



## Foundations of BLACK Popular Culture

### I. Course Information

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#### Quest 1 Theme: Identities

Summer B 2025 (June 30-Aug 8)

Meeting Day/Time:

Location: Asynchronous

Primary General Education Designation: Humanities

Writing Designation (if seeking): Writing Designation  
(WR) 2000 words

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

#### Instructor

**Dr. Drew D. Brown**

Email: – brown.ad@ufl.edu

Office location: 1012F Turlington Hall

Office hours: TBA (and by appointment)

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Margaret Mparebea Eduonoo

Abida Sultana

Pepe Srisa-nga

Office location: by appointment

#### Course Description

This course explores the cultural foundations of Black expression where creativity isn't just art—it's life. It examines the popularity and influence of Black culture by asking, "What is Black popular culture and why is it important?" This course cuts across disciplines, using multiple perspectives to critically inspect the historical and contemporary forces shaping Black popular culture. It traces the lineage of Black music, television and film, social media, fashion, and arts, uncovering how these domains have reflected Black cultural identity and influenced global culture.

Black popular culture is more than a billion-dollar enterprise; it's a dynamic player in the ongoing dialogue about society. This course will equip students to understand how creators of Black popular culture show their experiences in their material, generating powerful discussions and often spearheading cultural shifts. Engaging in digital and scholarly materials, students will learn to critically analyze and articulate the nuanced ways Black culture both mirrors and shapes society.

## II. Coursework & Schedule

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### 1. List of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	%
Discussion Boards (5)	Students will (1) answer a question on the discussion board and (2) respond to another student's post. Each post must be more than 75 words. Students must think critically and deeply when posting and responding.	10
Quizzes (5)	There will be multiple choice quizzes that evaluate the reading assignments.	20
Test	There will be one tests to evaluate students' mastery of the course material.	25
Paper 1: Pre-Reflection	Write a 350 to 450-word paper on "What is Black popular culture, why is it important, and how do you engage in/contribute to it?"	2.5
Digital Presentation #1: BPC	Select a specific cultural element that is popular in Black culture and create a 3-4-minute cultural analysis video. Use the "Cultural Presentation Worksheet" to create the script.	5
Paper #2: Analytical Short I: The "Ghetto"	Using the course materials on "the ghetto" and the Black urban experience, write a 700-900-word lyrical analysis of rap lyrics.	10
Paper #3: Analytical Short II: Cultural analysis of signifying	Using the concepts of "Signifying," write a 700-900-word paper that analyzes the language used in the provided examples of linguistic expression.	10
Paper #4: Analytical Long: "Cool"	Using concepts and theories from the course literature, write a 1500-1700-word paper that analyzes the presence of coolness in a photo and the impact it can have on a particular place or situation.	15
Paper #5: Post-Reflection	A 350 to 450-word paper on how your views have changed regarding "what is Black popular culture, why is it important, and how do you engage in/contribute to it?"	2.5
	Total:	100

## 2. Weekly Course Schedule

Module:	Activity:	Topic/Assignment: (Subject to change)	
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Module 1	Due Date:	July 6 <sup>th</sup>
	Topic:	Introduction and foundations
	Summary:	This course section is designed to introduce the various aspects of culture, including its definition, elements, and functions. It will also examine the key terms and concepts that have shaped the development of popular culture; Cultural Identity, Cultural Perspectives, Cultural Expression
	Concepts and Theories:	Culture; Ethnicity; High, Low, Sub, and Counterculture (Socio-cultural studies); Communication senders and receivers;
	Lectures:	What is Culture? Black Racial Identity Black History: African to Slavery African-American Cultural Identity
	Readings/Films:	Syllabus DuBois: Striving of the Negro People (PDF)
	Assignments:	Paper 1: Pre-Reflection Quiz 1 Discussion 1: Should our society embrace the variation of racial identities or try to become a post-racial/raceless society where racial identity disappears?

Module 2	Due Date:	July 13 <sup>th</sup>
	Topic:	Origins and popularity of Black-street culture
	Summary:	This section explores Black Street culture, presented as an intrinsic part of the Black experience, and examines its significant influence on Black art and music. It explores how this culture reflects the lives and challenges Black communities.
	Concepts and Theories:	Concepts and theories: Nihilism (Social Psychology); The “Code of the Streets”; The “Ghetto”
	Lectures:	The Impacts of Racism Black Street Culture Popularity of Black-street culture
	Readings/Films:	West: Nihilism in Black America (PDF) Anderson: The Code of the Streets (PDF)
	Assignments:	Paper #2: Analytical Short I: The “Ghetto/Hood” Quiz 2 Discussion 2: Should the NFL get rid of celebration dances that are rooted in Black street culture? Listening to the podcast It is what it is, give a major reason for getting rid or allowing the most recent banned celebrations.

Module 3	Due Date:	July 20 <sup>th</sup>
	Topic:	Cultural Aesthetics, Language and Signifying from Ebonics to Black Twitter
	Summary:	This section explores how cultural aesthetics shape the creation and reception of Black artistic expressions. It defines “signifying” in Black popular culture by examining the language on Twitter to highlight how Black users engage in creative expression and communication of complex ideas and emotions through language and cultural expressions.
	Concepts and Theories:	Nzuri model, Rhythm, Call and response, Improvisation (Culture and Aesthetics); Signifying (Rhetoric and communication), Trickster tradition
	Lectures:	African Aesthetics and Traditions Language and Signifying Black Twitter
	Readings/Films:	The Crossover: Black Style of Play AAVE: Talking Black In America ( <a href="#">Link</a> ) <i>Are You Entertained?:</i> Ch 10_The Subaltern is Signifying (p. 161-174) by Sheneese Thompson Florini: Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin’ Communication and Cultural Performance on ‘Black Twitter (PDF)
	Assignments:	Paper #3: Cultural analysis of work using language
Module 4	Due Date:	July 27 <sup>th</sup>
	Topic:	Black Popular Music (Part 1)

	Summary:	This section explores Black music, from its African origins to the sounds of Blues and Jazz. It highlights the evolution to Hip-hop and contemporary music, showcasing how these genres have revolutionized musical expression and culture globally, from street origins to worldwide acclaim.
	Concepts and Theories:	Gospel, Blues, Jazz, Hip hop, Sampling/Remix, The Cool Pose
	Lectures:	The History of Black music Hip-Hop and Rap Music Genres Black Men and Coolness Bad B_tch Behavior
	Readings/Films:	Hip Hop: A Culture of Vision and Voice ( <a href="#">Link</a> ) Watch: <i>Hip Hop: Beyond beats and rhymes</i> ( <a href="#">Link</a> ) Majors, Richard. "Cool pose: Black masculinity and sports." <i>Contemporary themes: African Americans in Sport</i> . Routledge, 2017. 15-22. (PDF) Ali_Towards a Bad Bitches' Pedagogy (PDF)
	Assignments:	Discussion 3: Has Hip Hop had a grater positive or negative impact on the Black community? Digital presentation Quiz 3

Module 5	Date:	Aug 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Topic:	Ethics in Black Popular Culture
	Summary:	This section explores Black cultural values in popular media from twerking on social media to Beyoncé's music videos. it looks at the history of respectability politics in the Black church and its impact on popular culture and socially accepted expressions of femininity among Black women/girls.

	Concepts and Theories:	Black Liberalism, Black Conservatism, Black Radicalism
	Lectures:	The Black Church and Respectability
	Readings/Films:	<i>Are You Entertained?:</i> Ch 15_The booty don't lie (p. 237-251)
	Assignments:	Discussion 4: If you were to select only one ideology (Black Liberalism, Black Conservatism, or Black Radicalism), without blending any of them, which do you believe would be the most effective for Black people in achieving social equality in the U.S. today?  Paper #4: Analytical Long: Be Cool  Quiz 4

Module 6	Due Date:	Aug 8 <sup>th</sup>
	Topic:	The impact of traditional media and new media (social media): From CNN to Podcasts; Representation of Black Culture in social media
	Summary:	This section of the course offers a critical examination of traditional media and new media's use of Black culture on Black culture. It examines the use of new media, particularly social media, and podcasts, to provide a platform for Black culture.
	Concepts and Theories:	Traditional Media, Cultural representation, "New media" (Media and communications), Representation (Media and Communication)
	Lectures:	Black culture and traditional/old media Black culture and new media
	In-class Activity:	Watch and analyze: Old media vs new media
	Readings/Films:	"What Draymond Green's 'new media' ethos gets wrong about media-player dynamics" ( <a href="#">Link</a> )

	Assignments:	Evaluations Paper #5: Post-Reflection
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## III. Grading

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### 3. WR Statements and Grading Rubric

For courses that confer WR credit, the course grades now have two components: To receive writing credit a student must receive a grade of “C” or higher. The writing assignment ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

PLEASE NOTE: A grade of “C-” **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student’s written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Assignment, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with a basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow the progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only a generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback, on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

## 4. Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100% of possible points		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

*A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.*

## IV. Quest Learning Experiences

### 5. Details of Experiential Learning Component

For experiential learning, this project is an opportunity for students to reflect upon their understanding of “Blackness” and its place in popular culture. In this project, students will create a piece of artistic

expression that reflects Black popular culture such as rap lyrics, fashion outfits, or a hashtag. Students will have to not only provide an analysis of their submission but also show the impact of this type of expression on American popular culture by identifying other Black people who have used the same form of expression or produced something that became “popular”.

## **6. Details of Self-Reflection Component**

The self-reflection comes in two areas of this course. The first is in various discussion posts where students will post on topics in Black popular culture (rap music, #blacktwitter, Black sporting styles of play, etc.,) and respond to critiques of their posts by other students. The second area is the reflection paper. At the beginning of the semester, they will write on “What is Black popular culture, why is it important, how do you engage in/contribute to it?” Then at the end of the semester, they will have to reflect on how these things have changed.

# **V. General Education and Quest Objectives & SLOs**

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## **7. This Course’s Objectives—Gen Ed Primary Area and Quest**

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) At the end of “For the culture: Foundations of Black Popular Culture,” students will be able to...

1. Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory, and methodologies in the humanistic study of traditions, elements, and social impact of Black popular culture. As these methodologies, works, and ideas continue to be relevant in contemporary American culture, students will also be able to identify, describe, and explain their position in historical, cultural, economic, political, and social experiences and processes that characterize Black popular culture in the contemporary world. Given the central role history and experiences play in contemporary culture, students will be able to identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition, especially the formation, maintenance, and transformation of identities (Content SLOs for Gen Ed H and D [\[area SLOs available here\]](#)). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in class discussions, a digital presentation, two short analytical papers, two response papers, one long essay, and weekly quizzes.

2. Identify and analyze key elements, values, assumptions, biases, and influences that shape thought in Black popular culture. Students will approach issues and problems from the perspectives of multiple genres, as well as multiple disciplinary and analytical positions, and will learn how perspectives of music, art, sports, psychology, sociology, history, gender, and politics inform the function of Black culture. In a learning environment that promotes students becoming more cognizant of their own lived experiences with Black popular culture, the juxtaposition of these analytical lenses will foster the analysis and evaluation of essential questions about the human condition, especially concerning identity. (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed H and D [\[area SLOs available here\]](#)). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in class discussions, a digital presentation, two short analytical papers, two response papers, one long essay, and weekly quizzes.

3. Communicate—clearly and effectively—knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning, and develop and present clear and effective responses, about the foundations of Black popular culture and their relevance to more contemporary issues and manifestations of identity, particularly in the context of popular cultural narratives (Communication SLO for Gen Ed H and N [[area SLOs available here](#)]). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in class discussions, a digital presentation, two short analytical papers, two response papers, one long essay, and weekly quizzes.

**Quest 1:**

Quest is a shared, sequential general education curriculum. Eschewing rote learning and standardized tests in favor of close reading, critical thinking, and effective communication of ideas, UF Quest promotes a high level of faculty engagement in undergraduate education. UF Quest nurtures the intellectual curiosity of UF students and invites them to grapple with the difficult questions and challenges that they will face as thoughtful adults navigating a complex and interconnected world.

**Humanities (H)**

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and analyze the key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Institutional Definition</b>	<b>Institutional SLO</b>	<b>Diversity (co-designation)</b>	<b>Objectives will be Accomplished By:</b>
<b>Content</b>	Content is knowledge of the terminology, concepts, methodologies, and theories used within the subject area.	Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies, and theories used within the subject area.	Identify, describe, and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.	Quizzes Paper # 3 Paper #4 Lectures Digital presentation Test 1&2
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Critical thinking is characterized by the comprehensive analysis of issues, ideas, and evidence before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.	Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the subject area.	Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on how cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse U.S. society.	Paper # 2 Paper #3 Paper #4 Discussion Boards Digital presentation Test 1&2
<b>Communication</b>	Communication is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms.	Students clearly and effectively communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning in written or oral forms appropriate to the subject area.	The diversity designation is always in conjunction with another category. Communication outcomes are listed in those subject areas.	Paper # 1 Paper #5 Discussion Boards Digital presentation

## VI. Required Policies

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### 8. Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### 9. UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### 10. Class Attendance and Make-up Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)

### 11. University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course.

The Honor Pledge:

*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by Students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

## **12. Counseling and Wellness Center**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

## **13. The Writing Studio**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or at 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

## **14. Online Issues**

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please seek assistance by [visiting our helpdesk website](#) or contacting us at 352-392-4357.