

**Western University
London, Ontario, Canada
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
Winter 2027**

BLST 2168B: Black Popular Culture Today

****Preliminary Course Outline – Subject to Change****

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

Instructor: Prof. Anmol Dutta

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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.

Technical Requirements: a.) Laptop b.) Stable Internet Connection

Required Texts

There are no required texts that students need to purchase for the course. All readings can be accessed via the Course Readings tab on OWL. *****ALL readings can be accessed via Course Readings on Brightspace; ALL viewings can be accessed via links on the Syllabus under the "Course Outline & Syllabus" tab.*****

OWL Brightspace

All course materials, including links to video clips, will be posted on OWL Brightspace. Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Asynchronous Learning

This course will be taught asynchronously. Asynchronous learning is independent and relies on the student directly their own schedule. This does not mean that you have access to the entire course. Readings/viewings and lectures will be posted weekly, every Monday. Completing the course requirements, listening to lectures, etc. are the responsibility of the student. Please ensure that you plan your time accordingly.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is strictly prohibited. If AI use is suspected in any written work, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment	Description	Points
Syllabus Quiz	Open-book quiz about the syllabus	5%
Midterm Exam	Multiple Choice and True/False Questions	20%
Short Analyses		
Short Analysis 1: 500-600 analysis WEEK 2-5	500–600-word close reading analysis of a scene/clip OR a quote from your critical readings from the syllabus.	20%
Short Analysis 2: 500-600 analysis WEEK 8-11	500-600-word close reading analysis of a scene/clip OR a quote from your critical readings from the syllabus.	20%
Final Exam	Reflection-based responses about your learnings, and takeaways from the course. (Divided in three parts and will have internal options).	35%

Grading

Prof. Dutta will be grading the Syllabus Quiz and Midterms. Your Short Analyses (both) and the Final exam will be graded by your designated Group Leader.

Assignment Descriptions

**** Additional information about assessments will be available under “Content” tab in OWL Brightspace under “Exams and Assignment Guidelines” ****

- **Syllabus Quiz – 5%**

Students will complete an open book quiz on OWL. The Syllabus Quiz can be found through the “Tests and Quizzes” tab of the Course OWL site. Questions will all be based entirely on the information provided on the Course Outline as well as the Introduction Lecture. All 20 questions will be multiple choice or True/False. Students will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz from the moment it is opened by them on OWL.

NOTE: No extensions will be granted for this assignment. No re-does or remakes will be granted. Students with accommodation will have the allotted extra time provided for their quiz.

- **Short Analysis Assignments (2) x 20% = 40%**

Students will write a **500-600 word** analysis on that week’s topic. Students’ SA must include a close reading analysis of either: **a short clip/ or a still image from one of the viewings OR a quote from one of the assigned readings of that week**, and discuss its relevance to the theme of the week.

Short Analysis 1: Weeks 2-5. Due in early February

Short Analysis 1: 500-600 words (DUE: early Feb)	Week	Topic
	2	“Black Looks” in Popular Culture
	3	Performance and Blackness: Rap & Hip Hop
	4	Performance and Blackness: Stand-Up Comedy
	5	Belonging and Visibility: Racialization of Black Hair

Short Analysis 2: Weeks 8-11. Due in late March

Short Analysis 2:	Week	Topic
	8	Belonging and Visibility: <i>Moonlight</i> and Queer, Black Masculinities
	9	Belonging and Visibility: Beyonce and Black Motherhood

500-600 words (DUE: late March)	10	Re-Making Blackness: Horror and the Black Body in <i>Get Out</i>
	11	Re-Making Blackness: Afro-futurism and <i>Black Panther</i>

****NOTE**:** Please note that whichever **scene/ quote you pick, MUST be from the assigned weeks, and CANNOT be from outside the Syllabus.** If students submit an analysis from outside the syllabus, the SA will be returned to them, with a **-10% applied on the resubmission.**

Midterm Exam – 20%

Students will complete a midterm **exam** on OWL. **Midterm exam questions will be multiple choice and true/false based on Week 2-5.**

NOTE: This exam will have a six-day window; **no extensions or make-ups will be provided for this exam.**

No late exams will be accepted. Students with accommodations will have the allotted extra time provided for their exam.

Final Exam – 35%

The exam format will include short reflection-based responses about your learnings, and takeaways from the course. The exam will be divided in three parts: Part A, Part B, and Part C. You will answer **2/4** prompts in **Part A and B respectively.** In **Part C,** you will answer **1/3** prompts.

The exam due date will be determined by the official university exam schedule. More details regarding the final exam will be made available at the end of term.

No late exams will be accepted. Students with accommodations will have the allotted extra time provided for their exam.

Grading Standards and Final Grades

Grade	Percentage
A+	90-100% - One could hardly expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89% - Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79% - Good work, meeting all requirements & eminently satisfactory
C	60-69% - Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59% - Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	Below 50% - Missed assignment/ Below par work not meeting requirements/ Assignment submitted does not apply to course

Course Policies

Email Response Time

Please note that emails will be responded to within 48 hours during regular working hours on Mon – Fri from 9 am-5pm. Please ensure to respect these working hours. When contacting me via email, students *must* include the course code (BLST 2168B) in the subject line and use your official UWO email account to send the email. Emails without the course code and/or not sent from a UWO email are subject to be overlooked and not be responded to in time.

Essay Policy

The Short Analyses must follow current MLA format (MLA 9) and must include a list of Works Cited at the end. There is a helpful online version of the guide here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

Please ensure that all your written work is **submitted as a Word attachment on OWL Brightspace**. The essays that are submitted in other formats will receive a grade, without any feedback.

Late Policy

Any submissions that surpass the deadline will be considered overdue, and receive a penalty of **3% per day late**, including weekends and holidays. For any assignments more than 10% of the final grade, students must directly contact their academic counselor. Once I have received a recommendation for accommodation or consideration, then we can discuss the new due date, but not before. Accommodations for medical reasons cannot be given by the instructor; students must go through the proper channels to receive the medical accommodations.

Statements

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements. For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar’s webpage: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>. Requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make **one** Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course.

Academic Accommodation

This course prioritizes accessible learning. [Academic Accommodation](#) thus is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.” Students with both, visible and invisible disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity.

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-driven materials such as PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's (Professor Dutta's) intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner, Anmol Dutta, may be an infringement of copyright.

You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (both online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Support Services Statements

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. The contact information for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Religious Accommodation

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Learning Development and Success

Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> is a fantastic resource to plan your studies. Counsellors at LDS are ready to help you improve your learning skills. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling. They also offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Additional Support Services

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or quote or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Course Syllabus

Week		Topic	
1		Introduction: Course Welcome	
2	Short Analysis 1 500-600 words (DUE: early Feb)	“Black Looks” in Popular Culture	FINAL EXAM
3		Performance and Blackness: Rap & Hip Hop	
4		Performance and Blackness: Stand-Up Comedy	
5		Belonging and Visibility: Racialization of Black Hair	
6		MIDTERM EXAM	
7		READING WEEK	
8	Short Analysis 2 500-600 words (DUE: late Mar)	Belonging and Visibility: <i>Moonlight</i> and Queer, Black Masculinities	
9		Belonging and Visibility: Beyonce and Black Motherhood	
10		Re-Making Blackness: Horror and the Black Body in <i>Get Out</i>	
11		Re-Making Blackness: Afro-futurism and <i>Black Panther</i>	
12		Black Futurisms: Black Joy and its Resistance	
13		Catch Up Week	