

**SOCIOLOGY 396H1F
SOCIOLOGY OF HIP HOP
Fall 2014**

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Introduction

What is Hip Hop? How does a sociological lens enhance our understanding of Hip Hop?

This is a “mash up” course. Like musical mash ups that blend different—and often quite distinct—musical genres together, this course will bring together different research traditions in Hip Hop studies *and* Sociology. This pairing will produce a nice dialogue between complementary fields of research.

I have two goals for you in this course:

- (1) I want to give you a basic footing in *some* Hip Hop scholarship;
- (2) I want to show you how a sociological lens can help us better understand and analyze Hip Hop culture.

Please keep in mind that this is *not* a comprehensive study of Hip Hop culture. Although we will spend time reading and thinking about different dimensions of Hip Hop culture, most of our substantive focus will be spent on rapping and bboying/bgirling. Although graffiti art and turntablism will make cameo appearances throughout our course, there is simply not enough time in a 12-week course to really delve into all “4 elements” of Hip Hop culture.

Also, please keep in mind that you do not have to be a seasoned Hip Hop fan or practitioner to do well in this course. While a basic familiarity with Hip Hop is always welcomed and may enhance our in-class discussions, I have designed the course so that the devout Hip Hop “head” and complete outsider can both thrive and walk away with fresh insights from the course. In other words, much like Hip Hop culture, this course is designed for everyone.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Fernandes, Sujatha. 2011. *Close to the Edge: In Search of the Global Hip Hop Generation*. New York:

Verso.

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Wesleyan:

Wesleyan Press.

Schloss, Joseph. 2009. *Foundation: B-Boys, B-Girls, and Hip-Hop Culture in New York*. New York:

Oxford University Press.

NOTE: The prerequisite for SOC 395H1F is successful completion of a SOC 200+ level course. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

Course Expectations

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory.

You are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates.

Proper documentation from a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate or college registrar is required to justify an absence.

Course Webpage

We will have a course website hosted on Blackboard. This website will contain the course syllabus, links to all the readings that are in journal article form, handouts, and course announcements. You are responsible for all the course materials and for all announcements. Please make sure to check your official utoronto.ca email addresses regularly.

Live Tweets

I encourage you to post ideas from lectures and readings to the course Twitter. These can be observations, questions, random ideas, or links to additional readings and media that relate to course material. Please post using the hashtag: **#SOC396HipHop**. Not only will it encourage critical dialogue with your colleagues, it will also provide me with a sense of what you find interesting, puzzling, and provocative. Each week, I will choose the “top 3” tweets and announce these in lecture. There might be prizes for the most creative and interesting tweets.

Assignments

You will have 4 major grades for this course, which add up to 100% of your final grade (the research paper will be discussed in class):

- 1) An in-class midterm (25%);
- 2) A short research paper (30%);
- 3) An in-class final (25%)
- 4) 2 in-class pop quizzes (20%)

The pop quizzes will be short, in-class assignments. During the quiz, I will play you a video clip or music. You will then write a short response piece on how the multimedia might connect with one of the themes that we have covered in class. Make-ups for these impromptu assignments will **NOT** be accepted. I will only make exceptions for students who provide me with email and medical documentation *before* class meetings.

Plagiarism: Avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters”). If you are using somebody else’s ideas, do not present them as your own, whether you are quoting exact words, paraphrasing or summarizing. Give proper references if you are using somebody else’s ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference--you are not going to be penalized for that.

Go to *Turnitin.com* to submit your research paper online. Please note: "Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to *Turnitin.com* for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the *Turnitin.com* reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the *Turnitin.com* web site."

For more on these matters, see:

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/conditions-use.htm>

Deadlines: Late work without appropriate medical documentation will **NOT** be accepted. I will only make exceptions for students who provide me and the TA with email and medical documentation of an emergency **24 hours before** the test dates and deadlines. **Also, the essay must be turned in by YOU; I will not accept papers from friends in or out of the class. Similarly, these papers will not be due at the beginning or end of class. Instead, I will announce sometime in the course of my lecture when I will collect these essays. I will not accept papers from students who arrive early just to drop off their papers and leave. Similarly, if you are not present when I collect these essays, your paper will be counted as LATE. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

- In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed **Verification of Student Illness** or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. **The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or to your TA during their office hours.
- If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). **The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or to your TA during their office hours.

Late assignments will be penalized 5% for every day after the original date.

Accessibility Services: If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

OVERVIEW

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction and Discussion: What is Hip Hop?

Week 2 (September 15): Contextualizing Hip Hop

Anderson, Elijah. 1990. "The Police and the Black Male." Chapter from *Streetwise: Race, class, and change in an urban community*.

Anderson, Elijah. 1994. "The Code of the Streets." *Atlantic Monthly* 273(5): 1-8.

Bourgois, Philippe. 1995. "The Political Economy of Resistance and Self-Destruction in the Crack Economy." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 97-118.

Wilson, William Julius. 1999. "When work disappears: new implications for race and urban poverty in the global economy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (3): 479-498.

Week 3 (September 22): The Hip Hop Wars

Alim, H. Samy. 2006. "The Natti Ain't no Punk City": Emic Views of Hip Hop Culture." *Callaloo*. 29(3): 969-990.

Kitwana, Bakari. 2004. "The State of the Hip-Hop Generation: How Hip-Hop's Cultural Movement is Evolving into Political Power." *Diogenes* 51: 115-120.

McWhorter, John. 2003. "How Hip-Hop Holds Blacks Back." *City Journal* 13(3): 66-75.

Morgan, Joan. 1995. "Fly-Girls, Bitches, and Hoes: Notes of a Hip-Hop Feminist." *Social Text* 45: 151-157.

Week 4 (September 29): IN-CLASS MIDTERM

BLACK NOISE

Week 5 (October 6): Black Noise 1

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise*. Introduction-Chapter 2

Week 6 (October 13): Thanksgiving, no class

Week 7 (October 20): Black Noise 2

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise*. Chapters 3-5

BBOYS, BGIRLS & BATTLING

Week 8 (October 27): Foundation 1

Schloss, Joseph. 2009. *Foundation*. Introduction- Chapter 4

Lee, Jooyoung. 2009. "Escaping Embarrassment: Face-Work in the Rap Ciphер." *Social Psychology Quarterly*.

Week 9 (November 3): Foundation 2

Schloss, Joseph. 2009. *Foundation*. Chapters 5-8

Lee, Jooyoung. 2009. "Battlin' on the Corner: Techniques for Sustaining Play." *Social Problems*.

RESEARCH PAPER DUE!

GLOBAL HIP HOP

Week 10 (November 10): Close to the Edge 1

Fernandes, Sujatha. 2011. *Close to the Edge*. Introduction – Ch. 2.

Week 11 (November 24): Close to the Edge 2

Fernandes, Sujatha. 2011. *Close to the Edge*. Ch. 3-Epilogue.

Week 12 (December 1): IN-CLASS FINAL!