



## UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PRAGUE

**Course:** LIT 103 Literature in Contemporary Society (6 ECTS)

**Semester:** Summer

**Instructor:** Dr. Anna Oravcová (Sessions 1 – 7)  
Dagmar Spain (Sessions 8 – 15)

**Contacts:** [anna.oravcova@esc.edu](mailto:anna.oravcova@esc.edu)  
[danceimprints@aol.com](mailto:danceimprints@aol.com)

**Class meets:** Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays Zoom meetings from 6 PM

**Office hours:** By appointment

\* This course will run in a format of a seminar (24 contact hours). The Zoom meetings will be held for approximately 90 to 120 minutes combined with home assignments.

### 1. Catalogue Description

**Literature in Contemporary Society: Self-expression through dramatic monologue, rap, and poetry slam.**

### 2. Course Purpose

The first part of the course aims to introduce students to the critical reading of rap and poetry slam and to explore their inherent poetic qualities. Selected lyrics will be analyzed in order to explore their connection to cultural history as well as present narratives regarding authenticity, gender, race and political engagement.

The second part of the course is intended as an examination of female voices in literature starting with key historical works in the literary canon and then focusing on contemporary works. These 8 sessions are designed through comparison of different examples of female monologues in plays in order to deepen the understanding of the verbal expressions by women, and the often persistent struggle for authentic voices by female writers in contemporary society.

### 3. Required Readings:

**All required readings, song lyrics, monologues and short stories will be available on the course e-learning site or via Perlego.**

Selected readings from:

Ogbar, Jeffrey. *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap*. University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Pate, Alexs. *In the Heart of the Beat: The Poetry of Rap*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2010.

Rose, Tricia. *Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop and Why It Matters*. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2008.

Selected female monologues, some also available online:

“Antigone”, Sophocles, Prestwick House, Inc.; 2005 edition, 2005.

“Othello”, William Shakespeare, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

“The Fugitive”, John Galsworthy, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

“The Cradle Song”, Gregorio Martinez Sierra, Samuel French, 1961.

“The Lower Depths”, Maxim Gorky, Samuel French Inc., 1992.

“The Chocolate Affair”, Stephanie Alison Walker. Ten Minutes Plays Vol. 2, Black Box Press, 2008.

“Moments of Silence”, Mohammad Yaghoubi, translated from Persian by Torange Yeghiazarian 2010.

Enslar, Eve. *The Vagina Monologues*. New York: Virago Press, 2001.

Mukherjee, Tutun. *Staging Resistance: Plays by Women in Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Perkins, Kathy A., ed. *African Women Playwrights*. University of Illinois Press, 2009.

### 4. Additional Readings (Perlego)

Berry, Michael. *Listening to Rap: An Introduction*. New York and London: Routledge, 2018.

Coval, Kevin, Quraysh Ali Lansana, Nate Marshall. *The BreaBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*. Haymarket Books, 2015.

Jessica Care Moore. *We Want Our Bodies Back*. HarperCollins, 2020.

Williams, Saul. *The Dead Emcee Scrolls: The Lost Teachings of Hip-Hop and Connected Writings*. New York: Pocket Books, 2006.

### 5. Learning Outcomes

Session 1-7:

Upon completion of this part of the course the students should have an understanding of standard tropes (metaphor, simile) and the structure of the rhyme. The aim of the

course is to lead students to critical analysis and reading of rap and poetry slam lyrics as manifestations of modern forms of poetry. This part of the course will also introduce students to the social, historical, economical, and cultural context of contemporary rap production. The students will be able to analyze and “decode” the construction of race, gender and politics as they manifest in the production of rap music and poetry slam.

Session 8-15:

Upon completion of this part of the course, the students should be able to have a historical & contemporary overview of important writings of female voices, primarily in monologue form while including some short stories written by women, as well as men. This course is designed to create a holistic bridge between the word and the physical manifestation of these words emphasizing their effects on women, yet also examining the effects on both sexes in our present societies of different cultural backgrounds. Students of both genders can define their own degree of participation with the selected texts, either in analysis, comparison and/or evaluations, as well in the writing of their own original text and presentation of it.

## 6. Course Schedule

**Week 1: Sessions 1-3:** Exploring the connection between classical poetry, rap music and poetry slam. Introduction to the historical contexts of rap music and poetry slam and guest speaker (2. 6. 2021 Corey James Gray FKA Illspokinn).

### Readings:

Machin, David. “Analysing Lyrics: Values, Participants, Agency.” *Analyzing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2010.

Pate, Alexs. “Language.” *In the Heart of the Beat*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2010. 51-60.

Willimas, Saul. “A Confession.” *The Dead Emcee Scrolls*. New York: Pocket Books, 2006 (Perlego).

**Week 2: Sessions 4-6:** Close reading and analysis of selected text (key elements of analysis: language, imagery, tropes used, rhyme structure and meaning). Focusing on constructions of gender (femininity and masculinity), race (concepts of blackness, whiteness and white supremacy), narratives of male-female relationships, and political engagement and activism.

### Readings:

Rose, Tricia. “There Are Bitches and Hoes.” *The Hip-Hop Wars*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2008. 167-185.

Ogbar, Jeffrey. "The Prison Industrial Complex and Social Control." *Hip-Hop Revolution*. University of Kansas Press, 2007. 165-174.

### **Week 3: Session 7: Midterm paper and journals due**

**Sessions 8-9:** Analysis and comparison of selected historical monologues

Readings:

"Antigone", Sophocles, Prestwick House, Inc.; 2005 edition, 2005.

"Othello", William Shakespeare, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

**Week 4: Sessions 10-12:** Analysis and comparison of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>- century American and European female and male writers.

Readings:

"The Fugitive", John Galsworthy, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

"The Cradle Song", Gregorio Martinez Sierra, Samuel French, 1961.

"The Lower Depths", Maxim Gorky, Samuel French Inc., 1992.

"The Chocolate Affair", Stephanie Alison Walker. Ten Minutes Plays Vol. 2, Black Box Press, 2008.

Enslar, Eve. *The Vagina Monologues*. New York: Virago Press, 2001.

**Week 5: Sessions 13-15:** Analysis and comparison of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>- century Asian and African female and male writers.

Readings:

"Rethinking Japan", Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, Massimo Raveri, ed. Routledge 2016.

"Moments of Silence", Mohammad Yaghoubi, translated from Persian by Torange Yeghiazarian 2010.

Mukherjee, Tutun. *Staging Resistance: Plays by Women in Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Perkins, Kathy A., ed. *African Women Playwrights*. University of Illinois P, 2009.

**Final Project and Journals due:** presentation of original female monologue. Students have a choice regarding performance of their works. They can either perform their own works or have someone else perform their work.

**7. Course Requirements and Grading** – the course will be graded on the basis of:

Journal (reflections on the assigned readings) (40%)

Writing assignment (10%)

Midterm paper (20%)

Final Exam as Presentation (30%)

Details of the assignments above will be given during the course.

## Grading scale

Letter Grade	Percent (%)	Generally Accepted Meaning
A	95-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above the average
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

## 8. Key UNYP Policies

### Attendance:

-It is your responsibility to show up to class on time. If you are late you will be marked as absent for that hour. **If you miss more than 12 (twelve) hours of class for any reason, you will automatically fail the entire course. Pay strict attention to this. This class policy is standard UNYP policy.**

### Academic Honesty

- The university's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the **student honor code** or ask your instructor for clarification.
- For examinations: copying from your neighbor, communicating with another student, using a phone or anything similar will result in you failing the test or quiz.
- On written papers, properly note your sources with academic citations. Cutting and pasting from the Internet without accurately citing the source may be considered plagiarism. Students may be required to submit papers electronically, which could mean an automated check for plagiarism via the Turnitin resource. Students may also be required to defend the content of a paper orally to an instructor as a check on authorship.
- If you have questions about any of the above, please consult with the instructor.

## 9. General Requirements

- Students are expected to attend each class session and participate in a positive way.
- Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss homework readings, projects or cases.
- Students are expected to turn in homework assignments at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due.
- Students are expected to leave their mobile phones, beepers, pagers, and so forth switched off.
- Students may not use laptops or netbooks for any reason other than taking notes. **Do not** surf the Web during class time. If you do, you will lose the privilege to use a laptop or netbook.
- In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor **in advance** to determine whether special arrangements are possible.

## 10. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

- Students who complete the course will receive 6 ECTS credits, which are the equivalent of 3 American credits. (In other words, 2 ECTS credits equal 1 American credit hour.)
- Further, 1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. Thus, a 6-credit ECTS course (equivalent to a 3-credit American course) will total 150-180 projected work hours. For this course, students are expected to spend time in the following course-related activities:

Class Lectures and exams	45 hours
Reading class-related material	50 hours
Exam preparations	25 hours
Team preparation	15 hours
Final project preparation	30 hours
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165 hours</b>

## 11. Technology Expectations

Assignments, excluding those that are carried out exclusively in class, must be completed on a computer. Students are assumed to be familiar with the use of the Internet and in particular with the gathering of data from the Worldwide Web. This will be a necessary tool for carrying out some of the course assignments (i.e., long essay or class presentations).