



Kendrick Lamar, Yeezus Tour, 2013

## ENGL 189

Online -- Cross Session – June 6 – July 29

### ***Race, Rap and Power: Hip Hop In Lyric, Literature and Film***

*"What one does realize is that when you try to stand up and look the world in the face like you had a right to be here, without knowing that this is the result of it, you have attacked the entire power structure of the Western world." - James Baldwin, London, 1969*

*"People treat Hip-Hop like an isolated phenomenon. They don't treat it as a continuum, a history or legacy. And it really is. And like all mediums or movements, it came out of a need. - Mos Def*

*"Every time I speak I want the truth to come out. Every time I speak I want a shiver. I don't want them to be like they know what I'm gonna say because it's polite. I'm not saying I'm gonna rule the world or I'm gonna change the world, but I guarantee you that I will spark the brain that will change the world." — Tupac Shakur, MTV, 1994*

*"Rap is black America's CNN." Chuck D*

*The hurt becomes repetition, the love almost lost that  
Sick venom in men and women overcome with pride  
A perfect world is never perfect, only filled with lies  
Promises are broken and more resentment come alive  
Race barriers make inferior you and I  
"Pride" Kendrick Lamar*

Instructor: Ellen Gorman  
E-mail: elg27@georgetown.edu  
Available Hours: By Appointment – Zoom or FaceTime

#### **Required Texts:**

All books are available via the University bookstore

The following three are also available free for download via Z-library: <https://usa1lib.org>

***That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader, edited by Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal.***

***Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop, Adam Bradley***

***It's Bigger Than Hip-Hop: The Rise of the Post Hip-Hop Generation, MK Asante***

*Available for sale online or via the bookstore:*

***Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap, Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar***

**YouTube Playlist (public) – “GORMANRACERAPPOWER”**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_VDGysJGNol&list=PL49NnBnA6G895wBZcJ0QzvosNIR2eexXZ&index=4&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VDGysJGNol&list=PL49NnBnA6G895wBZcJ0QzvosNIR2eexXZ&index=4&t=0s)

**Films/Television:**

***I Am Not Your Negro (2017); Do the Right Thing (1989); Juice (1992); Straight Outta Compton (2015); Empire (Season 1, 2015); Fruitvale Station (2013)***

What relationship does the political power of the Hip Hop movement have to the corporatization of rap as a genre, and how has that affected racial politics in America in the last thirty years? We will look at a wide variety of texts in this course, including literature, film, lyrics and video in order to discuss Hip Hop and Rap as aesthetic movements and genres, and how they are viewed as both empowering and marginalizing in their commodification in the US.

In this course you will be asked to read and then to think critically about what you have read. You will also be asked to articulate and make claims about your interpretations in your writing and participate in collaborative discussions and class debates which will help replicate the in-person campus experience in terms of engaging with fellow students. These discussions and debates will require all students to weigh in and often result in more fulsome engagement than in-person discussions, which can be a benefit of online learning.

The overall frame around any of our inquiries in this course is the development of critical thinking and writing skills. You will be asked to submit a number of written assignments, which vary and are all designed to serve as opportunities for you to refine your analytical and argumentative writing and further your confidence in your own voices and opinions.

**List of assignments and percentage of grade**

Intro Video on You and Syllabus Check-off	5%
Responses (8 x 5% each)	40%
Discussions (6 @ 5% each)	30%
Debates (2 x 5% each)	10%
Annotated Playlist	15%

**General Policies:**

**Course Commitment:**

Please keep in mind that this three-credit course is requires that each student engages in a sustained and intensive eight weeks, in which they need to post several assignments each week on deadline. This commitment requires consistent access to Wi-Fi and engaged self-direction throughout!

**Grading**

- All assignments are to be posted to the Canvas site for the course on the due date and time (EST)
- Assignments submitted after the deadline will be dropped 10 points; assignments submitted 24 hours late will be dropped 20 points.
- A grade of “No Credit” or 0 points will be given for assignments submitted later than 24 hours late.

All students are encouraged to avail themselves of the free services at the University’s Writing Center:

<http://www.georgetown.edu/departments/english/writing/wcenter.html>.

**Responses:**

- You will need to submit eight (8) informal response papers – one a week - by the end of the course.
- Criteria and due dates for these responses are available on the Assignments tab on our Canvas site for the course.
- No late submissions will be accepted.

### **Canvas Discussion Board and Debate Assignments:**

- You will be asked to respond to a prompt and then engage with your classmates via the Canvas Discussion Board format eight (8) times during the course.
- Dates are on the schedule and will require completion deadlines.
- These discussions/debates are designed to encourage thoughtful and productive engagement among the classes that otherwise will never meet as a group, and to enable everyone in the class to articulate opinions and make points about the material in the course and how they are relating it to their lived experiences while taking it.

### **University Policies**

All Georgetown University policies, as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin, will be observed: <http://www.georgetown.edu/undergrad/bulletin/>.

All students are required to be aware of the University's Honor Code regulations: <http://www.georgetown.edu/undergrad/bulletin/regulations6.html#standards>.

If you believe that you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class, please contact the Academic Resource Center (<http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/>) for further information. The center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. University policy requires faculty members to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct.

These resources include Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention, (202) 687-0323 ([jls242@georgetown.edu](mailto:jls242@georgetown.edu)) and Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 ([els54@georgetown.edu](mailto:els54@georgetown.edu)).

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

### **Sensitive Material**

At times this semester we will be discussing events and issues that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to refrain from reading, listening to or viewing a specific text, please feel free to do so. Also be in touch with me so that we may find a substitute for you to engage with that is more suitable.

## **SCHEDULE**

***\*\*This pdf Syllabus is not meant to be your guide for the course. Please use the Modules on our Canvas site instead of the syllabus, which includes embedded links for all materials, except for required texts/books. The Modules also include recorded lectures from the instructor which are important to watch as you proceed through each module for the course***

## **MODULE 1**

**June 6 – 12**

### **“the racial nightmare”**

Read: excerpt from West, Cornel, *Race Matters*. New York, Vintage Books, 2001: pps. 3 – 31. (Canvas)

Read: Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Excerpt from *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. Toronto: Open University Press, 2009: pps. 87 – 89. (Canvas)

Listen to Podcast: “1619 Project: “The Fight for a True Democracy” - *TheNewYorkTimesMagazine.com*

Listen to interview: ““It’s More Than Racism: Isobel Wilkerson Explains America’s ‘Caste System’” – Fresh Air, NPR.org

Read: Excerpt from Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. New York, The New Press, 2010. (Canvas)

Listen to podcast: “Teju Cole on Blackface” – *The New Yorker*

Read: “Virginia Scandals Draw Attention To The Dehumanizing History Of Blackface” – Debbie Elliott, NPR.org

Read/check out: <https://black-face.com>

Read: “The Case for Reparations” - Ta-Nehisi Coates, *TheAtlantic.com*

Watch: Coates Testifies on Reparations on “Juneteenth,” June 19, 2019

Read: “Georgetown students vote to pay reparations for slaves sold by university” – Martin Pengelly, *TheGuardian.com*

Read: “The Pain We Still Need to Feel” – Jamelle Bouie, *Slate.com*

Watch: “Greenwood and the Tulsa Race Riots” – PBS.org

Watch: “An Artist’s Unflinching Look at Racial Violence – Sanford Biggers” – Ted.com

Look at: “At Brooklyn Museum, Sanford Biggers Explores Symbols of Race in America” – ArtsObserver.com

Read/watch poems:

“Power” – Audre Lorde, Poetry Foundation.org

“White Privilege” – Gabriel Ramirez, *We are mitú*, *HuffPost.com*

Screen: *Fruitvale Station* (Sharestream)

Listen to podcast: “The Worst Thing We’ve Ever Done” – On the Media, WNYC Studios, June 1, 2018.

Check out: “Fatal Force” – *TheWashingtonPost.com*, 17 Aug, 2020.

Watch videos/Read lyrics at *Genius.com*:

“Fuck tha Police” – N.W.A.

“Scenario” – A Tribe Called Quest

“99 Problems” – Jay-Z

“M.A.A.D. City (Feat. MC eih) – Kendrick Lamar

“Get Ur Freak On” – Missy Elliott

## MODULE 2

June 13 – 19

“The Fire Next Time”

Screen: *I Am Not Your Negro* (Sharestream)

Read: Quick bio of Baldwin: *MyBlackHistory.net*

Read excerpt from Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York, Vintage Books, 1993: pps. 3 – 10.

Read/Interact with site: “The Faces of American Power” -

Haeyoung Park, Josh Keller and Josh Williams, *TheNewYorkTimes.com*

Watch: "Malcolm X's Fiery Speech Addressing Police Brutality" – 1962, SmithsonianChannel.com (YouTube)

Watch: "The Most Powerful Speech in a Generation: Tamika Mallory" – YouTube, June 10, 2020

Read/check out: "'Rumors of War' in Richmond Marks a Monumentally Unequal America" - Susan Stamberg, NPR.org

Watch: "A Conversation on Race" – *TheNewYorkTimes.com* (choose at least three short films to watch and to which to respond)

Watch video: VICE: "Charlottesville: Race and Terror" – *Vice.com*

Listen to Podcast: "Pod Save the People: Charlottesville," DeRay McKesson – Overcast.fm

Read speech: "Mayor Mitch Landrieu's speech on removing New Orleans' Confederate monuments" – *Nola.com*

Read: "The Multiple Unfolding Crises for African Americans in Minneapolis" *TheNewYorker.com*, May 27, 2020.

Read: "King's Death Gave Birth to Hip-Hop" – Vann R. Newkirk, II, *TheAtlantic.com*

Watch: "Grammys 2016: Watch Kendrick Lamar's stunning performance – Micah Singleton, *TheVerge.com*

Watch: "Meek Mill, Miguel debut powerful song 'Stay Woke' about race, incarceration at BET Awards" – Erin Jensen, *USAToday.com*

Watch videos/Read lyrics at *Genius.com*:

"The Story of OJ" – Jay-Z

"Strange Fruition" – Lupe Fiasco

"Paranoia" – Chance the Rapper

## MODULE 3

June 20 – 26

### "What You Hear Is Not a Test"

Watch: "Hip Hop Is..." (Documentary/YouTube)

Read: "Hip Hop's Founding Fathers Speak the Truth" – Nelson George, *That's the Joint*

Read: "The Culture of Hip-Hop" – Michael Eric Dyson, *That's the Joint* (Canvas)

Read: "Jalal Mansur Nuriddin, 'Grandfather of Rap,' Is Dead at 73" – Giovanni Russonello, *TheNewYorkTimes.com*

Watch: "Hip Hop DNA: Breaking Down The Caribbean's Impact On The Culture" - Complex, July 6, 2017 (YouTube)

Read: Guzman, Jayden. "The History of Hip Hop Fashion: How Street Culture Became Fashion's Biggest Influence" - Afterglow.com, March 26, 2019.

Read: *The Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*

Watch: "Mos Def – Power Move Freestyle" (1992) (YouTube)

Listen to: Podcast: "Big Daddy Kane's Lyrical Legacy" - "Into America" - Trymaine Lee, MSNBC, August 19, 2021.

Watch: "Power Move Freestyle" - Mos Def, 1992 (YouTube)

Watch/listen to: "Eminem Freestyle, BET Awards 2017 - EW.com

*Watch videos/Read lyrics at Genius.com:*

"I Ain't No Joke" – Eric B. & Rakim

"I'm Bad" - LL Cool J

"Paper Thin" – MC Lyte

"Walk This Way" – Run DMC

## MODULE 4

**June 27 – July 3**

### Public Enemy

Read: *It's Bigger Than Hip Hop*

Listen to interview with MK Asante – YouTube

Read: "'Represent': Race, Space and Place in Rap Music" – Murray Forman, *That's the Joint*

Screen *Straight Outta Compton*

Read: "Film Review" "Straight Outta Compton" – Scott Foundas, *Variety.com*

Check out online journals: *XXL.mag.com*; *AllHipHop.com*; *Vibe.com*; *SOHH.com*

Listen to: Podcast, Slow Burn, Slate.com. Episode: "Cops On My Tail" - November 6, 2019.

Read: "The Mixtape and Emancipatory Journalism" – Excerpt from *I Mix What I Like: A Mixtape Manifesto*, Jared A. Ball, Baltimore, AK Press, 2011, pp. 121 – 133. (Canvas)

*Watch videos/Read lyrics at Genius.com:*

: "Gin and Juice" – Snoop Dogg

"Power" – Ice-T

"The World is Yours" – Nas

"C.R.E.A.M." – Wu-Tang Clan

"Nuthin' But A G Thang" – Dr. Dre ft. Snoop Doggy Dog

## MODULE 5

**July 4 – 10**

### "Do the Right Thing"

Read: *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap*

Screen *Do the Right Thing* (Sharestream)

Read: "On This Day in Hip Hop History: "Do the Right Thing": *XXLMag.com*

Read: "'Universal Was Not Afraid': Spike Lee Reflects on the Fearmongering That First Met 'Do the Right Thing'" – Susan King, *HollywoodReporter.com*

Read: "Fight the Power": Hip Hop and Civil Unrest in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*" - Casarae L. Gibson, *Black Camera*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 2017), pp. 183-207 (Canvas)

Watch documentary: "Public Enemy: 'Prophets of Rage'" – YouTube, May 2, 2013.

Watch/Listen to video/Read lyrics at Genius.com:

"Fight the Power" – Public Enemy

"Who Got the Camera" – Ice Cube

"4-If I Ruled The World", Nas feat. Lauryn Hill

"White America" - Eminem

## MODULE 6

July 11 – 17

"Changes"

Read: "No Time for Fake Niggas: Hip-Hop Culture and the Authenticity Debates" – Mark Anthony Neal, *That's the Joint*

Read: "True Colors: Race, And The Misnomer Of Hip Hop As 'Black Music'" – Omar Burgess, *HipHopDX.com*

Read: "Killer Mike's Supreme Court Brief: - Gilad Edelman, *TheNewYorker.com*

Read: "8 Ways Tupac Shakur Changed the World" – *RollingStone.com*

Watch: "Race and Equality: Tupac Interview" – YouTube,

Read: "To Die Like a Gangsta" – Robert Sam Anson, *VanityFair.com*

Read: "The Meaning of Biggie: On Life After Death" – Dean Van Nguyen, *ConsequenceofSound.net*

Watch: *Biggie & Tupac* (Dir. Nick Broomfield, 2002) - YouTube

Screen *Juice* (Sharestream)

Watch/Listen to video/Read lyrics at Genius.com:

"Hypnotize" and "Mo Money, Mo Problems" – Biggie Smalls

"Changes" and "Dear Mama" – Tupac Shakur

## MODULE 7

July 18 – 24

"We Run This"

Read: "Black Youth and the Ironies of Capitalism" – S. Craig Watkins, *That's the Joint*  
Read: "An Exploration of Spectacular Consumption: Gangsta Rap as Cultural Commodity" – Eric K. Watts, *That's the Joint*

Read: "How Corporate Hip-Hop Profits From Rape Culture" – Kirsten West Savali, *TheRoot.com*  
Read: "Pop music's race problem: How white artists profit from mocking hip-hop" – Daniel D'Addario, *Salon.com*  
Read: "The Disturbing, Surprisingly Complex Relationship Between White Identity Politics and Racism" – Isaac Chotiner, *TheNewYorker.com*

Screen *Empire*, Season 1, Episodes 1 & 2 (Sharestream)

Read: "Black Empires, White Desires" – Davarian L. Baldwin, *That's the Joint*  
Read: "What Does Atlanta Hip-Hop Think of 'Atlanta' the Show?" – Christina Lee, *Pitchfork.com*

Watch videos/Read lyrics at *Genius.com*:

"Respiration" – Blackstar ft. Common, Mos Def, Talip Kweli  
"Smuckers" – Tyler the Creator  
"You Grew Up" – Oddisee  
"Last Hope" – DMX  
"New Slaves" – Kanye West

## MODULE 8

July 25 – 29

### "Alright"

Read: "The Improbable Story of How Kendrick Lamar's 'Alright' Became a Protest Anthem" – Jamilah King, *Mic.com*

View: "11 Great Hip Hop Protest Songs" – *Vibe.com*

Read: "Black Lives Matter's DeRay Mckesson on the Power of Protest Music" – Marc Hogan, *Pitchfork.com*

Watch: Eminem, Freestyle 2017 – YouTube

Watch: "Ferguson rapper Tef Poe on Obama, hip-hop and institutional racism" - YouTube

Read: "Protesting Police Violence: A Playlist" – Juan Siliezar with Marcyliena Morgan, *The Harvard Gazette*.

Hope, Clover. "11 Great Hip Hop Protest Songs." - *Vibe.com*, 19 Aug 2014.

Read: "The Challenge of Rap Music from Cultural Movement to Political Power: - Bakari Kitwana, *That's the Joint*

Watch: Ferguson Rapper Tef Poe on Obama, hip-hop and institutional racism" - YouTube

Read: "Rise Up Hip Hop Nation: From Deconstructing Racial Politics to Building Positive Solutions" – Kristine Wright, *That's the Joint*

Read: "Big Sean Compares Himself To Civil Rights Activists Throughout 'Double Or Nothing'" – Eddie Fu, *Genius.com*



Read: "Rap's fraught history with Black Lives Matter: 'I didn't sign up to be no activist'" – Sheldon Pearce, *TheGuardian.com*

Read: "Young Moose: Baltimore rapper's rising star slowed by run-ins with law" – Baynard Wood, *The Guardian*, 13 Mar 2016

Read: Chang, Jeff. Introduction, *We Gon' Be Alright*, Picador, 2016.

Read: "'I'm Not Black, I'm Kanye'" – Ta-Nehisi Coates, *TheAtlantic.com*

Read: "Chance the Rapper Bids to Become a Chicago Kingmaker" – Edward McClelland, *Politico.com*

Read: "Protesting Police Violence: A Playlist" – Juan Siliezar with Marcyliena Morgan, *The Harvard Gazette*

Watch videos/Read lyrics at *Genius.com*:

"Alright" – Kendrick Lamar

"Land of the Free" – Joey BadA\$\$

"This is America" – Childish Gambino

"The Bigger Picture" – Lil Baby