MUSIC 351. History of Hip Hop  
Spring 2015, W 7:00–9:40 p.m., ENS-280

Instructor: Maya Ginsberg (mginsberg@mail.sdsu.edu, 619.800.8389)  
M-256, office hours: Tuesday 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.; by appointment

This is a lecture course that surveys the music known as hip hop. Emerging from street parties in New York in the 1970s, hip hop music and culture has evolved into an art form with huge economic success and worldwide cultural impact. This course examines the historical, social, political, and aesthetic roots of hip hop music and culture. Students in this class will examine the music and lyrics of a selection of representative songs by hip hop groups and individual artists. Through critical listening and reading students will explore and examine the socio-political influence and the controversy and criticisms of hip hop music and culture.

Please note that some of the material in this course contains explicit content that may be offensive. These works are presented as explorations of artistic practices and are not intended to offend and/or shock.

This is an Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Required Textbook:


Optional Textbook:


*Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* and *Hip Hop America* are available for purchase in the SDSU bookstore. Supplemental readings (as indicated in the course outline below) can be accessed on Blackboard. These works are marked in the course outline with double asterisks (**).

Required Listening:

Students are individually responsible for accessing all 41 musical examples that will be studied this semester. The songs are listed in the order they appear in the course outline. The songs may either be downloaded on such commercial sites as *iTunes Store* and *Amazon.com*, or they may be accessed on *YouTube*. It is not necessary to purchase these songs, but it is imperative that students listen repeatedly to each musical selection. Listening guides will be available to students on Blackboard.
Listening List:

1. Fatback Band, “King Tim III (Personality Jock)” (1979)
3. The Jimmy Castor Bunch, “It’s Just Begun” (1972)
10. Funky 4 + 1, “That’s the Joint” (1981)
13. Sugar Hill Gang, “Rapper’s Delight” (1979)
32. De La Soul, “Eye Know (The Know It All Mix)” (1988)
35. Vanilla Ice, “Ice Ice Baby” (1990)
38. Salt-N-Pepa, “Let’s Talk About Sex” (1990)
Class Website:

Students may consult a website specifically designed for this course on Blackboard (the University’s online network of class websites) from any computer with internet access. The address is: https://blackboard.sdsu.edu. The site includes copies of the syllabus and course outline, handouts, listening guides, supplemental reading, review sheets for exams, discussion boards, and quizzes. Grades for quizzes, discussion, and exams will be posted on Blackboard. Please direct any questions about grades to the instructor in a timely manner.

If you have difficulty with any technical aspect of Blackboard, contact the staff at the Student Computing Center:

Blackboard Student Help @ Student Computing Center
Student Help Desk Phone: (619) 594-3189
Student Help Desk Email: scc@rohan.sdsu.edu
http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/index.html

Evaluation:

Quizzes (10 @ 50 pts.): 500 pts.
Over the course of the semester, students will be required to take ten quizzes, each comprised of multiple-choice, true-false, and/or listening identification questions concerning issues, readings, and music discussed in class the previous week. The quizzes, which will be administered on Blackboard, must be completed before the class period listed in the course outline. The due dates for the quizzes are listed in the class outline. Any issues with the quizzes regarding technology need to be addressed in a timely manner. There will be no opportunity to make up missed quizzes.

Midterm and Final Examinations (2 @ 200 pts.): 400 pts.
The exams will consist of multiple-choice and/or true-false questions requiring students to identify key terms and people, identify a musical selection of songs studied in class, respond to statements concerning musical features of each listening excerpt, and address main issues associated with the lectures and assigned readings. Exam dates and times can be found on the course outline. You must be present on these dates unless you are prevented by a verified illness or emergency. Please bring a red ParSCORE test form (F-289-PAR-L) and a #2 pencil.

Discussion (4 @ 25 pts.): 100 pts.
At four points during the semester, as indicated in the course outline, students will form groups to discuss issues concerning musical or cultural principles of hip hop from the lectures and readings. Attendance is critical and mandatory for these discussion groups and each group will submit a written summary of their discussion.

Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930–1000</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>900–929</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830–869</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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Use of Electronics in Class:

Please limit the use of computers and/or tablets during class to work being done in class—note taking, accessing your text, etc. The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class meetings.

Student Disability Services:

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability must register with Student Disability Services (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/index.html) who will issue a verification letter. If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.