### Course Description
The goal of this course is to provide students a deeper understanding of the vitality, resilience, and global breadth of contemporary African and African diaspora communities through an experiential engagement with hip-hop and urban cultures as decolonial voices that constantly engage the limits of coloniality, global capitalism, and local political realities. This course will particularly focus on the ways African urban hip-hop functions as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the global African diaspora, in general and in the U.S., Senegal, and Ghana, in particular. Using music as a political and aesthetic expression against Empire, we explore the potential and limits of African urban hip-hop to offer disenfranchised masses, especially people of African descent, possibilities to critique and delink from coloniality in their everyday lives. Hip hop will be studied as a means to create links and spaces of solidarity between African descendants and economically disenfranchised peoples from the Global North and the Global South. Our ultimate goal is to question dominant narratives and create a transformative consciousness about economic and cultural globalization, immigration, identity, nation, nationality, democracy, human rights, and equality.

### Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course students should be able to:
- Analyze the concept of diaspora and its corollaries: (concepts of roots, nations, and nationality) from a decolonial perspective;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the vitality, resilience, and global breadth of contemporary African and African diaspora communities;
- Articulate the ways in which African urban hip hop functions as a means to create links, spaces, and solidarities between African descendants and economically disenfranchised peoples from the global north and the global south;
- Illustrate the pervasive nature of coloniality in Black Communities globally;
- Appraise the complex role of African urban hip hop as a decolonial pedagogy that engages the limits of coloniality, global capitalism, and local political realities; and
• Articulate how African urban hip-hop functions as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the U.S., in Africa, and in Europe.

**Language and methods of Instruction**

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to local vocabularies related to course content through in-country expert lectures, field assignments, and activities. Assigned and recommended readings are listed in the course schedule section below. Students are responsible for all the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear in class discussions. Students may submit assignments in either English or French and are expected to complete all assignments by their due dates.

**Course Chronology:**

Topics covered in each lecture will draw on site visits, guest lecturers, and other activities, in addition to the assigned readings. Each country will involve a series of classes structured around the key lines of inquiry outlined in the course overview. The order of the lectures may be rearranged to respond to activities or opportunities presented in each location.

**Module 1: Coloniality, Deccolonial Thinking, and the Necessity of New Pedagogies**

Module 1 introduces students to the epistemic, political, and socio-economic effects of coloniality on people of African descent. Students will be introduced to key concepts in decolonial theory and shown the necessity for a decolonial perspective in this day and time. Students will then be shown the limits of traditional disciplines such as philosophy, literature, anthropology, and political science and how hip-hop offers the possibility of different epistemologies and pedagogies that allow political and ethical modes of resistance against global colonialism and its corollary the colonial matrix of power.

**Site visits**

Site visits will include G Hip Hop, a hip-hop collective from Guediawaye. Students will learn how hip hoppers from lower middle-class neighborhoods succeeded in creating self-reliant economic systems that allow them to circumvent global capitalism. We will particularly examine the ways G Hip Hop has, through the creation of a community garden and a hip-hop academy, attempted to solve problems linked to food security and former detainees' reinsertion in society.

**Required reading**


**Recommended reading**


Week 2

Module 2: The Boomerang Effect: From Africa to the US and Back

This module explores the birth and development of hip hop in the U.S. and in Africa. We will start with an exploration of the roots of the Hip Hop movement in the South Bronx through an examination of the ways African aesthetics and ontologies allowed disenfranchised diasporic communities from the South Bronx to engage critically the social and political realities of the 1970s USA before Hip Hop developed into a global phenomenon in the 1990s. We will subsequently trace the development and adaptation of Hip Hop on the African continent, revisit the diasporic exchanges that have led to its emergence on the continent, and examine the particularities, in Africa, of Hip Hop as a means to question the modes of definitions of the world and the epistemic and cultural foundations of eurocentrism and global capitalism. The module will ultimately engage in a more focused study of Hip Hop and urban cultures in Senegal. Starting with a genealogy of the movement, we will examine its relevance in the consolidation of democracy in Senegal while exploring the ways it has adapted to, and transformed, contemporary Senegalese cultures and cityscapes.

Site visits

Students will visit Awadi and Africulturban and learn about the way hip-hop has evolved in Senegal. While Awadi, the pioneer of hip hop in Senegal is from the SICAP neighborhood, Africulturban is from the Senegalese suburbs. The comparison between these two respectively upper middle-class and lower middle-class neighborhoods, will show how hip-hop evolved from a Pan-African movement focusing on questions related to universal black consciousness to a movement focused on issues of day to day survival. This will lead us to better understand the sociology of Senegalese urban dwellings and their implications on the socio-political particularities of Senegalese urban cultures.

Site visits will also include MCU, an urban cultural center in Ouakam, where students will learn about Hip Hop as a global music rooted in local art forms.

Playlist


Week 2

Session 1: The Fluid Roots of the South Bronx

Required reading

https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/poverty_prejudice/mediarace/socialsignificance.htm


**Recommended reading**


**Week 3**  
**Session 2: A Short History of Hip-Hop in Africa**

**Required reading**


**Recommended reading**


**Week 4**  
**Session 3: Hip-Hop in Senegal and Ghana**

**Required reading**


Module 3: The Four Elements and the Development of Hip Hop in Senegal and Ghana

We will focus on the particularities and developments of graffiti, breakdancing, slam, rap, and Djaying in Senegal and Ghana. This module will mainly be organized around workshops animated by major performers of Hip-Hop and urban cultures such as King Mo, Ndongo D, Xeinnix, and Salla Ngary. We will particularly look at the ways the so called four elements of Hip-Hop have developed into completely new genres in the African context and how they engage the social, political, and economic realities of Senegal and Ghana today. Students will get the chance to produce their own work and perform with Senegalese and Ghanaian Hip Hop artists.

Site visits
This module will be organized in Ghana. Site visits will include Hip Hop collectives in Accra. Students will workshop the four elements of Hip Hop and critically reflect on their adaptation in Ghana’s hiplife tradition. Students will get the chance to work alongside major Ghanaian hip-hoppers, artists, and cultural activists.

Week 5
Session 1: Graffiti and Slam à l’Africaine

Recommended reading


Week 6
Session 2: breakdancing, D-Jaying, and the New Griot Tradition

Required reading


Recommended reading


Week 7
Session 3: Rap

Required reading


Recommended reading


Module 4: Hip-hop, Urban Cultures, and the Grammar of Decoloniality
This module looks at the ways African Urban hip-hop challenges the colonial matrix of power and participates in the consolidation of democracy in Senegal. Students will examine the ways African urban hip-hop functions as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the U.S., in Africa, and in Europe. In light of all the readings and experiences accumulated during the semester, students will explore further the ways Hip Hop and urban cultures function as political and aesthetic expressions against Empire and corrupted local elite. The module will subsequently explore the role of Hip-Hop and urban cultures in the creolization of local cultures through a discussion of the ways it has led to modern and creole yet fundamentally African cultures thereby showing the complexity the very idea of root that traditionally constitutes the foundation of the idea of diaspora.

Site visits
This module will be organized in Tambacounda, Dakar, and Ziguinchor. Site visits for this workshop will include visits to radio stations, youth empowerment collectives, cultural centers, and political organizations working on urban cultures and education. We will work closely with two major Senegalese rap crews, Kangam Squad from Tambacounda and Hardcore Side, from Ziguinchor. While the former crew, composed of teachers has been central in bringing Hip Hop into education spaces through hip-hop literacy, the latter has been working with politicians to develop peace and reconciliation programs in the South of Senegal. Students will have the chance to experience radical changes that hip-hop has brought in the Senegalese school system and political spheres. In Dakar, students will also get the chance to learn how hip hop crews
such as y en a marre have developed into NGOs playing a central role in the democratic process.

Week 8
Session 1: Hip-Hop, decolonial Pedagogy, and Liberation

Required reading


Recommended reading

Week 9
Session 2: The Revolution will be televised: Bringing democracy one beat at a time

Required reading

Recommended reading

Week 10
Session 3: Hip-Hop, Urban Cultures, and Creolization

Required reading


Recommended reading
Williams, Angela. “‘We ain’t Terrorists but we Droppin’ Bombs’: Language Use and Localization in Egyptian Hip Hop.” Ed. Marina Terkourafi. The Languages of Global Hip Hop. Lond” Continuum. Pp. 67-95.
Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments:
Response papers 35%
Final Paper 25%
Creative Project 25%
Participation 15%

Grading Scale:
94-100% A
90-93% A-
87-89% B+
84-86% B
80-83% B
77-79% C+
74-76% C
70-73% C
67-69% D+
64-66% D
below 64% F

Description of Assignments
Response papers will be biweekly reflections on the assigned readings and the experiential engagement with communities we will interact with, concepts we will discuss and experiences we will have. These papers should be 3-page double-spaced reflexive and critical.

The final paper is a 10-page critical reflection on Hip Hop as a decolonial praxis in light of students’ readings, their engagement with the Hip Hop community and their visits of Hip-Hop sites. More details about the structure of the paper will be provided before the due date.

For the creative project, students will be asked to produce artistic works based on elements of Hip Hop such as rap, graffiti, dance, slam, djaying, film or video in response to the general theme of the course. The project should be decolonial and Africa-centered in scope. Each project must be submitted along with a three-page typed paper explaining the process by which it was created and how it relates to the themes and materials of our course. The grade will not be primarily based on the artistic skills of the project. The instructor will seriously consider the critical thinking methods involved in the process as well as the effort and time commitment of the author.

Class Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, written questions for class, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. In addition, the following are expectations of all participants:
* Come to class prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

* Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

* Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.

* Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

* Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.