



# MUSIC, BELONGING AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM IN SENEGAL

**APA Program:** Dakar: June Short-Term

**Language of instruction:** English

**US semester credits:** 4.0

**Contact hours:** 36

**Term availability:** June Short-Term (3 weeks)

**Instructor:** Babacar Faye, PhD

## Course Description

The goal of the course is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the vitality, resilience, and global breadth of contemporary African and African diaspora communities through an experiential engagement with hip hop and urban cultures as decolonial voices that constantly engage the limits of coloniality, global capitalism, and local political realities. This course will particularly focus on the ways African urban hip hop functions as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the global African diaspora and Senegal. Using music as a political and aesthetic expression against Empire, we will explore the potential and limits of African urban hip hop to offer disenfranchised masses, especially people of African descent, possibilities to critique and delink from coloniality in their everyday lives. Hip hop will be studied as a means to create links and spaces of solidarity between African descendants and economically disenfranchised peoples from the Global North and the Global South. Our ultimate goal is to question dominant narratives and create a transformative consciousness about economic and cultural globalization, immigration, identity, nation, nationality, democracy, human rights, and equality.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the vitality, resilience, and global breadth of contemporary African and African diaspora communities.
2. Articulate the ways in which African urban hip hop functions as a means to create links, spaces, and solidarities between African descendants and economically disenfranchised peoples from the Global North and the Global South.
3. Illustrate the pervasive nature of coloniality in Black communities globally.
4. Appraise and articulate the complex role of African urban hip hop as a decolonial pedagogy that engages the limits of coloniality, global capitalism, and local political realities.

## Schedule

### Week 1

**The Boomerang Effect** - Guest lecturer: Xuman

- Workshop with Xeinixx and Salla Ngary at Africulturban and visit of Pikine Slam

## From Africa to the US and Back

Introduction - This module explores the birth and development of hip hop in the US and in Africa. We will start with an exploration of the roots of the hip hop movement in the South Bronx through an examination of the ways African aesthetics and ontologies allowed disenfranchised diasporic communities from the South Bronx to critically engage the social and political realities of the 1970s USA before hip hop developed into a global phenomenon in the 1990s. We will subsequently trace the development and adaptation of hip hop on the African continent, revisit the diasporic exchanges that have led to its emergence on the continent, and examine the particularities, in Africa, of hip hop as a means to question the modes of definitions of the world and the epistemic and cultural foundations of eurocentrism and global capitalism. The module will ultimately engage in a more focused study of hip hop and urban cultures in Senegal. Starting with a genealogy of the movement, we will examine its relevance in the consolidation of democracy in Senegal while exploring the ways it has adapted to, and transformed, contemporary Senegalese cultures and cityscapes.

## Site Visit

With hip hop artist Xuman, students will visit Africulturban and learn about the way hip hop has evolved in Senegal. While Xuman, one of the pioneers of hip hop in Senegal is from the SICAP neighborhood, Africulturban is in the Senegalese suburbs. The comparison between these two respectively upper middleclass and lower middle-class neighborhoods will show how, in Senegal, hip hop evolved from a Pan-African movement focusing on questions related to universal black consciousness to a movement focused on issues of day-to-day survival. This will lead us to better understand the sociology of Senegalese urban dwellings and their implications on the socio-political particularities of Senegalese urban cultures.

## Required readings

Catherine M. Appert (2016) "On Hybridity in African Popular Music: The Case of Senegalese Hip Hop" *Ethnomusicology* Vol. 60, No. 2: 279-299

Mitchell, T. (2002). *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*. Indiana: Wesleyan. "Introduction: Another Root—Hip-Hop outside the USA." Pp. 1-38

## Recommended reading

Clark, M. 2018. *Hip Hop in Africa: Prophets of the city and dusty foot philosophers*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press

Saucier, P.K, ed. (2011). *Native Tongues: An African Hip-hop reader*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press. Forman, Murray "Forward;" Saucier "Introduction" in Saucier. Pp. ix-xxii

## Week 2

**The Five Elements: Hip Hop Aesthetic** - Guest lecturer: King Mo about Graffiti

- Site visits: the Blaise Senghor center - Talk about Hip Hop, Graffiti and Gender with Fatou Kine and visit A Design/Fashion shop.

### **Required readings**

Leslie W. Rabine (2014) "These Walls Belong to Everyone: The Graffiti Art Movement in Senegal" *African Studies Quarterly*, Volume 14, Issue 3

Maggie Dickinson (2008) "The Making of Space, Race and Place: New York City's War on Graffiti, 1970 – Present" *Critique of Anthropology* Volume 28 Issue 1: 27-45

### **Week 3**

**Hip Hop and the Grammar of Decoloniality** - Guest lecturer: Thiat, Founding member of *Y en A Marre*

- Talk with Malal Tall "The Revolution Will be Televised" at G Hip Hop center
- Visit to *Y en A Marre* headquarters in Parcelles Assainies

### **Hip Hop, Urban Cultures, and the Grammar of Decoloniality**

This module looks at the ways African urban hip hop challenges the colonial matrix of power and participates in the consolidation of democracy in Senegal. Students will examine the ways African urban hip hop functions as decolonial pedagogical praxes and counterhegemonic movements against cultural and economic imperialism in the US, in Africa, and in Europe. In light of all the readings and experiences accumulated during the term, students will explore further the ways hip hop and urban cultures function as political and aesthetic expressions against Empire and corrupted local elite. The module will subsequently explore the role of hip hop and urban cultures in the creolization of local cultures through a discussion of the ways it has led to modern and creole yet fundamentally African cultures thereby showing the complexity.

### **Required readings**

Maramé, G. (2013). "Urban Guerrilla Poetry: The Movement Y' en a Marre and the Socio-Political Influences of Hip Hop in Senegal." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6, 3, 2013

Bryson, Devin (2014) "The Rise of a New Senegalese Cultural Philosophy" *African Studies Quarterly* Volume 14, Issue 2: 33-56