



<http://lunch.com/hiphop>

**BLST 191 IB: "The Slave and the Master": Investigating Race, Class, and Gender in Hip Hop**  
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**UCSB Spring 2012**  
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**Course Prelude:**

This is the REMIX! The syllabus you are about to read, may or may not look like what you used to. I know some of y'all are ready to call me out and think that I made a grammatical mistake in the second sentence. That type of thinking doesn't work with me. Like many linguists, I do not see black language as slang or as inappropriate. Linguists say what we speak is only a language if it has its own grammar, syntax, and phonology. Languages spoken by West Africans who were enslaved by Europeans and their descendants, for example, have all of that and then some. Yeah, we even got our own ways of making arguments that are very connected to the trajectory of our racial experiences. We do not speak incorrect, broken, or dialectical versions of our master's languages. We speak variations of our own languages. We understand and know the rules behind what we speak, how, and when we speak it— even, if others do not. Hip hop is no different. Everywhere you go you will hear variations of hip hop language. I'ma keep it as real with you as hip hop always has, you can't have no hip hop course without some form of hip hop language. And if you are doing hip hop and not using hip

hop language, then you frontin. If you are uncomfortable with anything you had read thus far, you probably won't like this course or my teaching style.

You won't find units up in here! What you will find is a phrase from or the title of a track that hopes to capture the topic and the theme. The track is put on repeat until the tape pops or the track skips.

As captured by the title of this course, each group of texts in a track puts the limelight on the ways relationships between a slave and master gets reconfigured in hip hop, in terms of race, class, and gender.

While I have selected this theme and I selecting tracks as a way of guiding this quarter, much of this soundtrack (i.e. syllabus) reflects what y'all told me you wanted to learn about, read about, and write about in terms of hip-hop. Like the image across the top of this syllabus, this course will capture a range of hip hop culture. This course though is only 10 weeks long and can in no way shape or form do justice to hip hop culture. If this seems unbalanced, in any way I apologize. I am only doin what a DJ does—I'm playing your requests. Let the beat rock!

### **How's It Going Down:**

#### **Methodology**

I value all of y'all and acknowledge the knowledge you bring to the table. As such, my teaching style involves allowing you to take charge of your education and showing your peers what you learn and what you know. There won't be a whole lot of lecturing; there'll be dialogue. There'll be sharing and learning from all the different perspectives we bring to the table.

#### **Office Hours:**

Please do come to my office hours to discuss anything that pertains to the course or the intersects of our academic work. Your best bet for catching up when you can't be in class is to ask a classmate. I don't write or keep lecture notes. When you do come to office hours, please come prepared with questions.

#### **Attendance & Participation(20% of Final Grade):**

All of y'all are grown adults. I respect that; I won't get up in yo business. But because you need to be in class to learn, come on a regular basis. Every three tardies or early departures or combination thereof equals 1 absence. For every 3 absences, your participation grade goes down 1 full letter grade. Being in class, means that you are here and doing what you supposed to be doing. Don't get lost in space and time. That means that you don't use any electronic devices unless it is a part an assignment

for this hip hop experience and you are requested to do so. That means that you don't do work for another course on this course's watch.

### **Check Yo Self Before Yo Wreck Yo Self**

Be respectful of your peers and how you respond to them. Be mindful of the positions we occupy in society and the privileges some of us carry.

We'll discuss plagiarism before you write something that will be graded here. We'll discuss methods of documentation and citation. If you do plagiarize, you will receive an "F" and a chance for a redo. The second time, you will receive an "F" for the assignment. The third time you'll get an "F" for the course.

**Description of Assignments & Grading Distribution: You can only turn in one assignment late. After that, no late assignments will be accepted without prior approval.**

#### **1. Rockin da Mic Right: 20 minute Student-led discussion** 20%

Based on the units and readings you see, you will sign up to do a student led discussion. There will be 5 of you each week. It is your responsibility to make sure that there is no overlap in the discussion you lead with that of the other 4 people.

#### **2. 21 Questions: Sustaining Intellectual Dialogue in the Classroom** 20%

For your own presentation, you will be expected to e-mail me one question you would like me to answer. While the rest of class will not present, you will send to me via e-mail 5 questions about at least three texts assigned that week that you would like to ask of those who are presenting. You must word-process these questions and send it to me via e-mail on Sunday no later than 5PM. The questions need to show that you have critically read and understood the texts and that you are looking at your classmates as intellectual sharers of knowledge.

#### **3. You Can Get With This or You Can Get With That: Options for Midterm Project** 20%

For this project you will look at one of the topics we have covered closely. You will have a choice of whether you want to work with print texts or a combination of texts. Either way, this project will involve options for both types of assignments as well as analysis and writing and work off things we've covered in class.

#### **4. The After Party: Final Project** 20%

Much like the midterm project, the final project will revisit the topics and themes we covered in class. You will be provided with options of what you would like to do in terms of hip hop. Here, what you to think about something that you can take with you and develop as part of your studies at UCSB or part of life outside of UCSB.