African Urban Hip Hop and Decolonial Futures
AFRS-3000 (3 credits)

Senegal: Hip Hop, Resilience, and Black Struggles

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

The goal of the 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 function as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the global African diaspora, in general and in the U.S. and Senegal, 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

Upon completion of the course, students will 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 African urban hip hop functions as a means for 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;
- 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 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.

Instructional Methods
Topics covered in each lecture will draw on site visits, guest lecturers, and other activities, in addition to the assigned readings. Each module 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, Decolonial 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 show 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
> Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). "Decolonization is not a metaphor." Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1(1).
> http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18630
> Wynter, S. (2003). "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom." *CR: The Centennnial Review*. Vol. 3.3, p.257-337.
>
> Recommended reading
> SCZ. (2015). "Remixing: Decolonial Strategies in Cultural Production" Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education & Society.
> https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2015/03/10/remixing-decolonial-strategies-in-cultural-production/
> Lorenzo, V. (2010). "Introduction: The Settler Colonial Situation" in Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mignolo, W. (2007). "Delinking." *Cultural Studies*. Vol. 21:2. p.449 – 514

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.

> Playlist:
> Bambaataa, A. (1986). "Planet Rock" [Soulsonic Force]. Planet Rock: The Album. New York: Planet that Be. (1982).
> Prophets of the City. (1994). "Neva Again" [Prophets of Da City]. Ghetto Code. [Vinyl]. South Africa: Beggars. (1994).
> Awadi, D. (1995). "Je ne sais pas." [Recorded by Positive Black Soul.] Salam [CD] Universal Island Record (1995).
> Holocauste. (2016). [Recorded by Dig Dund Guiss] Tay la Kagn [CD] Reptile Music 2016.
> Karballah (2017). [Recorded by Karballah] Lou xew Fi. [CD] TeK TanK 2017.
> Passion (2016). [Recorded by One Lyrcal]. Sélébéyoon [CD] (The difftape). 2016.
> Elzo Jamdong. 2018. Coulisses. Macina. 2018.
> Omzo dollar. 2019. Sokhor. Beut ak Lamiñ. 2019.

Module 3: The Four Elements and the Development of Hip Hop
We will focus on the particularities and developments of graffiti, breakdancing, slam, rap, and Djaying in Senegal. 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. Students will get the chance to produce their own work and perform with Senegalese Hip Hop artists.

> Required readings
> Hegert, N. (2013). "Radiant Children: The Construction of Graffiti Art in New York City." *Rhizomes*, Issue 25. Retrieved from http://www.rhizomes.net/issue25/hegert.html

Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson & Ben Greenman. Eds. (2015). *Mo' Meta Blues: The World According to Questlove*. New York: Grand Central Publishing. Pps. 1-13; 180-184.

Recommended reading
Imani P. (2016) "Stinging Like Tabasco: Structure and Format in Hip Hop Compositions." *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
15 Best Places for Graffiti in NYC (updated August 2016). Retrieved from https://foursquare.com/top-places/new-york-city/best-places-graffiti
Top 10 Graffiti Spots in NYC (2015). Retrieved from https://www.timeout.com/newyork/art/street-art-top-ten-spots-to-see-street-art-and-graffiti-in-nyc
Tricia Miranda Choreography: August Alsina, "I Luv This Shit," March 9, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9ypdIf85gI
Wildabeast Adams Choreography: Chris Brown, "Poppin'," August 27, 2014. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xMkH5Go3Xc
Tricia Miranda Choreography: Rihanna, "Bitch Beta Have My Money," April 26, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQraeOG-3L8
Irwin, M. (2016). "Two Detroit Artists Fave Up to Four Years in Prison for Political Graffiti," *Hyperallergic Magazine.* Retrieved from https://hyperallergic.com/316946/two-detroit-artists-face-up-to-four-years-in-prison-for-political-graffiti/
Niang Abdoulaye "Mouvement hip-hop au Senegal: des marges à une légitimité sociale montante" in Momar Coumba Diop (ed.) *Le Senegal sous Abdoulaye Wade,* Paris, Karthala, 2013.
Msia, C. (2012). "Hip Hop as a social commentary in Accra and Dar es Salaam." *African Studies Quarterly 13 (3): 23-46. http://sites.clas.ufl.edu/africa-asq/files/Clark-V13Is3.pdf*.
Appert, C. (2011). "Rappin Griots: Producing the Local in Senegalese Hip-hop." Saucier, P.K, ed. *Native Tongues: An African Hip-hop reader*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
Rattrey, M. (2018). Knowledge Session: The Griot Tradition Education. Retrieved from http://www.iamhiphopmagazine.com/thegriottradition/

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 program, 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.

> Required reading
> McLaughlin, F. (2001). "Dakar Wolof and the configuration of an urban identity." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* Vol. 14, no. 2: 153-172.
> Swigart, L. (1994). "Cultural Creolisation and Language Use in Post-Colonial Africa: The Case of Senegal" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 64, No. 2: 175- 189.

> Recommended reading
> Williams, A. (2012). "'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.
> Herson, B., McIlvaine, M., and Moore, C. (Directors). *African Under ground: Democracy in Dakar.* USA: Nomadic Wax, Sol Productions Foundation.
> Marame, G. (2013). "Urban Guerrilla Poetry: The Movement Y' en a Marre and the Socio-Political Influences of Hip Hop in Senegal." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6, 3, 2013.

Assignments and Evaluation

<u>Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria</u>

1) Response Papers (40%)
The response papers will be weekly 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.

2) Final Paper (25%)
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.

3) Creative Project (25%)
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.

4) Attendance and Participation (10%)

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments
SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (final research project). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Assessment
        Response Papers (40%)
        Final Paper (25%)
        Creative Project (25%)
        Participation (10%)

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

Program Expectations
- Show up 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.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the program's Canvas page. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting local staff know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with the academic director and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

SIT Policies and Resources
Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and the Policies section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as Library resources and research support, Disability Services, Counseling Services, Title IX information, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion resources.