

**Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS)
ICS Team Teaching Program for Spring 2024**

Course Number:

THFM 3950 (Workshop in Current Topics)/MUCT 4310 (Aesthetics of Black Music)

Course Title:

Africana Performance and the Aesthetics of Resistance

Faculty:

Dr. Sidra Lawrence, College of Musical Arts

Email: sidral@bgsu.edu Tel : (940) 367-8425

Dr. D. A-R. Forbes-Erickson, Department of Theatre and Film

Email: forbeda@bgsu.edu Tel : (419) 372-4874

ICS Research Clusters:

Africana Diaspora Cluster

The Cultural Study of Sound Cluster

Course Description:

Africana Performance and The Aesthetics of Resistance is a general arts survey examining African American theatre and music history from the 1960s to the present. Through dramatic literature, music, and cultural production, students will explore African American theatre and music and their significance within US American culture, activism, democracy, and civil liberties. The course engages in Indigenous African cultures, Black identity, and issues of colonialism, gender, race, and sexuality in selected music, dramatic literature, and related arts by African American artists, including the emergence of jazz, rap, and hip hop. This course includes weekly lectures, discussions, presentations, and group projects, and open to all BGSU students across various disciplines.

Course Objectives:

Students will -

1. Analyze and learn various Indigenous African performance and musical genres and in relation to African American traditions.
2. Explore global human rights issues and the role of the arts activism in the performing arts in Africana performances.
3. Be able to discuss the commonalities between African American theatre and African Diasporic theatres in the Latin America, Caribbean, and Black Europe.
4. Consider issues of diversity in African American theatre, and engage in critical issues and debates about theatre.
5. Engage in the arts and activism, and in the journey of African American and African theatre and musical forms.
6. Begin to understand the injury caused by the social concept of race in US America; and to review African American survival and achievements.

7. Be able to explain the political, economic, and cultural history of the United States, specifically African American life.
8. To gain an understanding of US America's role and place in relation to the world, and in particular Africana global and local communities.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will -

1. Research and disseminate knowledge through oral presentation and writing skills.
2. Examine forms as social and cultural activism in Africana music and dramatic literature through readings, viewing films, listening to music.
3. Develop collaborative skills through class participation, group projects and presentations.
4. Acquire skills in research and critical analysis through regular written discussions, including how to cite sources.
5. Distinguish between historical and contemporary Africana art forms in musical arts and theatre through contextual lectures and demonstrations.
6. Compare, contrast, and contextualize historical and contemporary genres and moments in Africana musical and theatrical forms.
7. Cultivate and develop critical thinking skills in evaluating evidence and formulating new arguments through play script and music score analyses.
8. Analyze US American theatre and music performance as conceptualized by African Americans with influences from Indigenous African and other Indigenous cultures.

Target Audience and Course Promotion

1. Target audience is open to all students across campus for general education and intercultural diversity in US American culture and global perspectives.
2. Course number is currently on the checklist for several majors
3. Course promotion includes scheduled informational meetings and events during Fall 2023 semester before registration for the Spring 2024 semester.

(Workshop in Current Topics)

AFRICANA PERFORMANCE AND THE AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE

SPRING 2024

January 8 - April 26, 2024

FACULTY

Dr. Sidra Lawrence, College of Musical Arts
Email: sidral@bgsu.edu Tel: (940) 367-8425

Dr. D. A-R. Forbes-Erickson, Department of Theatre and Film
Email: forbeda@bgsu.edu Tel: (419) 372-4874

LOCATION

TBA

OFFICE HOURS

TBA & by appointment

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REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Play texts provided on Canvas:

1. *Dutchman* (1964) by Amiri Baraka
2. *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964) by Adrienne Kennedy
3. *Venus* (1996) by Suzan-Lori Parks
4. *Ruined* (2008) by Lynn Nottage
5. *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915* (2014) by Jackie Sibblies Drury

Readings from African American theatre and music provided on Canvas from:

- *A History of African American Theatre* by Errol G. Hill and James V. Hatch
- Other selected readings (TBD)

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Poster board for projects (1 group project)
- Printing access, labels
- Manilla folder for written reports
- Glue stick, paper, scissors, pens, markers

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT (2.26.21)

Bowling Green State University and its affiliated campuses are situated in the homelands numerous Indigenous and Native tribal nations. This space holds many contemporary and historical ties to the Wyandot, Kickapoo, Miami, Odawa, Potawatomi, and multiple other Indigenous tribal nations, present and past, who were forcibly removed to and from the area. This area's history reveals an arterial network of complex economic and cultural significance. We recognize the stewardship, dedication, and presence of those for whom the Great Black Swamp and the Lower Great Lakes region is home. Through this statement, we aim to trace the past to the present to inform current conditions. It is within BGSU's responsibility as an academic institution to disseminate knowledge about Indigenous peoples and the University's relationships, past and present, with tribal nations and individuals. As such, we recognize the forced relocation of tribal nations to and from this land and we strive to decolonize history and present conditions. We thank Indigenous individuals and communities who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. This type of acknowledgement must not only be through statement, but in action and practice as well, in order to foster inclusive, respectful and sustainable community.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

1. Research Projects and Presentations (Group) (Ongoing) (20%)

In groups of 3s or 4s, groups will research the life and work of one musician and playwright, the period and significance of the work. Each group will do a written report and presentation with a poster board in class. Groups will prepare and analyze audio samples of music and/or film excerpts of theatre.

2. Presentations (Individual) (Ongoing) (20%)

Each person will do a ten-minute presentation on one of the week's readings. Students will summarize selected reading highlighting any definitions, points, or arguments. Include examples from music and/or theatre

3. Listening Exercise (Discussion Post + Discussion in-Class) (Ongoing) (20%)

In class, we will listen to and analyze selected songs from the following discographies. Analyses should include contextual research on the artiste, influences, periods, and social movements, lyrical content, and related arts.

- “Say it Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud” from album *A Soulful Christmas* (1968) by James Brown.
- “Who Will Survive America” from album *It’s Nation Time* (1968) by Amiri Baraka
- *Space is the Place* (1973) by Sun Ra
- *All Eyes on Me* (1996) by Tupac
- *Lemonade* (2016) by Beyonce

- *Damn* (2017) by Kendrick Lamar
 - *Dirty Computer* (2018) by Janelle Monae
4. Mid-Term Exam – Due: February 26, 2024 (Tested on weeks 1 to 8) (20%)
The mid-term exam consists of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. The final exam will cover weeks 1-8.
 5. Final Exam – Due: TBA (Tested on weeks 10 to 15) (20%)
The final exam consists of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. The final exam will cover weeks 10-15.

GRADE SCALE

- 4.0 - A—excellent (90-100%)
- 3.0 - B—good (80-89%)
- 2.0 - C—acceptable (70-79%)
- 1.0 - D—poor but passing (60-69%)
- 0.0 - F—failure (\leq 59%)

COURSE DATES

- January 8 – April 26, 2024 – Regular Spring Semester
- January 15, 2024 (Monday) – Martin Luther King Day (No Classes)
- March 4-8, 2024 – Spring Break
- April 19, 2024 (Friday) – Last day of classes
- April 22-26, 2024 – Exam Week
- April 26-27, 2024 - Commencement

COURSE SCHEDULE

Introductions and Overview

- Week 1 – January 8, 2024
General introductions and activity
Syllabus
Course Description – Overview
Research Projects and Presentation (Group) – sign-up sheets
Presentations (Individual) – sign-up sheets
Class Party

Unit I - Africana Music/Theatre – 1960s – 1970s – *Dutchman* (1964) by Amiri Baraka and *Funnyhouse of a Negro* by Adrienne Kennedy

- Week 2 – January 15, 2024
 Overview on Africana/African American theatre history
 Civil Rights Movement
 Black Arts Movement
 Amiri Baraka’s *Dutchman* (1964)
 Indigenous African references – Ndongans from 1619 landing in Jamestown Virginia on a Dutch-man-of-war
 View 1964 excerpt from – *Dutchman* by Amiri Baraka
 Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
- Week 3 – January 24, 2024
 Civil Rights Movement
 Black Arts Movement
 Colonialism and neocolonialism
 Independence movements on the continent of Africa
 Adrienne Kennedy’s *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964)
- Week 4 – January 29, 2024
- In class readings:
- Ben Okri, “A Mental Tyranny is Keeping Black Writers from Greatness.”
- Sofia Samatar, “Black and African Writers don’t need Instructions from Ben Okri.”
- Peggy McGlone, “Why the Smithsonian is changing its approach to collecting, starting with the removal of looted Benin treasures.”
- Questions: What stories are generated about Africa and diasporic experiences? Can performance decolonize Black and African storytelling and storytelling about Black and African lives? How does colonialism live in the world of art and music?
 Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
- Week 5 – February 5, 2024
- Space and dislocation in Africana arts and identity
- Watch: Tsitsi Jaji poetry
- Activity: Blackout poetry
 Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class

Unit II – Africana Music/Theatre - 1980s and 1990s – *Venus* by Suzan Lori-Parks

- Week 6 – February 12, 2024
 Overview of Africana/African American Theatre
Venus (1996) by Suzan-Lori-Parks
 African references – South Africa, human zoos in the US and Europe
 Indigenous African and other Indigenous cultures
 Mid-Term Review
 Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
- Week 7 – February 19, 2024

Hip Hop and a new era of Black protest song

Questions: How are contemporary Black artists engaging with the BLM movement through performance? What sonic materials extend from 1970s Black Nationalist movements through today's social racial justice movements? In what ways are artists challenging spatial ideologies through performance? How does the Black feminist tradition intersect with the #BLM movement?

Venus (1996) by Suzan-Lori Parks

Listen: Kamasi Washington, Christian Scott

Research Projects and Presentations (Group)

Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class

- Week 8 – February 26, 2024
Mid-Term Exam
- Week 9 – Spring Break – March 4-8, 2024
No Classes

Unit III Africana Music/Theatre - 2000s – *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage

- Week 10 – March 11, 2024
Overview of Africana/African American theatre
Ruined (2008) by Lynn Nottage
References to the Democratic Republic of Congo
Other references to Indigenous African and other Indigenous cultures
Musical styles, genres
Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
- Week 11 – March 18, 2024
Overview Africana feminist movements
Case study: Ghana (based on Dr. Lawrence's research)

Unit IV Africana Music/Theatre - 2010s – *We are Proud to Present* – Jackie Sibblies Drury

- Week 12 – March 25, 2024
Overview of African American theatre
We are Proud to Present – Jackie Sibblies Drury
References to Indigenous African cultures
Herero and Namaqua genocide and lynching dramas in the US
View virtual production of *We are Proud to Present* by Jackie Sibblies Drury
Presentation

- Week 13 – April 1, 2024
References to Indigenous African cultures
Satirical Dramey
Herero and Namaqua genocide and lynching dramas in the US
Presentation
Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
- Week 14 – April 8, 2024
Presentation
Indigenous cultures
Listening Exercise – Discussion Post + Discussion in-class
Final Exam review
- Week 15 – April 15, 2024
Presentations
Research Projects and Presentations (Group)
Wrap-Up- Course Review Africana Theatre and Music
Class party
- Week 16 - Exam Week – April 22-26, 2024
Final Exam date and time – TBA

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Office Hours

TBA

No late assignments. No incompletes.

*Late assignments will receive minus five points (-5 pts) for each day late for up to 2 days.

Content Statement

This course explores issues of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression and discrimination. We study these issues at the university to understand the world around us, to raise awareness, to analyze histories, to develop compassion, and to inspire a call to action and change to restore human dignity to all people.

If you have experienced trauma related to these or other issues, I encourage you access counseling services at the BGSU Counseling Center here: <https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html>, Tel: 419-372-2081.

At no time do these issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, disabilities, religious/spiritual practices, or others in the course content excuse any student from participating in course work and/or completing assignments.

Emergency Crisis Information

On-call counselors are available at 419-372-2081 for crisis situations from 8:00am to 5:00pm Mondays through Fridays in the BGSU Counseling Center

<https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html>

For after-hours call the Wood County Crisis Line at 419-502-4673. The Wood County Crisis Line is a 24 hours, 7 days a week crisis center.

Writing Consultations

Please access writing consultations with writing tutors in the BGSU Writing Center in the Learning Commons located on the first floor of the Jerome Library, BGSU. Please visit the webpage, or email for further information: <https://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons.html> or email: tlc@bgsu.edu. To schedule an in-person or virtual appointment, please call 419-372-2823.

Absences

Students are expected to attend every class meeting. Absences will not be excused, except for professional engagements such as conference presentations or performances with documentation. Leaving class early, even by 5 minutes will be counted as an absence from the class. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your course grade.

If emergencies, long-term illness, or other circumstances arise, please contact me directly as soon as possible. Please do not relay messages to me through third parties. If you have religious observances, please notify me well before the start of observances so that you can rearrange course work and submit assignment. Religious observances do not excuse you from completing coursework and assignments in this course.

Academic Honesty

The BGSU Academic Honesty Policy can be found here: <https://libguides.bgsu.edu/c.php?g=227101&p=1505336> . Please familiarize yourselves with the BGSU Academic Honesty Policy guidelines. Violations, including but not limited to plagiarism, forgery, cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, bribery, coercion, threats for grades, and others may lead to dismissal or expulsion from the university.

Accessibility Services

The BGSU Accessibility Services will provide equal access and opportunity to qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or will experience a disability at any time during the semester, please contact the BGSU Accessibility Services immediately for accommodations. <https://www.bgsu.edu/accessibility-services.html>, email: access@bgsu.edu & Tel : 419-372-8495.

As expected, BGSU Accessibility Services will advise me on specific accommodations needed for each person who qualifies with a disability. Accommodation letters from the BGSU Accessibility Services detail only accommodations needed, and do not include disabilities.

BGSU Diversity and Belonging Statement

<https://www.bgsu.edu/equity-diversity-and-inclusion.html>

Quote:

Bowling Green State University values diversity as essential to improving the human condition. Diversity and inclusion immeasurably enrich all that we do to engage, understand, and respect individuals. Within our community, the diversity of identities has not always been understood or embraced in our society, yet, at

BGSU, we will strive to understand and embrace diversity by breaking down barriers to meaningful participation to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity. As a community, we commit to advance this culture through a comprehensive strategy and diversity plan that focuses on the recruitment, retention, and success of a diverse student body, faculty, staff and administration.

As a public university for the public good, our bedrock commitment to diversity and belonging requires mutual respect, understanding, and valuing individuals to facilitate a more diverse and inclusive environment so all can belong.

Read the BGSU “Diversity and Belonging Comprehensive Strategy and Plan, 2020-2023” here: <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/division-of-diversity-and-belonging/documents/20DB0405DiversityandBelongingComprehensiveStrategyandPlan.pdf>

Social Justice & Advocacy Statements at BGSU

Click on link below to access the following statements.

<https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center/social-justice.html>

- Statement on Gender Diversity
- Statement on Race
- Black Lives Matter
- Pride Statement
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

*Please go to Canvas to find your syllabus, assignments, rubrics, and additional readings and resources for the course.