SYLLABUS

School for International Training | 1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676 | Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
Tel 888 272-7881 | Fax 802 258-3296 | studyabroad.sit.edu

# Hip-Hop, Resilience, and Black Struggle Research Project
## AFRS-3500 (3 credits)

## Ghana: Hip-Hop, Resilience, and Black Struggle

*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 Hip-Hop, Resilience, and Black Struggle research project provides room for students to undertake a research-based project that extends a concept or idea formed and developed throughout the course of the program. The idea will be connected to creative expression in any context of the student's choice and will involve working on a set of research questions that revolve around a research objective.

This objective will be informed by an issue that connects with the evolution of a music genre, connections between different types of creative expression, an artistic concern, a thematic issue, etc. Among other options, projects can explore:

- challenges faced by creative artists
- ideas that bridge music and socio-political spaces
- innovations that have the potential to be adopted by stakeholders in the creative arts industry
- creative work crafted under the mentorship of experienced stakeholders.

## Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Design a research project that contributes to knowledge in a given field of scholarship;
- Justify the scholarly choices that underpin research work;
- Identify and integrate primary and secondary sources in a coherent interdisciplinary analytical framework;
- Apply a relevant research methodology learned in the program;
- Propose innovative solutions to challenges that exist in the creative arts industry.

## Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to local vocabularies related to course content through survival Twi lessons, 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 will submit assignments in English 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 week 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.

**Weeks 1: Introducing and Identifying**

During class, all students will share their preliminary ideas to inspire other students to think through (and re-think) their own concepts that can be developed over the course of the semester. Students then work with the academic director to narrow down interests and choose a topic that relates to the program. While one-on-one sessions with the academic director will help to think through topics, students are also encouraged to seek support with other members of program faculty, guest lecturers from the program, and even during everyday discussions with homestay families. The academic director will organize sessions that introduce students to the basics of research methods.

**Week 2 What, Why, and How**

Students go through the different components of a research project with guest lecturers and sessions led by the academic director. Students will understand *what* they are doing (including the background, literature review, research questions and objectives, and scope of study), *why* they are doing their project (justification and significance), and *how* they can go about their projects (methodology and theoretical framework). Students will formulate a preliminary research objective and craft related research questions, start reviewing existing research that will inform the direction of the work, theorize how to go about the work, and, through exercises, provide answers as to why their work is important in practical terms and in relation to existing research. There will again be sessions that address the ethical considerations for the project (informed consent, Study Abroad Research Board, etc.).

**Week 3 and 4: Excursions**

During excursions to the cities of Kumasi, Tamale, Cape Coast, and Takoradi, students will observe and engage with different sites, stakeholders, and other aspects of the program to hone their ideas. Through practical exercises such as interviews, focused group discussions, and sustained interactions, students will polish their skills while better understanding the contexts into which they are entering. The academic director will also have one-on-one meetings with each student during this time around the country. Students will submit a proposal at the end of the excursions.

**Week 5: Return to Accra**

Students return to Accra and focus on collecting and synthesizing relevant research and data before writing up their projects. SIT Staff facilitate connections with relevant experts and stakeholders as students spend time drafting and editing their projects. Students are strongly encouraged to undertake field research and test their methodology skills. There will be time set aside for working on individual projects.

**Week 6: Wrap-Up and Presentations**

Students complete their projects, prepare visual-based presentations or exhibitions, and present their final work to an audience of guest lecturers, homestay families, stakeholders, and the general public.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

### Methods

During the program, students identify primary and secondary sources related to the topic of their research. Students meet the academic director and experts to evaluate and discuss their progress of research. During the last two weeks of the program students work exclusively on their project that include data collection, synthesis and analysis, interactive research, interviewing stakeholders, and writing the papers. Students continue to meet with the academic director throughout the research and writing period. Students might also choose an external project advisor who will usually be a guest lecturer or identified expert in the field.

### Course Requirements

1. Full participation in all aspects of the program;
2. A 5-page proposal that includes background to the study, scope of the study, limitations, literature review, research objective and research questions, methodology, theoretical framework, significance, justification, and project structure;
3. An 8–10-minute visual-based presentation (Prezi, PowerPoint, etc.) that contains the thrust of the research paper;
4. A 15–20-page research paper that includes: abstract, title page, preface, acknowledgments, table of contents, theoretical framework of analysis, research methodology, conclusions, notes, and bibliography. This will be submitted to the academic director, both as a paper copy and via email (as an electronic version).

### Description of Assignments:

### 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.

### Proposal (25%)

The proposal should be 5 pages – double spaced, font 12, ranging from 1,200-1,500 words). The aim of a proposal is to answer these questions:

- What
- Why

- How

And to a lesser extent
- When
- Where

Your proposal can include the following (in whatever order you find useful; with sub-headings and/or paragraphs if you like)

- **WHAT**
  - **Introduction/Background to the Study/ Preliminary Literature Review**
    - You will talk briefly about the context in which you are doing your research.
    - What are some of the larger arguments that you are entering with your work?
    - What should someone know about the topic you have chosen?
    - Summarize 3-4 examples of existing research in relation to your topic.
    - What important books/articles/etc. exist on your topic? And how does each work not do what you are doing?
    - How does your project extend the conversations you identify?
  - **Scope of Study**
    - Delineate the breadth of your research.
    - Which area of Ghana are you going to be working in and on?
    - What is the timeframe for your work?
  - **Limitations**
    - What are you not going to be doing in relation to your work?
  - **Research Objectives**
    - What are the main aims of your work?
    - What do you seek to find?
  - **Structure of the Work**
    - Outline an initial chapter by chapter breakdown
    - You will usually have 3-5 chapters that include the following:
      - Introduction
      - Literature Review
      - Methodology
      - Analysis
      - Conclusion
- **HOW**
  - **Methodology**
    - Expand on how you plan to do your research. Will you design questionnaires? Will you do a survey? Will you observe? Will you do something else?
  - **Theoretical Framework**
    - Would you need any theory to underpin your work?
- **WHY**
  - **Significance of the Study**
    - What will another researcher find helpful/important about your work?

- Why is your particular argument important to existing research?
  - o **Justification**
    - Why have you chosen the area you have chosen?
    - Why are you working in the particular city/town/village?
- **Ethical Considerations**

## Presentation (15%)

You will undertake an 8-10-minute visual-based presentation of your work to an audience. Your presentation should include the core components of your project and provide the audience with a fair idea of the work that you have done. You will then field questions.

## Project (50%)

Your project will include the following

**I. Introduction**
  - a. Explain why you chose this topic
    - i. Points of interest (i.e., thematic courses, personal observations, previous research interests, future research interests, personal interests, etc.).
  - b. Describe why this topic is relevant to the region/country/culture and program theme.
  - c. Define the general parameters of your study, including the scope.
  - d. Define your terms, including the overall theory on which you are basing your work, while situating your work in a scholarly context.

**II. Literature Review**
  - a. This segment is usually a general introduction into the existing research and theories relevant to your topic.
  - b. Link your topic to the scholarship currently available on the subject—cite authors, book titles, theories, or general perceptions that you may or may not agree with.
  - c. Explain why you feel these authors were right or wrong; argue with or against their theories using your own observations or those of other theorists.

**III. Body of Paper/ Methodology**
  - a. This is probably the most practical aspect of the paper, as it allows you the opportunity to describe your overall research experience.
  - b. Describe the way you decided to set out on your research (i.e., how you chose the participants that you interviewed or worked with, the locations where you conducted your research, etc.).
  - c. Describe the methods you used while planning your strategy to obtain the data for your research (i.e., protecting the identity and integrity of your participants, maintaining the integrity of your data, how you planned to avoid any misunderstanding/misinterpretation of your data).
  - d. Describe the obstacles and problems that arose during the course of your research.
  - e. If necessary, explain how and why you had to change your original plans (basically a cause/effect section) and how that affected the quality, depth, and scope of your data.

## IV. Findings

    a. This is where you explain what you found out during the research process.

    b. It's better to focus on the important points of your hypothesis in this section. Highlight the most important aspects of your data and cite responses or observations that either prove or disprove your original hypothesis (it's okay to be wrong here) using the data you generated during the study.

    c. You can include your analysis of the data/interpretation of findings in this section or you can include this discussion in the "Conclusions" section.

## V. Conclusions

    a. This is where you get to tie up all the loose ends and bring things together, while proving or disproving your original hypothesis.

    b. You can include your analysis/interpretation of findings in this section as the proof you need to argue for or against your original theory.

    c. Describe what the implications of your study are (i.e., why your findings are important. How can this information enhance the existing body of knowledge already available on the topic? What new questions arose out of your findings? How will these findings inform your future research interests?)

## VI. Limitations of the Study

Though optional, this section is highly recommended. Legitimize your study by proactively pointing out its shortcomings and biases (all studies have them, of course).

## VII. Recommendations for Further Study

This should consist of a short list of recommendations on how your study might be expanded upon or used in future research.

## VIII. Endnotes (unless you have used page-by-page footnotes)

## IX. Bibliography and List of Sources

This should include all primary and secondary resources used. Primary resources (usually consisting of personal communications) and secondary (textual/archival) resources should be listed under separate headings. Whatever style you choose to use, be accurate and consistent.

## X. Appendices

    a. Include a copy of your questionnaire, survey questions, etc. if applicable

    b. Include a copy of your written consent form (not the ones signed by participants—those you keep in a safe place), if applicable.

## Evaluation and Grading Criteria

The evaluation of the research and paper will be completed by the academic director. Assessment of the project is based on the accuracy of information conveyed, the quality of analysis and argumentation. Special emphasis is put on the student's ability to integrate

primary sources and methods of interactive research and to present the findings in a clear, organized and well-synthesized format. The academic director's assign the final grade. Assessment of your project is done on the basis of grading evaluation and criteria listed below.

### Title/Acknowledgements/Abstract
- The title is succinct, interesting, and engaging, and it clearly explains the project
- The acknowledgments are complete and professionally written
- The abstract clearly summarizes the project

### Research Question/Objectives/Justification
- The study/research question is relevant, thought-provoking, and original
- The project aims to contribute information on a topic relevant to local community and/or other researchers
- The objectives of the study are clearly presented and appropriate
- The justification of the project is clear and contextualized

### Context and Literature Review
- The content is relevant. Important themes and background information is provided
- The paper includes appropriate, high-quality relevant background sources, including several from peer-reviewed journals

### Methods
- The explanation of methodology is clear and accurate and supporting materials are included
- Implementation of methods through the research process is thoughtful and handed with care
- The methods are appropriate

### Ethics
- Human subject policies and ethical research guidelines are adhered to and thoroughly discussed
- Appropriate consideration is given to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of research participants, in keeping with human subjects protocols and the LRB-approved proposals

### Presentation of Results/Findings
- The findings are complete and are logically and convincingly presented
- The prose discussion of findings is clear, succinct, and logical
- Tables, graphs, photos, and direct quotes are relevant and support the argument

### Depth of Analysis/Conclusions
- Important implications raised by the findings are included
- The argument is well-structured and different sources of information are well-integrated
- Patterns in the findings (or lack of a pattern) are identified and discussed

- The author gives logical explanations of what findings mean
- The author clearly and specifically relates findings to the study/research question and to previous research in the field

**Technical Aspects/Effort**
- The paper is organized into major sections and/or follows the guidelines in accordance with the orientation of the program
- Table of contents, in-text citations, and reference list or bibliography are done correctly and completely
- There are no mistakes in writing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

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. 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:
| | |
|---|---|
| Participation | 10% |
| Proposal | 25% |
| Presentation | 15% |
| Paper | 50% |

**Grading Scales and Criteria**
Grades are given both fairly and rigorously and in accordance with the system below. They will reflect a combination of absolute quality of performance, progress made, the ability to consider and assimilate the Academic Director's advice in assessing the work done. An "A" letter grade reflects exceptional work, perfect combination of academic competences and personal research and analysis. It shows great ability to integrate field-based investigation and personal reflection into a structured and well-argued paper. A "B" letter grade reflects serious and methodical work as well as a substantial effort at analyzing and understanding cross-cultural issues. A "C" letter grade shows the work meets the requirements but needs more in-depth reflection and personal involvement. A "D" letter grade is insufficient and clearly reflects lack of work or serious deficiencies.

Grading Scale
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 94-100% | A | Excellent |
| 90-93% | A- | |
| 87-89% | B+ | |
| 84-86% | B | Above Average |
| 80-83% | B- | |
| 77-79% | C+ | |
| 74-76% | C | Average |
| 70-73% | C- | |
| 67-69% | D+ | |

| 64-66% | D | Below Average |
| below 64 | F | Fail |

## Program Expectations
- <u>Show up prepared</u>. 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.
- <u>Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements</u>. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- <u>Ask questions in class. Engage the guest lecturer</u>. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak to the program.
- <u>Comply with academic integrity policies</u> (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- <u>Respect differences of opinion</u> (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.

## 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 responsible 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.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto: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](http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices).

**Please note:** the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may be modified by the academic director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants. Should any change of class topics or lecturers be necessary, students will be promptly notified.