

RAP Courses Spring 2018

Afro-Am 151: "Literature and Culture" (Gen Ed ALU)

Read what instructor Olivia Ekeh has to say about the course:

Have you ever considered the relationship between words (lyrics, poems, texts, etc) and music (styles, instruments, venues, etc) and the connection to what is happening in the world and the changes in our culture? In this course we will investigate questions such as: **Why do so many blues songs mention trains? What is the origin of the theme of "keepin it real" in hip-hop? How does one get "funky"?**

All these questions interrogate the aesthetics of Black music. To put it more simply, these questions are concerned with how these genres of Black music are distinct from each other.

Specifically, we will be exploring four major Black aesthetics:

- the blues
- jazz
- funk/soul and
- hip-hop.

For each aesthetic, we will explore the music within the historical context of when it came to be. In addition to the music, we will also read texts that have been defined by one of the mentioned aesthetics.

In summary, in this class we will explore this idea through the lens of Black music. A unique trait of Black music involving aesthetics is that the Black genres usually have a literary sphere connected to them.

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Afro-Am 236: "History of the Civil Rights Movement" (Gen Ed HSU)

Read what instructor Bob Williams has to say about the course:

The course will provide a thorough examination of the Civil Rights Movement from the Brown v. Board decision to the rise of Black Power, along with the legacies of the Movement today. Class meetings will be grounded in a discussion-based format to encourage a participatory learning environment. As a RAP section, this course seeks to develop a learning community in the classroom by emphasizing collaboration around the primary assessment of the course, a semester-long research project, designed to incorporate students' personal and academic interests.

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Anthro 100: "Human Nature" (Gen Ed SBG)

Read what instructor Marc Lorenc has to say about the course:

This course explores how cultural practices and beliefs shape the world we live in.

In an increasingly globalized world and competitive job market, it is not readily obvious why the study of anthropology matters. Although anthropology is not directly responsible for technological breakthroughs, feats of engineering, or curing diseases, it is essential in understanding how these advancements affect people on the ground and what repercussions certain actions, policies, inventions, and developments have on the everyday lives of global citizens.

Through the four subfields of anthropology (sociocultural, biological, archaeological, and linguistic) we will explore various themes and issues that directly relate to your day to day life as a global citizen:

- The importance of cell phones to your social relationships
- The connections of coffee to broader global processes, and
- What it means to be a consumer in the contemporary world
- Specifically you will learn theoretical and methodological tools for approaching your own academic interests in a critical manner. By the end of this class, you should be able to critically engage the questions:
 - What does it mean to be human?
 - What are some explanations for variation in human biology, cultural practice, and beliefs?
 - What are the deeper meanings behind the things we do, the stories we tell, and our everyday practices?

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Anthro 150: "Ancient Civilizations" (Gen Ed HSG)

Read what instructor Virginia McLaurin has to say about the course:

In this course, we will use archeological data to explore a range of civilizations in the Near East and the Americas. We will study small-scale foraging societies, the emergence of the very first cities and states, and even a few civilizations that seem to fit somewhere "in between." By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- see cultures around the world with an appreciation for their internal structures and values
- understand how people gain power and maintain it
- comprehend various levels of social structure and how they might impact each other
- recognize hierarchical social relations taking place around you, and the social contracts that maintain them
- both appreciate and critique how archeology interprets the past through a limited set of physical remains

While we will be focusing on the past through the physical records people left behind, we will always attempt to take the practices we see and relate them to our own human experience. Can we learn something from the first societies who domesticated crops, built religious temples, or began creating different social classes? In this course, we can - and we will! We will do this through interactive, engaged discussions. One week you may have to debate the merits of farming with a group of foragers- it's harder than you think - and another week you may be engaged in a trade war with a neighboring Ancient Maya chiefdom.

With these activities, you'll think through the options available to people in the past and begin to understand the world as they saw it.

As a RAP course, you will also gain insight into how a course is structured, how assignments are constructed, and what skills professors in similar courses are helping you build. As an introduction to similar college courses, you will leave the class with a clear vision of why it was designed, what you learned from it, and what you can do with that knowledge in your own life.

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Anthro 258: "Food & Culture" (Gen Ed SBG)

Read what instructor Dana Conzo has to say about this course:

"Tell me what you eat, I'll tell you who you are" (Anthelme Brillat-Savarin). This course surveys how cultural anthropologists have studied the big questions about food and culture. How and why do people restrict what foods are considered "edible" or morally acceptable? How is food processed and prepared, and what does food tell us about other aspects of culture like gender and ethnic identity? How have power issues of gender, class, and colonialism shaped people's access to food? How has industrialization changed food, and where are foodways headed in the future? Along the way, students will read and see films about foodways in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the United States, and Latin America.

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Comparative Literature 131: "Brave New World" (Gen Ed ALG)

Read what instructor Manuela Borzone has to say about this course:

This course is named in honor of the famous dystopian novel by British writer Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, with which some students may already be familiar. In this RAP course, however, we will not read *Brave New World*; instead we will move beyond it as we explore the meanings and implications of attempting to create a braver and newer world from a comparative literature perspective.

We will discuss a variety of utopian and dystopian societies through short stories, novels, films, comics, tv shows, as well as news articles, podcasts, and art, and deal with subjects ranging from perfect places to overpopulation, from food insecurity to technology and surveillance, and from consumer/consuming societies to climate change. Some of the materials might include selected *Black Mirror* episodes, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Octavia Butler's *The Parable of the Sower*, and even anime.

(Comp Lit 131 continued)

This discussion-based class fosters the creation of a learning community of students who share a common interest in the world and global-scale issues by welcoming a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. You will practice voicing your informed perspective on many topics in a safe and respectful environment. Likewise, we practice listening and engaging with other students' views, as well as receiving and giving feedback. We work on developing and strengthening college writing skills through short written responses and essay papers. Homework assignments include short creative responses, links to current events, and argument-oriented paragraphs.

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Comp Lit 133: "Introduction to Science Fiction" (Gen Ed ALU)

Read what instructor Alex Ponomareff has to say about the course:

Science fiction has become one of the most popular genres in contemporary culture in the United States and around the world. Also, science fiction is a genre of the contemporary moment. It is a phrase that first appears in 1851 but that does not become popular until its introduction into pulp magazines in the 1920s. It is also a genre whose stories often respond to issues and problems in the present moment. **We will work to understand these works in their historical contexts, while also attempting to understand their relevance to our present day.** In order to understand the scope of this genre, we are going to read and watch a series of short stories, plays, films, television shows, comic books, and novels.

This class is discussion-based. You will be expected to participate, both in person and on line, and to work in small groups throughout the semester. For this reason, one of our main goals will be to create a learning community that allows for free and open conversation and thought. You will all be encouraged to share your thoughts, feelings, and ideas, demonstrating that you are a good listener and classmate.

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English 117: Ethnic American Literature (Gen Ed ALU)

American literature written by and about ethnic minorities, from the earliest immigrants through the cultural representations in modern American writing.

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Education 167: "Education and Film" (Gen Ed SB)

Read what instructor Dani O'Brien has to say about the course:

What do movies like *Mean Girls*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *Freedom Writers* teach us about education? Do the way films represent school, students, and teaching reflect or reproduce our views about particular students and schools? What and how do movies teach us and why does it matter?

In this course we will:

- Examine Hollywood representations of teaching and schooling- in other words, watch movies
- Analyze film as both a product and producer of American society and culture
- Learn to identify and understand dominant educational ideologies and the real world impact these ideologies have
- Conduct media analysis based on race, class, gender, and sexuality
- Reflect on our own identities and educational experiences
- Have Fun!

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Food Science 150: "The Science of Food" (Gen Ed BS)

Read what instructor Christina DiMarco-Crook has to say about the course:

Food plays a prominent role in each of our daily lives, yet most of us have little if any understanding of the science behind our food. At the same time we live in a throw away culture that does not value our abundant food supply. The disconnect between individuals and the food we eat can be seen in the troubling statistic that shows Americans waste 40% of all food produced in the United States. This course will explore our understanding of food in our everyday lives and the science behind maintenance of a high quality food supply for our society.

Food safety and dietary concerns add to the confusion of how to successfully navigate and interpret the various labeling and regulatory guidelines. We will examine how our society addresses these issues from a chemical, biochemical, microbial and regulatory point of view to ensure an adequate and wholesome food supply is maintained for all. Through critical thinking and engaging class discussions a range of topics will be explored and critiqued.

These topics include:

- (1) food chemistry
- (2) processed food
- (3) food preservatives
- (4) food poisoning
- (5) product labeling
- (6) food fermentation
- (7) obesity/sweeteners
- (8) food additives
- (9) organic food

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History 200 "New Approaches to History: History Through Music & Social Justice" (Gen Ed HS)

Read what instructor Joie Campbell has to say about the course:

What do **Elvis Presley, David Bowie, Queen Latifah and Lady Gaga** have in common? They were all instrumental in major social and political changes through rock 'n' roll music! Considering race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation, correlations can be directly drawn between social justice movements and the evolution of rock 'n' roll music from the early 20th century to the present day.

Hit songs from specific historic eras will be played in each class and lyrics will be analyzed within the context of the social and political movements of the time. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the music's impact then, as well as its connections to the world today. During the course, students will work on informative and creative projects, both individually and in groups. We will also spend time in the Du Bois Library's Special Collections & University Archives where students will investigate aspects of original materials gathered from the eras being explored.

During this course we will cover:

- Birth of the Blues and Juke Joints
- Rockabilly and Teen Consumerism
- Folk Rock, Hippies, and Protests
- Motown, Roaring Women, and Civil Rights
- Tejano and the Chicano Movement
- Disco, Glam, and Sexuality
- MTV Nation
- Rap, Hip-Hop, and Speaking Truth

...and much more.

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Kinesiology 100: "Intro to Kinesiology" (Gen Ed BS)

Read what instructor Sarah Burkart has to say about the course.

This course is an interdisciplinary approach to Kinesiology, the science of human movement.

The objectives of this course include:

- providing students with a rounded overview of the subfields of Kinesiology including motor control, exercise physiology, biomechanics, sports medicine, exercise neuroscience, and exercise psychology.
- highlighting the importance of Kinesiology and how it is being used in our everyday settings.
- introducing students to scientific research articles and evidence-based theories and practices.
- encouraging critical thinking about how science is portrayed to the public.
- and developing skills to maintain students' own lifetime health and wellness.

On completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the following topics:

- The goals, scope, significance and methods of the field of Kinesiology
- The various sub-disciplines of Kinesiology
- The multidimensional changes in human movement capability that occur with maturation and as an adaptation to physical activity
- Additionally, on successful completion of the course, students will have a suitable foundation for more detailed studies of kinesiology.

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Poli Sci 101: "American Politics" (Gen Ed SB)

Read what instructor Mia Costa has to say about the course:

Politics has been traditionally defined as the struggle over who gets what, when, and how. This course, and political science in general, is the study of this struggle, the institutions in which this struggle takes place, and the individuals and groups involved in this struggle and how they achieve their political goals. **We will explore questions about American politics** such as:

- Why is voter turnout so low?
- When people do vote, how do they decide who to support?
- What is the role of race, gender, and class in American politics?
- Why do Americans hate Congress?
- Is the U.S. really that polarized, and if so, why? What can be done about it?
- What is up with "fake news"?
- How do political parties and interest groups hurt and help democracy?

Throughout the course we will regularly read the news in class and **weave in discussions of current events in American politics**. We will talk about current political affairs including the presidencies of Donald Trump and Barack Obama, as well as contemporary debates surrounding fact-checking and the media, terrorism, health care, social movements, and more.

One goal of this course is to help you more engaged and thoughtful citizens, whether that is in the US or beyond. By the end of this class, you should be able to write and speak intelligently about American democracy and evaluate the performance of political institutions and leaders.

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Poli Sci 111: "Comparative Politics" (Gen Ed SBG)

Read what instructor Eric Sippert has to say about the course:

What are the state, the market, and the nation, and how did they come to be the dominant units of comparative politics? Will they survive the 21st century?

- Why do some countries choose leaders through voting, while others have bloody revolutions, and others simply have continuously ruling families or groups?
- How did some countries come to be desperately poor while others are unspeakably wealthy?
- Those are some of the questions that drive the study of comparative politics as well as this course. We will study them:
- historically, to elucidate the roots of our contemporary institutions and systems and how they came to be
- from multiple perspectives, to see how politics functions at a global level, a personal level, and at the intersection of the two
- comparatively, to examine multiple phenomena and processes in relation to one another to see what they reveal.

Through analysis of current and classic texts in comparative politics, we will grapple with how our world came to be and then apply that knowledge to contemporary issues— such as immigration, political violence, and inequality—in different parts of the world. In sum, this course aims to provide you with the material we must work with and confront if we wish to understand—and shape—the present and future of our deeply interconnected world.

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Public Health 129: "Health Care for All" (Gen Ed SBU)

Read what instructor Tai Spargo has to say about the course:

Healthcare reform is a politically hot-topic issue, and a priority for the current administration and Congress, but how does our current system really work? We all want to maximize our health and whether it is for a routine trip to the dentist, an emergency trip to the hospital for a broken bone, or critical surgery, we will all utilize the healthcare system. This need is one reason that the healthcare sector is the single largest industry in the US. However, everyone's experience is not the same. Inequities exist in both access and outcomes, due to money and more pervasive social and cultural barriers. This course will provide an overview of the US healthcare system including issues related to cost, quality, access, structure, and the workforce. We will compare our systems to models in other countries and discuss how key policies have impacted the system. We will also follow and discuss the on-going debates as we all try to optimize our health through the healthcare system.

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Sociology 106: "Race, Gender, Class and Ethnicity" (Gen Ed SB)

Read what instructor Mahala Stewart has to say about the course:

In this class, we will examine **how sociologists study social inequalities** related to race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

- We will begin by exploring how these identities are experienced **in people's everyday lives**.
- Next, we will examine **how these identities are constructed and maintained** within dominant institutions, from families, schools, and workplaces, to the media, and state.
- We will end the course by **considering creative solutions** that work to end inequalities as seen through resistance and social change efforts.

Besides thinking sociologically about the world around you through engaging with foundational and cutting edge sociological research and theory, you will take part in interactive lectures, class discussions, and group work with your peers.

This course is designed to be useful for your success in college by developing critical thinking, writing, researching, and speaking skills. It will also be of interest to those concerned with social justice efforts, and interested in discussing ways of creating positive social change.

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Sociology 222: “The Family” (Gen Ed SBU)

Read what instructor Tanya Whitworth has to say about the course:

In this class, we will examine **how sociologists study families**: how we define family, the ways we construct families, the choices we make, and the relationship between our families and larger social forces.

We will focus special attention on the **varied ways that young adults experience and understand their families**, from their relationships with parents and siblings, to the process of dating and forming new families.

Throughout the semester we will examine variation in family experiences by race, class, gender, place, and historical time. By attending to historical variation as well as both difference and inequality in contemporary family forms, family practices, and family cultures and emotions, **we will shatter common myths** about our past and our present as a way to examine the implications of social structure and our individual choices and actions.

Besides thinking sociologically about the world around you through engaging with foundational and cutting edge sociological research and theory, you will take part in interactive lectures, class discussions, and group work with your peers.

This course is designed to be useful for your success in college by developing writing, researching, and speaking skills. Learning to **think like a sociologist** and **make connections between “private troubles” and “public issues,”** you will strengthen your critical thinking skills and learn a whole new set of questions to ask about the world around you.

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