

African American Studies Classes and Elective Classes / Spring 2024

AAS 302: Black Popular Culture/ MW 02:00 pm-03:15 pm/ HUMHAL/ 3 credit hrs

Black Popular Culture & Performance Theory

This course will focus on the production of Black popular or “pop” culture in the United States with special emphasis on the linkages between “mainstream” pop culture and pop culture originating in and from African Diasporic and African American experiences. We will engage Black performance theory and other sociological, historical, and theoretical perspectives to understand and critically exam topics related to Black pop culture; these include but are not limited Black performance and representation in television, film, and drama; Black music (blues, jazz, soul, neo-soul, R&B, rap, Hip hop, etc.), musical contributions, and dance; and Black artwork, media, and fashion. Through discussions, screenings, and analyses, we will engage these topics and their correlations to African oral traditions, folklore, and minstrelsy as well as Black protest traditions and methods of resistance. By the end of the semester, we will have surveyed an array of Black creative and aesthetic expressions that—individually and collectively—provide students insights into ways that shared meanings and ways of life have emerged via US traditions in general and the experiences and productions of the African Diaspora in particular.

**COMS 460: Public Memory (Cross-listed as HNRS 409)
TR 12:30-1:45pm / STRO 119 / 3 credit hrs**

Course Description: The United States is teeming with public memory artifacts that reconstruct the past for present use. The interdisciplinary field of memory studies is concerned with how such artifacts reflect and influence cultural identity by telling us who, what, and how to remember. This course introduces students to public memory through the rhetorical examination of media, memory sites, and other artifacts.

MUS 240: Survey of African American Music / MW 1:00-1:50pm / Davis 215 / 3 credit hrs

Course Description: Provides an overview of African American music from its origins to the present, with focus on understanding the cultural impact, details of performance, and style of various genres of African American music. Includes regular music listening and information helpful to understanding a wide spectrum of musical types and styles. Intended for non-majors with no musical training.

**ENG 471-001 /African-American Literature/ TR 09:30 am-10:45 am/ HUMHAL 308/
ENG 571-001 /African-American Literature/ TR 09:30 am-10:45 am/ HUMHAL 308/**

Soul Food Lit: The Intersections of African American Literature and Foodways

In this course, we will read a variety of African American literature, and through close reading, interpret what food in these literatures reveals and reflects about the dynamism of Black peoples, identity, and culture. We will read novels, short stories, excerpts, and poetry alongside cookbooks and recipes to consider how the foods and practices of cooking and eating therein locate Black literary, aesthetic, and culinary traditions. Engaging Black feminist literary criticism, African American literary theory, and scholarship on African American foodways, we critically examine the meaning and utility of foods in African American literature to question and defend how these foods have been shaped by and reflect African diasporic experiences and culinary histories. Using a chronological approach, we will invest time in the soul (1960-1975) and post-soul (1975-present) eras to define and discuss soul food as an African diasporic cuisine and its significance in African American literature. We will engage and discuss scholarship and artifacts (artwork, music, performance, fashion, etc.) of these eras to understand the contours of their defining and their aesthetic contributions to conceptualize if, how, and through what cultural context the foods present in our texts are soul foods. Using our cultural texts as a frame and food—particularly soul food—as a lens, we will interrogate the intersections of race, gender, class, region, sexuality, and ability and explore constructions of Blackness, selfhood, community, and agency in African American literature.