

**Westfield State University**  
**Department of Ethnic & Gender Studies Studies**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION	COURSE INFORMATION
Dr. Enrique Morales-Díaz email via PLATO	EGST 208: Hip Hop Cultures (CORE: Social Understanding/U.S. Diversity) ONLINE – Summer Session II

“Hip-hop is a family, so everybody has got to pitch in. East, west, north, or south – we come from one coast...This culture was born in the ghetto. We were born here to die. We’re surviving now, but we’re not yet rising up. If we’ve got a problem, we’ve got to correct it. We can’t be hypocrites. That’s what I hope the hip-hop generation can do, to take us all to the next level by always reminding us: It ain’t about keeping it real, it’s about keeping it right.”

-Dj Kool Herc in Jeff Gahng’s *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*

“The story of hip hop, like the story of the millennial America, is infinitely more intriguing than typical accounts acknowledge. Most assessments of the hip hop ‘generation’ or ‘nation’ present a culture that is monolithic in its worldview or definable simply by age. But if the thirty-plus-year career of the movement suggests anything it is that hip hop belies the established definitions and caricatures that tend to celebrate or condemn the culture. Simply put, hip hop is unlike anything the world has ever seen. It is a vital source of creativity and industry for youth. Hip hop is consumed with pop celebrity and street credibility – and capable, many believe, of transforming young lives [...] Over the course of its career hip hop has developed a notorious and even self-perpetuating reputation as a spectacular culture movement committed to defying the cultural and political mainstream. But as the borders of the hip-hop nation continue to expand, its biggest and most important battle is shaping up to be the one it is having with itself. Behind the explosive record sales, trendsetting cachet, and burgeoning economy is an intense struggle for the soul of the hip hop movement.”

-S. Craig Watkins, *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of the Movement*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Hip Hop refers primarily to a mode of self-expression for urban youth culture through rap, turntablism, graffiti, and breaking. For over four decades it has evolved not only within the confines of American mainstream culture, but it has also become a global movement. This course explores the political and aesthetic foundations of hip-hop. We will trace its musical, corporeal, visual, spoken and literary manifestations of hip-hop in the American cultural imaginary. We will also investigate specific cultural practices that have given rise to its various idioms, and discuss how media portrays and ‘profits’ from the impact hip-hop and its various manifestations have had on North American mainstream society. Some of the topics that will be studied closely include but are not limited to: gender relations, cross-cultural impact of hip-hop, identity formation, sexism and homophobia.

*By the end of the semester, students will:*

- Be familiar with the historical, political, cultural and social contexts that influenced the creation of hip-hop
- Understand how individuals and groups that identify with hip-hop associate their identity with the development of the culture
- Understand the varying controversies associated with hip-hop
- Understand the political role hip-hop has played in the United States
- Understand the transnational impact of hip-hop
- Increase critical and writing skills

### **REQUIRED TEXTS** (there will be other reading material available on PLATO)

Berry, Bertice. *The Haunting of Hip Hop*.

Mansbach, Adam. *Angry Black White Boy or, The Miscegenation of Macon Detornay*.

Ptah, Heru. *A Hip Hop Story*.

Asante, M.K. *Buck: A Memoir*.

Asante, M.K. *It’s Bigger than Hip Hop: The Rise of Post-Hip-Hop Generation*.

