

HI 450 B1: Topics in Popular Culture-Race and Popular Culture
Spring 2018
HIS 504, Friday 11:15-2:00

Professor Andrew David
226 Bay State Road, Room 501
Email: andavid@bu.edu
Office Hours: TR 3:30-4:30, F 2:45-3:45, and by appointment

Overview:

This course examines the interaction of race and American popular culture including music, film, television, sports, and food. To do this, students will engage with a variety of primary and secondary sources. While part of this class will be focusing on placing these sources in their original, historical, context, we will also discuss how they have evolved over time and their resonance today.

Requirements:

This is a writing and reading intensive course. While a lot is expected of you, the more you put into this course the more you will get out of it. Much of this material is deeply engaging and well written (we are far away from the realm of dry textbooks) and we will be looking at some of the transformative cultural art forms and works of modern American life.

A major portion of this course will be driven by in-class discussions, and class participation will form 25% of your grade. Most weeks we'll start off class by having two students poses a series of questions to the class and run a mini-discussion (this will count for 10% of your grade).

In addition to class participation, you will be asked to write a substantive (12-15 page) research paper on a topic of your choosing. In addition to writing this paper, you will give a presentation to the class at the end of the semester. In the run-up to writing your paper, you will also complete several smaller written assignments that are designed to help you develop your thesis and identify possible sources.

The complete grade breakdown is as follows:

Related to Discussion

10%-Leading Class Discussion

25%-General Participation/End of the Semester Presentation

Related to Paper

10%-Paper Pitch

15%-Intro, Paper Outline, and Partial Bibliography

40%-Final Paper

Late Work Policy:

Late papers will be penalized one-third grade per day (example: a B paper that is one day late becomes a B-).

Attendance:

This course is a seminar, which means that attendance is required and participation in discussion is essential not only for your final grade but also for the class to function well as a whole.

Plagiarism:**[Just don't do it...but see below if you have any questions]**

Plagiarism is the passing off of another's words or ideas as your own, and it is a serious academic offense. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in the College of Arts and Science Academic Conduct Code. All students are subject to the CAS code, which can be read online at:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

Penalties for plagiarism can range from failing an assignment or course to suspension or expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please speak with me.

Required Texts

Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (Picador, 2005)

Yunte Huang, *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History* (W.W. Norton, 2011)

Dick Lehr, *The Birth of a Nation: How a Legendary Filmmaker and a Crusading Editor Reignited America's Civil War* (PublicAffairs, 2014)

Eric Lott, *Love and Theft* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

David Margolick, *Strange Fruit: The Biography of a Song* (Ecco, 2001)

Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film* (University Press of Kentucky, 2003)

Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2006)

Thomas Zeiler, *Jackie Robinson and Race in America: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford St. Martin's, 2013)

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

January 19-Introduction to the Course

January 26-Minstrelsy

Readings:

Lott, *Love and Theft*

Blackboard Reading:

W.T. Lhamon, "The Blackface Lore Cycle"

February 2-Birth of a Nation

Readings:

Lehr, *The Birth of a Nation*

Blackboard Reading:

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Lost Cause Rides Again" *The Atlantic* 8/4/17

In Class: Discuss Initial Paper Ideas

February 9-Strange Fruit and Gone with the Wind

Readings:

Margolick, *Strange Fruit*

Blackboard Reading:

Aisha Harris, "How Movie Theaters, TV Networks, and Classrooms are Changing the Way They Show *Gone With the Wind*" *Slate*
10/22/17

February 16-Charlie Chan and Chop Suey: Asian American Influence on American Culture in the Early 20th Century

Readings:

Huang, *Chalie Chan*

Blackboard Reading:

Excerpt, Andrew Coe, *Chop Suey*

February 23-Jazz (at Home and Abroad)

Readings:

von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*

Due: Paper Pitch

March 2-Race and Popular Culture out West

Readings:

Rollins and O'Connor, eds. *Hollywood's Indian*

Blackboard Reading:

Desirée Garcia, "Not a Musical in Any Sense of the Word"

March 9-NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 16-Sports and Race

Readings:

Zeiler, *Jackie Robinson and Race in America*

Blackboard Readings:

The Yawkey Legacy [selected documents]

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "O.J. Simpson and the Counter-Revolution of 1968"

The Atlantic 6/25/16

March 23-Race and Comedy in Mid-Century Film

Watch:

Blazing Saddles

In Class: Bring Intro, Outline, and Partial Bibliography for Peer Edit

March 30-Hip Hop

Readings:

Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*

Due: Intro, Paper Outline, Partial Bibliography Final Draft

April 6-Student Meetings with Prof David (Schedule on 3/30)
Readings: None (work on paper)

April 13-Race and TV
Readings/Viewings: To Be Decided by Class

April 20-Student Presentations
Readings: None (work on paper)

April 27-Student Presentations
Readings: None (work on paper)

Final Paper Due: Monday, May 1 by 5pm (Hardcopy to Prof. David's office)

When Is Everything Due?

Class Discussion: Your Choice

Idea (or ideas) for Paper Topic: February 2 [Note: this is just to get you thinking. You won't be turning anything in]

Paper Pitch (1-2 pages): February 23

Intro, Paper Outline, and Partial Bibliography (2-3 pages): Draft peer review, March 23
Final draft, March 30

Class Presentation: Either April 20 or April 27 [Will pick dates after Spring Break]

Final Paper (12-15 pages): May 1 by 5pm