsGBbi9\\_qt9r-1Iyyk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XlpfjvVpaRciXdMBvUnixA0k1zsGBbi9_qt9r-1Iyyk/edit?usp=sharing)

### January 17<sup>th</sup>

- *Questions to consider going into class: how do you define feminism? How might an understanding of the role of Black women in hip hop alter your definition?*
- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - o Excerpts from Joan Morgan *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost* (PDF on OWL)
  - o Excerpts from Tricia Rose *The Hip Hop Wars* (PDF on OWL)
  - o bell hooks, "Gangsta Culture—Sexism and Misogyny: Who Will Take the Rap?" (PDF on OWL)
- - o Sharon Green/MC Sha-Rock (Funky 4+1)
    - "That's The Joint" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVxk9PW62Vk>
    - **Presentation:**
  - o MC Lyte
    - "Poor Georgie" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSTzr2V4KMw>
    - **Presentation:**
    - "Ruffneck" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGbn6eaZmCY>
    - **Presentation:**

### January 24<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - o Cam Litchmore, "Queen Latifah's U.N.I.T.Y Injects Social Change into Hip-Hop": <https://c-litchmo.medium.com/queen-latifahs-u-n-i-t-y-injects-social-change-into-hip-hop-77053cef5ea2>
  - o Excerpts from Joan Morgan, *She Begat This* (PDF on OWL)
  - o Shannon Cochran, "Give Me Body! Race, Gender, and Corpulence Identity in the Artistry and Activism of Queen Latifah" (PDF on OWL)
  - o Suppl: "Joan Morgan Talks Hip-Hop Feminism & *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeYRRzt2ikQ>
- **In-class:** Episode 1 of *Ladies First: A Story of Women in Hip-Hop* (2023, Netflix)

- - Queen Latifah
    - “U.N.I.T.Y.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8cHxydDb7o>
    - **Presentation:**
  - Lauryn Hill
    - *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (listen to entire album, but take note of 2-3 key songs)
    - **Presentation:**
    - **Presentation:**

### February 7<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Aisha Durham, “Hip Hop Feminist Media Studies” (PDF on OWL)
- **In-class:** Episode 1 of *Queens* (2021-2022, Apple TV)

### February 14<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Treva B. Lindsey, “If You Look in My Life: Love, Hip-Hop Soul, and Contemporary African American Womanhood” (PDF on OWL)
- 🎵
  - Salt-N-Pepa
    - “Let’s Talk About Sex” <https://youtu.be/ydrtF45-y-g>
    - “Whatta Man” Ft. En Vogue  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vgV\\_dVkXN4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vgV_dVkXN4)
    - **Presentation:**
  - Mary J Blige
    - “Real Love” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90c9pEtZquw>
    - “Sweet Thing” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WILmzyEu7E>
    - **Presentation:**

### Week 6, Reading Week

### Week 7, February 28<sup>th</sup>

- **Readings:**
  - Bettina L. Love, “Body Image, Relationships, Desirability, and Ass” (PDF on OWL)
  - Leigh-Ann Jackson, “A Rap Comedy Hits the Road”  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/arts/television/issa-rae-syreeta-singleton.html>
- **In-class:** Episode 1 of *Rap Sh!t* (2022, Crave)
- 🎵
  - City Girls
    - “Twerk” ft. Cardi B <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QryoOF5jEbc>

- “Twerkulator” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62-iVogg5jA>

### Week 8, March 6<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Excerpts from Psalm One’s book (PDF on OWL)
  - Elliott Powell, “Getting Freaky With Missy: Missy Elliott, Queer Hip Hop, and the Musical Aesthetics of Impropriety” (PDF on OWL)
- 🎵
  - Psalm One
    - “Basement Check” Ft. Metasota  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2PcDQtxgdg>
    - “Non-Binary” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAChd-xlIFg>
    - **Presentation:**
  - Missy Elliott
    - “Get Ur Freak On” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPoKiGQzbSQ>
    - “Lose Control” Ft. Ciara and Fat Man Scoop  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na7Iib09898>
    - **Presentation:**

### Week 9, March 13<sup>th</sup> Revolutionizing

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Sherri Williams, “Cardi B: *Love & Hip Hop*’s Unlikely Feminist Hero” (PDF on OWL)
  - Theresa White, “Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott and Nicki Minaj: Fashionistin’ Black Female Sexuality in Hip-Hop Culture—Girl Power or Overpowered?” (PDF on OWL)
  - Jennifer Declue, “To Visualize the Queen Diva! Toward Black Feminist Trans Inclusivity in Beyoncé’s “Formation” (PDF on OWL)
  - Margaret Hunter and Alheli Guenca, “Nicki Minaj and the Changing Politics of Hip-Hop: Real Blackness, Real Bodies, Real Feminism?” (PDF on OWL)
- 🎵
  - Beyoncé
    - “Formation” [https://youtu.be/WDZJPJV\\_bQ](https://youtu.be/WDZJPJV_bQ)
    - “Diva” [https://youtu.be/rNM5HW13\\_O8](https://youtu.be/rNM5HW13_O8)
    - **Presentation:**
  - Nicki Minaj
    - “Barbie World (With Aqua)” Ft. Ice Spice  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUj2AWEJnwQ>
    - “Anaconda” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDZX4ooRsWs>
    - “Good Form” Ft Lil Wayne <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8GX0cZ-xtw>
    - “Feeling Myself” Ft. Beyoncé  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlV9gmRLvAk>
    - **Presentation:**

- Cardi B
  - “Bongos” Ft. Megan Thee Stallion  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux1f1Q8Zxhk>
  - “I Like It” Ft. Bad Bunny and J Balvin  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTINMmZKwpA>
  - “Bodak Yellow” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEGccV-NOm8>
  - **Presentation:**

### Week 10, March 20<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Excerpts from Sesali Bowen’s *Bad Fat Black Girl: Notes from a Trap Feminist* (PDF on OWL)
- 🎵
  - Doja Cat
    - “Say So” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pok8H\\_KF1FA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pok8H_KF1FA)
    - “Paint the Town Red” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4\\_9TFeMfJE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4_9TFeMfJE)
    - “You Right” Ft. The Weeknd  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXgV1rXUoME>
    - **Presentation:**
  - Megan Thee Stallion
    - “Plan B” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQuQ8zDxGh0>
    - “Sweetest Pie” Ft. Dua Lipa  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7JrX7PHGBE>
    - “Body” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PBYPgu4Az8s>
    - “Savage” (Remix) Ft. Beyoncé <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leIqjoO0-Bs>
    - **Presentation:**

### Week 11, March 27<sup>th</sup>

- **For you, write down common themes:**
- **Readings:**
  - Christin Taylor, “Release Your Wiggle: Big Freedia’s Queer Bounce” (PDF on OWL)
  - Steven Shaviro, “Pulses of Distraction (Tierra Whack)” <https://www-bloomsburycollections-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/monograph-detail?docid=b-9781501388590&pdfid=9781501388590.ch-004.pdf&tocid=b-9781501388590-chapter4>
  - Young M.A. Interview <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2017/11/178013/young-ma-female-rapper-gender-sexuality-interview>
- 🎵
  - Big Freedia

- “Chasing Rainbows” Ft. Kesha:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZINI7UhRoyc>
- “You Already Know” Ft. Sonyae  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqv6HsgbvQE&t=5s>
- **Presentation:**
- Tierra Whack
  - “Whack World” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOTebhPy04g>
  - “Hungry Hippo” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QvhJEiPuAI>
  - **Presentation:**
- Young M.A
  - “OOOUUU” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVf\\_4Ns3qLU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVf_4Ns3qLU)
  - “Thotiana” Remix<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD88Eo9w-Eg>
  - **Presentation:**

### Week 12, April 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Exam Review
- “Hype project” due by 11:55PM on OWL

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6EplABAKKo>