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**Renison University College**  
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## **Renison University College Territorial Acknowledgement**

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

[Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements](#) by Chelsea Vowel

### **Winter 2021**

**Course Code:** SDS 441R

**Course Title:** Popular Culture & Social Change

**Class Times:** Wednesdays 4:00pm – 5:20pm (online)

**Instructor:** Dr. Craig Fortier

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### **Course Description**

Social change happens on many levels: politically, economically, socially, emotionally, and culturally. This course focuses on the interaction between the radical imagination of movements for social justice and the realm of popular culture. During the term we will explore instances of this interaction to understand how radical movements insert or find themselves in the popular imagination and how popular culture itself influences the radical imagination. By examining popular culture in the radical imagination, we will investigate how radical subcultures enter the mainstream, how social movements resist and push back against the appropriation, corporatization, erasure, and sanitization of their material, social and cultural production,

and how individuals involved in mainstream popular culture interact with grassroots political movements.

Investigating text, video, audio, and other mediums of communication, this course seeks to develop student's critical capacity to investigate aspects of popular culture in a social and historical context.

## **Pedagogy**

This course is developed under the premise that **knowledge** is created and generated in multiple ways (i.e. through oral traditions, poetry and music, film, sport, land-based traditions, lived experiences, spirituality & ceremony, scientific & academic research, lost traditions, fiction and science fiction etc.) and that we must resist the colonialist limits of Western ontologies that delegitimize other ways of knowing and being. As such, the readings, activities, videos, and assignments that I have curated in this course will draw on these various ways of knowing and learning. Each week will combine a mix of reading, viewing/listening, discussion, case studies, etc.

Your lived **experience and interactions** with other humans, non-human beings, and the earth are foundational to engaging with the course materials. This engagement could be rooted in the communities in which you have developed relationships (i.e. work, family, social circles, social organizations, activist groups, ethnocultural and/or religious communities, recreational/artistic/sporting communities, etc.). It might also develop through active engagement in social movements/groups.

I would like to create a classroom space that opens up **discussion** between you and your classmates. This will be a place to grapple with the course materials in a respectful and thoughtful manner – *it is not the same as Twitter or the comments on Facebook* – but rather a space for careful, humble, and serious discussion and debate. It should be a place where you are open to being challenged about your politics and positions, but also a space where your critiques should be tempered by your understanding that folks are entering this space with a desire to learn and change. This means that we should attempt to create a space of care, mutual respect, accountability and trust – this is very difficult to do in any social space.

While this is a space of learning, it is also a space that seeks to **resist** the structures of oppression that permeate our day-to-day interactions. As such, I urge all students to be self-reflexive about behaviours or comments that have been identified as patriarchal, misogynist, classist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, et cetera. This self-reflection applies to me as well. We are all in a process of learning and unlearning these logics that dominate our society, so there is no expectation here that anyone is self-actualized and perfect – all I ask is that you are mindful of what you think, say and/or the way in which you interact with others is circumscribed by these forces.

## **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Have knowledge of the ways in which popular culture and grassroots social movements are interrelated and influence each other.
- B. Be able to produce an original piece of work that is publishable in a peer-reviewed academic journal or blog for upper level undergraduate students.
- C. Have the ability to **synthesize** various forms of popular culture and situate them within a broader structural and intersectional social context in relation to grassroots social movement.
- D. Be able to **mobilize knowledge** through creative workshops and knowledge sharing practices.

## **Required Texts**

*Please consider purchasing your books for this course at a Black-owned independent bookstore like:*

[\*A Different Booklist\*](#)

- Brown, Adrienne Maree (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Gumbs, Alexis Pauline (2016). *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hartman, Saidiya (2019). *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: Norton.
- Jemisin, NK (2015). *The Fifth Season (The Broken Earth Trilogy #1)*. London: Orbit.

All other readings are available via the course LEARN page. I have sought to make the course readings as cheap and as accessible as possible. The success of this class relies on our collective commitment to keeping up with the readings and engaging fully with them in our assignments and discussions. Course schedules, assignments, additional readings and announcements are all posted on LEARN. LEARN can be accessed at <http://www.learn.uwaterloo.ca>

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Jan 11-15	Week 1 – Introduction: The Radical Imagination & the Black Radical Imagination	Kelley; Turner
2	Jan 18-22	Week 2 - Utopia & Dystopia I: Get Out	Hartman; Jolly
3	Jan 25-29	Week 3 - Utopia & Dystopia II: The Fifth Season	Jemisin; Maynard
4	Feb 1-5	Week 4 - Black Feminist Futurities I: Lemonade	Hartman; Webster; Zandria
5	Feb 8-12	Week 5 - Black Feminist Futurities: spill.	Gumbs; Hartman <b>Assignment 1 Due</b>
	Feb 15	Family Day	
	Feb 16-19	Reading Week	
6	Feb 22-26	Week 6 - Black Queer Futurities I: Freetown Sound	Hartman
7	Mar 1-5	Week 7 - Black Queer Futurities II: Blonde	Lewellyn-Taylor; Hartman
8	Mar 8-12	Week 8 - Black Radical Imagination I: Emergent Strategy	Brown <b>Assignment 2 Due</b>
	Mar 15-16	Long Weekend - New	
9	Mar 17-19	NO CLASS	NO READINGS
10	Mar 22-26	Week 9 – Black Radical Imagination II – Abolitionist Futures	Gilmore; Hartman
11	Mar 29-Apr 1	Week 10 – Black Radical Imagination II: Black Lives Matter	Taylor; Smith-West; Herlock
	Apr 2	Good Friday	
12	Apr 5-9	OPEN DISCUSSION	
13	Apr 12-14	OPEN DISCUSSION II	<b>Assignment 3 Due</b>

## Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
1. The Utopia/Dystopia Syllabus	Friday Feb 12, 11:59pm ET	30%
2. The Black Futurities Digital Archive	Friday Mar 12, 11:59pm ET	30%
3. The Black Lives Matter Playlist	Friday Apr 16, 11:59pm ET	30%
4. Participation		10%
Total		100%

### Assignment Details

#### Assignment 1: The Utopia/Dystopia Syllabus (30%)

Due: **Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 11:59pm ET** via LEARN

#### **BACKGROUND**

Constructing a syllabus is a process in learning. To be able to teach about a topic, you need to develop a close and careful understanding of the subject. Constructing a syllabus is also a process in communicating. For the syllabus to be useful to your audience it has to be able to reach them where they are at and then take them on a journey that sustains their interest while they themselves unearth and explore the topic at hand with more depth than they had previously done.

In recent years an explosion of social justice-oriented syllabi have both expanded the possibilities for how we learn collectively about movements and broadened our understanding of the realms where serious study occurs (i.e. it doesn't need to happen in the university). The [#StandingRockSyllabus](#) is a well-known example of this type of work. It helps people interested in supporting the Standing Rock Sioux protect their lands from the Keystone XL Pipeline learn and understand the historical context and political values of the land defenders. With the rising calls to abolish and defund the police emerging out of the Black Lives Matter movement, other syllabi have been created, including the [Indigenous Abolitionist Study Guide](#) and the [Prison Abolition Syllabus](#).

How might one construct a syllabus to draw out important themes from a piece of pop culture? The Langston League does exactly this with its [syllabus series](#) dedicated to the HBO series *Lovecraft Country*. This assignment is inspired by the work of the Langston League to unpack *Lovecraft Country* in a way that intersects with Black political theory and social justice movements.

## DETAILS

The Utopia/Dystopia Syllabus assignment challenges students to curate and create a creative syllabus based on the theme: Utopia and dystopia in the Black radical imagination (covered in Weeks 1-3).

The first option for the syllabus can focus on the critically acclaimed horror film *Get Out* directed by Jordan Peele. The second option for the syllabus can focus on the novel *The Fifth Season* by the three-time Hugo Award winning author NK Jemisin.

Students will work collaboratively in breakout groups to help brainstorm and conduct preliminary research for the assignment during the “in-class video lecture” portion of the course in Weeks 2 and 3.

## Instructions

### Structure

1. You will create one syllabus. Choosing between the film *Get Out* or the book *The Fifth Season*.
2. The syllabus must include a cover page (with an image) that clearly indicates that the syllabus will be exploring Utopia/Dystopia in the Black Radical Imagination.
3. Your syllabus must include a works cited page
4. You can have up to 4 pages of content per syllabus (that means 6 total pages that inclusive of the title and works cited pages)

### Content

1. Your **first content page** (pg. 2) will provide a brief overview of how the cultural piece (i.e *Get Out* or *Fifth Season*) relates to the broad theme of utopia/dystopia in the Black radical imagination.
2. Be sure to draw from at least 3 of the readings from Weeks 1-3 including (Kelley, Turner, Hartman, Jolly, Maynard)
3. This page should also guide readers on how to use the syllabus (see p.3 of the Langston League’s [syllabus](#) for Lovecraft Country Episode 1) as an example of how you might do this.
4. Your **second and third content pages** will do a deep dive into the cultural piece (i.e. *Get Out* or *Fifth Season*) itself. What are some scenes, markers, concepts, that need to be unpacked. You can include: research notes from readings, online searches, blogs. You can include: links to interviews with the director, author, actors, artists involved in the process. You can include: art and images from the film that relate to the points you are making. *Note: The key is to maintain your focus on what*

*these cultural pieces mean in terms of the theme of: utopia/dystopia within the Black Radical Imagination.*

5. Your **fourth content page** is an assemblage of books, art, music and other media that you believe will help the reader further explore the topic as it relates to either Get Out or The Fifth Season.
6. In the **GET OUT SYLLABUS** you must specifically address one of the songs used by the director in the film. Why was it used? What purpose does it serve?
7. In the **FIFTH SEASON SYLLABUS** you must specifically address the concept of afrofuturism and how it relates to this book.

### Style

1. So long as each syllabus is 5 pages and contains the parts listed above you are free to be creative in terms of how you lay it out, how you design it, and the format you submit it in (i.e. pdf, doc, jpeg).
2. Your works cited should cite all media, articles, readings, blog posts, music you discuss in the syllabus – **you should use footnotes formatting in text or name the author if you use a direct quote.**
3. This assignment, like assignments in this course, uses a combination of collaborative work and individual work. While **you will submit your syllabi individually**, you will work collaboratively in weeks 2-3 with classmates to conduct research, discuss the themes, and help each other with tips on format, content, and design!

## Assignment 2: The Black Futurities Digital Archive (30%)

Due: **Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 11:59pm ET** via LEARN

### **BACKGROUND**

In *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, Saidiya Hartman explains the challenges historians are faced with when they dig into the archives. She notes, "Every historian of the multitude, the dispossessed, the subaltern, and the enslaved is forced to grapple with the power and authority of the archive and the limits it sets on what can be known, whose perspective matters, and who is endowed with the gravity and authority of historical actor." This is such an important intervention into the limits of historical research because it suggests that not only are the lives of people deemed too insignificant to be studied erased, if there are remnants of their stories remaining they are often narrated through the lens of people who despised, oppressed, pittied, or sought to change/reform them.

LGBTQ2S+ folks have struggled to reclaim their histories and stories from erasure or distortion. Organizations like [the Arquives](#) in Toronto or [Interference Archive](#) in Brooklyn seek to preserve and showcase LGBTQ2S+

and social movement histories through a practice of digging and reading “against the grain” of archival artefacts like news stories, police reports, social worker reports and “digging deeper” into love letters, interviews, and movement literature. Similarly the [Black Feminist Archives](#) at UMass Amherst collects and disseminates the important contributions of Black feminists in U.S. history.

## **DETAILS**

The Black Futurities Digital Archive assignment challenges students to dig through and uncover “digital artefacts” that will help piece together a narrative that documents the life, historical connections, and influence of lesser known feminist or queer Black artists, activists, or organizations. Building off of the work that we conducted in Weeks 4-7 and drawing on the historical and contemporary work of scholars we read like Hartman, Webster, and Spillers your task will be to select a single figure (or organization) in Black feminist or Black queer history (past and present) and collect a series of “digital artefacts” that you will present as the focus of your research report.

Students will work collaboratively in breakout groups to help brainstorm and conduct preliminary research for the assignment during the “in-class video lecture” portion of the course in Weeks 4-7. This research will be guided by the course instructor and you will be given tips and suggestions for how to engage in online research.

*What is a digital artefact?*

For the purpose of this assignment a digital artefact can be: a song, a film, a book, a poem, a protest sign, a personal letter, a speech, a newspaper article, an interview, a photograph, an animation, a podcast, a story told by someone who was part of an organization or knew your subject personally, etc.

*What might my subject be?*

You may select someone who was either a politicized pop culture icon who espoused or engaged in the practice of Black feminist or Black queer futurities past or present (i.e. Ella Fitzgerald, Josephine Baker, Princess Nokia, Junglepussey, Janet Mock, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Big Freedia, etc.). You may select individuals who were active in social justice struggles that sought to bring about Black feminist or Black queer futurities past or present (i.e. Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Syrus Marcus Ware, Fannie Lou Hamer, Audre Lourde, Ella Baker, Janaya Khan, El Jones, Keanga Yahmatta-Taylor, Patrice Cullors, Pascale Diverlus, Che Gossett, Tourmaline, Marsha P.



Johnson, etc.). You may delve into organizations that sought to bring about Black Feminist or Black Queer futurities (i.e. Combahee River Collective, Sista II Sista, Critical Resistance, BLM-TO, the Audre Lorde Project, etc.). You may select lesser known local figures (i.e. Fiqir Worku (KW), Ruth Cameron (KW), Fanis Juma Radstake (KW)). You may select afrofuturist feminists or queer theorists (i.e. Octavia Butler, Janelle Monae, adrienne maree brown, Zainab Amadahy, etc.). Your selection does not have to be listed above.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. You will **select one subject** (either an individual or a group) to be the focus of your study for this assignment. They may be from the list above or outside of the list, *feel free to check in with me if you are unsure if your subject will be a good fit for the assignment.*
2. You will **search for and identify between 3-5 artefacts** related to your subject that fit with the theme of the assignment (Black feminist futurities, Black queer futurities, or both).
3. You will do a **deep dive into those artefacts researching and analyzing** their content, impact on popular social justice movement, impact on popular culture, format, style, era, etc.
4. You can present your findings in **multiple formats**: as a blog post, as a video (i.e. think about YouTube unboxing videos or informative TikToks), as an audio file (i.e. podcast format), as a graphic illustration, or in any other format ok'd by me.

### Content

1. Your archive presentation should list – the name of your subject – and give a very brief background history on who they are.
2. You will identify each of your artefacts separately and will discuss their relationship to either the concept of Black feminist futurities or Black queer futurities.
3. You will draw on the writings of Saidiya Hartman, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, José Esteban Muñoz to explain how these particular artefacts make visible and mainstream what otherwise might be erased or suppressed.
4. You will discuss your personal relationship to these artefacts: what do they teach you that you didn't know before? Why are they meaningful to you?
5. Given that the format is open, a rough guide for various options: written (1500 words), video (8-12 minutes), audio (10-15 minutes), graphic (check with me for guidance).

## Assignment 3: The Black Lives Matter Playlist (30%)

Due: **Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup> 2021 11:59pm ET** via LEARN

### **BACKGROUND**

Music plays a critical role in giving life, voice, and a rhythm to collective mobilization. Certain songs can become a defacto soundtrack of political movements. Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" was vital to the 1960s Civil Rights movement, Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" was the backdrop for 1970s Gay Liberation struggles, A Tribe Called Red's "Sisters" was heard at rounddances and protests during the Idle No More movement. The history of movements is often intertwined with the creativity of musicians and some songs can capture stories, feelings, or histories in ways that rally chants, books, articles, or interviews cannot.

Black Lives Matter emerged as a #hashtag rallying cry in the face of Trayvon Martin's murder in 2012. In 2013, three radical Black organizers (Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opel Tometi) advanced a political project that they dubbed [#BlackLivesMatter](#). This #hashtag helped to organize a set of disparate but connected Black resistance struggles in the United States and brought this movement into the realm of mainstream [white] public consciousness. Numerous musicians and artists have both been influenced by the emergence of BLM as a movement and have been affected by events and killings of Black people in their music.

### **DETAILS**

The Black Lives Matter Playlist assignment prompts students to research and identify songs and artists who have been central to this nascent movement in all its multiplicities. Working in parallel with the cultural shift towards playlists as a listening mechanism for music, this assignment prompts students to intentionally create a tracklist between 6-10 songs that are in some way influenced by or influencing the broad movement for Black lives happening in the United States, Canada, and globally. Your playlist may focus on a specific subtheme (i.e. police brutality, highlighting Black excellence, global Black resistance, Black Lives Matter Canada, etc.) or can be more general. Your playlist will be accompanied by a written component that will draw from the writings/speeches of adrienne maree brown, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Saidiya Hartman in its analysis.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Structure

1. You will curate a 6-10 song playlist with the broad theme "Black Lives Matter"
2. The playlist can be one on streaming platform (i.e. Spotify, Apple Music, etc.) but for the purpose of this assignment, will need to also be submitted in written form.
3. Your written playlist will include the following components in this order: Artist Name/Song Title/Album Title/Year of Release/Song Length
4. You will include with the playlist a written booklet (between 1250-2000 words) that does the following: (1) explains the **theme** of your playlist and the **method** you went about to compile it; (2) an **analysis** per track listing of why it was included, how it relates to the readings in the course, and its relationship to the Black Lives Matter movement; (3) a **works cited** page that includes all music, writing cited in the paper (**not included in word count**).

### Content

1. There are some "rules" to completing the playlist. As noted above you must have a minimum of 6 tracks and a maximum of 10 tracks.
2. You must have no more than 2 tracks that were released before 2013 (the year Black Lives Matter began)
3. You may choose from any genre, but need to be sure that you can effectively argue each track's connection to Black Lives Matter
4. You must have a minimum of 2 tracks performed by women/trans\*/non-binary people (i.e. it can't be filled with cis-men)
5. You must have a minimum of 2 tracks released in 2020

### Style

1. Your final submission will include a screenshot of your streaming service playlist and a typed list of the tracks you've selected
2. You will submit an accompanying written booklet (1250-2000 words) that will respond to the questions noted above
3. Your submission will cite from and draw analysis from at minimum 2/4 of adrienne maree brown, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Saidiya Hartman.
4. Citing external books or academic articles and some theoretically detailed blog posts (ask me before using) is encouraged!

## Participation (5% each in first & second half of the term = 10%)

The course will involve discussions, group work, individual work, activities, and lectures. I believe in interactive teaching and that means that I expect each student to be prepared for the class, but also for us to work collaboratively as a classroom to support each other's learning. Not in competition with each other, but as a team. As such we help each other keep up with the readings and engaging in respectful discussion in the class – while actively listening to their peers.

Participation includes both listening and speaking. Students will receive a grade for class participation for comments that reflect careful listening to and consideration of others' points of view, that are thoughtful and in-depth, that demonstrate a willingness and ability to rethink one's own ideas, that are pertinent to the course material and issues being discussed, and that reflect critical thinking and humility.

Active listening is a key component of participation that often goes unrecognized. It means that you must not only contribute to the discussion but know when it is appropriate for you to listen, to hear someone else out, and recognize who is speaking/who is not speaking and why. As the instructor, I hope to help the class to develop strategies to become better listeners and I expect that you hold me accountable to this principle as well. Participation involves collectively creating a supportive learning environment. A supportive learning environment requires all of us to act on an awareness of our responsibilities to others in the class (particularly related to group and team work), our social location, and of the dynamics of group discussion (i.e., only one person speaks at a time, interrupting another speaker most often makes respectful discussion difficult, silence and reflection are necessary parts of learning and as important as speaking, all students should have somewhat equal "air time," students have different styles of communication, etc.).

*You will be evaluated at the end of the first half of the course (Week 6) and in the final week of the course (Week 12).*

## Course Readings Schedule

### **Week 1 – (Jan 11-17) - Intro: The (Black) Radical Imagination**

This year's course focuses specifically on the Black Radical Imagination as a way to centre blackness and the work of contemporary Black activists, culture producers, and scholars to shape our understanding of social transformation.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Kelley, Robin D.G. (2002). "When History Sleeps: A Beginning", *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, 1-12. Boston: Beacon Press.

Turner, David C (2018). "#ResistCapitalism to #FundBlackFutures: Black Youth, Political Economy, and the Twenty-first Century Black Radical Imagination," *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics* (1): 217-227.

### **Week 2 – (Jan 18-24) – Utopias & Dystopias I: Get Out**

The second week explores concepts of utopia and dystopia within the Black radical imagination. Students will be assigned to watch the film *Get Out* prior to class/in conjunction with the lecture materials. The core focus here is recognition that our current historical context is a form of dystopian world for people who were formerly enslaved and now live/survive in a society that is anti-Black and seeks the death, disappearance, and suffering of Black people through structural racism, carcerality, appropriation.

It will also begin a conversation that will continue into the following week showing how Black joy is an audacious resistance to these conditions – and the organization of Black pleasure and joy is itself a form of enacting utopianism through the cracks in history.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Peele, Jordan (2017). *Get Out*. United States: Universal Pictures.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "The Terrible Beauty of the Slum," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 3-10. New York: Norton.

Jolly, Jallicia (2016). The Audacity of Black Pleasure. [Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics Blog](#), August 22, 2016.

### **Week 3 – (Jan 25-31) – Utopias & Dystopias II: The Fifth Season**

This week further develops the concepts of utopia/dystopia in the Black radical imagination. This week we are introduced to the concept of afrofuturism as a political concept that drives Black radical projects. Engaging with real-time social movements (past and present) we can see the foundations of the utopian projects of afro-futurism in organizing but also in literary theory. This week we focus on the work NK Jemisin and her Broken Earth Trilogy. Using the book "the Fifth Season" we begin to unpack the way Jemisin creates both a dystopian worldscape and afrofuturist possibilities within The Fifth Season.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Jemisin, NK (2015). *The Fifth Season (The Broken Earth Trilogy #1)*. London: Orbit.

Maynard, Robyn (2019). Reading Black Resistance through Afrofuturism: Notes on post-Apocalyptic Blackness and Black Rebel Cyborgs in Canada. *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 39(4): 29-47.

### **Week 4 – (Feb 1-Feb 7) – Black Feminist Futurities I: Lemonade**

This week begins our analysis of Black feminist futurities. We focus here on methodologies used to dig into the archival records of Black woman fugitivity in US history building off of Hartman's framework. We then centre on the visual album Lemonade by Beyoncé. Digging into the analysis, archival footage, and positioning of the album as a central part of a revolutionary Black moment in history, we examine the cultural importance of Lemonade, its core messages, and the critiques of its capitalist underpinnings.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Knowles, Beyoncé (2016). *Lemonade*. United States: Parkwood Entertainment.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "A Minor Figure," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 13-35. New York: Norton.

Webster, Sina H. (2018). *When Life Gives You Lemons, "Get In Formation:" A Black Feminist Analysis of Beyonce's Visual Album, Lemonade*, Senior Honors Thesis, Eastern Michigan University.

Zandria (2016). We Slay, Part I. [\*New South Negress: Region. Race. Culture.\*](#)

## **Week 5 – (Feb 8 – Feb 14) – Black Feminist Futurities II: Spill**

This week continues our analysis of Black feminist futurities. Centering on the work of poet Alexis Pauline Gumbs's *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity* we identify and discuss what Black feminist fugitivity in a historical and contemporary context. What is the importance of fugitivity to Black feminist futures? How does this fugitivity play out in mainstream culture (i.e. WAP Cardi B/Megan Thee Stallion), afrofuturism, etc.

### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline (2016). *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 229-256. New York: Norton.

Black Studies for the Digital Soul (2017). Left of Black with Hortense Spillers and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, [Public Lecture](#), Duke University, March 22, 2017.

## **Week 6 – (Feb 22 – Feb 28) – Black Queer Futurities I: Freetown Sound//Paris Is Burning**

This week begins an exploration of Black queer futurity. Specifically it analyzes the influence of NYC ball culture in the 1970s-1980s on the LGBTQ+ movement, the erasures of Black activists from the history of the struggle, and then the re-emergence of Black queer futurity as visionary pathways towards justice. This week we begin with an analysis of Blood Orange's *Freetown Sound*, excavating the fragments from *Paris is Burning* and situating the trans\* women who were central to that story in a re-historicization of queer liberation struggle in the United States. Drawing on Hartman's work, we explore erasures and the illegibility of queer Black being in the archives and stories of movement and resistance.

### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Blood Orange (2016). *Freetown Sound*. United States: Domino.

Livingston, Jennie (1990). *Paris Is Burning*. Off White Productions Inc. Copy.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "1909. 601 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street. A New Colony of Colored People, or Malindy in Little Africa," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 177-191. New York: Norton.

**READINGS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "Mistah Beauty, the Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Woman, Select Scenes from a Film Never Cast by Oscar Micheaux, Harlem, 1920s," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 193-202. New York: Norton.

### **Week 7 – (Mar 1 – Mar 7) – Black Queer Futurities II: Blonde**

This week builds on the analysis of Black queer futurity by analyzing the ways in which the music industry has worked to profit off of Black people's talent and creativity. Focusing on Frank Ocean's work to free himself of this exploitative relationship we dig deeper into the narrative and political meaning of his seminal album *Blonde*. This work is historicized in relation to Black queer struggles for freedom and self-sufficiency through Hartman's analysis of Harlem chorus dancers in the 1920s.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Ocean, Frank (2016). *Blonde*. United States: Self-Released.

Lewellyn-Taylor, Benjamin (2019). The Free Black Artist: Frank Ocean Through a Decolonial Lens. *Black Theology* 17(1): 52-68.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "The Beauty of the Chorus," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 297-343. New York: Norton.

### **Week 8 – (Mar 8 – Mar 14) – Black Radical Imagination I: Emergent Strategy**

This week we analyze the inter-relationship and influence of contemporary Black liberation movements on popular culture and vice versa. Beginning with a deep read of Adrienne Maree Brown's *Emergent Strategy* we analyze the ways in which the movement for Black lives has impacted and influenced our world – and how non-Black folks might support this mobilizing.

#### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Brown, Adrienne Maree (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Oakland: AK Press, pp. 1-190.



## **Week 9 – (Mar 22 – Mar 28) – Black Radical Imagination II: Abolitionist Futures**

This week focuses on the call during the 2020 Black Lives Matter rebellion for a defunding or abolition of the police. It analyzes how the movement for Black lives through various strategies, tactics, and events has prompted the mainstream public to consider what it would mean to abolish and/or defund the police in our lifetime. These movements have touched all forms of popular culture including music, sports, art, film, literature and has prompted a renewed emphasis on not just the individual injustices happening but the systemic and structural roots of anti-Blackness in the United States and globally.

### ***Assigned Readings or Media:***

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2020). Ruth Wilson Gilmore Makes the Case for Abolition interview with Chenjerai Kumaniyika Parts I and II. [The Intercept](#), June 10, 2020.

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "Wayward: A Short Entry on the Possible," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 227-228. New York: Norton.

## **Week 10 – (Mar 29 – Apr 4) - Black Radical Imagination III: Black Lives Matter**

This week is a historical look at the emergence of Black Lives Matter as the most popular anti-racism movement of the 2010s and nascent 2020s. It traces the origins of BLM and the ways the movement has been taken up within popular culture.

### ***Readings:***

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta (2016). "Chapter 7: From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation," *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Press, pp. 191-219.

Smith-West, Corey (2016). The Sounds of Black Lives Matter. [Pitchfork](#), October 17, 2016.

Herlock, Ethan (2020). A Playlist of Tracks Soundtracking the Black Lives Matter Movement. [The Face](#), June 19, 2020.

## **Late Work**

We are in the midst of a global pandemic that has drastically altered our lives, our relationships, and our collective mental health. I want to honour and acknowledge that we are engaging in this course under trying circumstances. As such, I have waived all late penalties for this course. If you need more time on any given assignment submission or if you need to speak to me to negotiate changes to your curriculum please contact me before the deadline and we will do just that.

Let's build a collective culture of accountability, respect, and care in this course.

## **Attendance Policy**

I seek to develop a culture of respect and accountability in the digital classroom. To do so I will maintain respect for you as individuals and as a class – to understand that you all live in differing life circumstances and that we participate in this class in a collective fashion. I expect each student to engage with the class materials and with your fellow student with the same respect for other students and for me. This includes being accountable in your participation and communication.

## **Final Examination Policy**

For **Winter 2021**, the established examination period is **April 17-26**. The schedule will be available early in the winter. Students should be aware that student travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting an alternative final examination time (see: [Final Examination Schedule](https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/final-examinations) <https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/final-examinations>)

## **Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances:**

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom\\_illness.html](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom_illness.html)

## **Academic Integrity:**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-](https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-)

[undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour](#)) for more information.

**Discipline:** Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity\)](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or Academic Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71\)](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties\)](#).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. Waterloo’s policy on Fair Dealing is available here: [https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-guidelines/fair-dealing-advisory](#) Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4 ([https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70](#)). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant, who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there are grounds. Students who believe they have grounds for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72\)](#).

**Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):**

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AAS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Intellectual Property.** Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

**Mental Health Support**

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

**On Campus**

- Counselling Services: [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

### **Off campus, 24/7**

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

## **A respectful living and learning environment for all**

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

If you experience or witness harassment or discrimination, seek help. You may contact Credence & Co., Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officers, by email ([info@credenceandco.com](mailto:info@credenceandco.com)) or by phone (519-883-8906). Credence & Co. is an independent K-W based firm which works with organizations toward thriving workplace cultures, including professional coaching, consulting, facilitation, policy development, conflict mediation and ombudsperson functions.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.