

Queer Black Popular Culture (in Diaspora)

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday - 12:00 pm – 2:15 pm PT

Summer Session 2: July 29th – August 30th, 2024

shah noor hussein, M.A.

Zoom Link: [here](#)

Getting In Touch: Email is the best way to reach us. Please send all messages to both the prof. and the T.A. to ensure it is received. In general, we will respond to email within two business days.

Professor Email: shahnoor@ucsc.edu

Student Hours: Drop In or by Appt.

Wednesdays, 3-5pm via Zoom

Zoom Link: [linked here](#)

Meeting ID: 912 7167 1078

Passcode: Summer24

Detailed dial-in information is available on Canvas.

This syllabus is a living document! Check Canvas for syllabus updates and note the header date.

Course Description

By centering the voices and experiences of Black LGBTQI people, this course aims to use the tools of social science, humanities, and liberal arts fields to analyze media and help students better understand the crises and possibilities of Black queer life in the US and abroad. This course will introduce students to the theories behind and methods for reading Queer Black Popular Culture. We will focus on experiments in literature, visual arts, and filmmaking both in the U.S. and in the greater diaspora. Students in this course will interpret, analyze, and produce media texts that range from music videos to films, from poetry to novels. We will also work with contemporary art forms, social media, photography, and installation art as sites of theoretical production from which we will investigate the intersections of sexuality, gender, and race in popular culture. The course will draw on urban ethnographies, memoir, and queer theory, as well as mainstream and social media discourses to build a toolkit for seeing and impacting the world along axes of difference. We will work with theorists and cultural archivists from the US south, the Caribbean, and the Continent (Africa), and across Latin America. Through our daily readings, group discussions, critical review essay, and collective project, we will build the analytical skills to articulate a praxis and politic informed by queer Black thinkers and activists.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course student will gain exposure to the following skills:

- Understand how to critically read and annotate theoretical, scholarly, and creative texts in the field of anthropology, critical race studies, humanities, literature, and liberal arts.
- Practice researching and analyzing media texts like films, music videos, art installations, gallery exhibits, novels and works of literature, and multimedia art projects.
- Learn how to work collaboratively as a group with peers on a creative intervention that applies course teachings to real-world experiences and events.
- Increase their proficiency in relating to global experiences, cultures, and people through experience with deep listening, constructive feedback, and collaborative learning with peers.

- Improved ability to write clear, strong papers – formulating well-organized arguments that are grounded in supporting evidence, providing counterevidence, integrating peer and instructor feedback, completing revisions, and citing diverse sources.

At the end of the quarter, engaged students demonstrate their expanded comprehension of:

- Cultural variation and the diversity of perspectives, practices, and beliefs found as it relates to queer Black communities within the United States and global diaspora.
- Theoretical concepts and frameworks that underpin the field of queer Black studies, Black diaspora studies, and Black scholars' approach to media studies.
- Methodological strategies of queer and Black scholars who study popular culture, music, visual art, and cinema within the Black and African diaspora.
- Knowledge of basic steps involved in scholarly research, including locating and critically evaluating scholarly sources, evidence and data, and other information relevant to chosen topics, fields, and methods of inquiry.

Course Texts *(all readings will be posted on the course's Canvas site.)*

Required Books & Volumes:

- Johnson, E. Patrick and Mae G. Henderson, eds. *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. New York, NY: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Johnson, E. Patrick, ed. *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Allen, Jafari S. *Black/Queer/Diaspora*. GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, vol.18 no.2, 2012.
- Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis, ID: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- Livermon, Xavier. *Kwaito Bodies: Remastering Space and Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020.

Articles & Essays:

- "The Combahee River Collective Statement," in *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. Boston, MA: Kitchen Table Press.
- Babacar, M'Baye. "Variant Sexualities and African Modernity in Joseph Ramaka's *Karmen Geii*." *Black Camera: An International Film Journal*, 2 (2011): 114-129.
- Green, Kai. 2015. "The Essential I/Eye in We: A Black TransFeminist Approach to Ethnographic Film." *Black Camera* 6(2): 187-200.
- Johnstone, Lyn. "Queer Worldmaking in Wanuri Kahiu's Film *Rafiki*." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 33.1 (2021): 39-50.
- Keeling, Kara. "LOOKING FOR M— Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future." 15.4 (2009): 565-582.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1979.
- Ridley, LaVelle. "Imagining Otherly: Performing Possible Black Trans Futures in Tangerine." *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4 (2019): 481-490.

Course Policies

Important: You are responsible for meeting the deadlines, for information given in class and online, and above all, for contacting me with any problems you may encounter. **Read the entire syllabus carefully so that you are aware of class policies.** If you have any questions or are struggling with the material, it is essential that you come to see me as soon as possible. Additionally, if you are experiencing any personal issues that make it difficult or impossible for you to complete assignments or come to class, it is your responsibility to let me know in a timely manner so that we can work together to make sure that you successfully complete the course.

Communication

Students may email me to set appointments, ask specific questions about the readings or assignments, or to notify me about any health-related or personal situation that may affect your academic performance. All deadlines and late policies still apply; advance notice is a matter of courtesy. Questions requiring more detailed responses should be discussed with me in person or during student hours. **In email communication,** please include a **specific subject line** with the course number or title, a form of professional address (I prefer professor shah), a **formal greeting and farewell** and **thorough and respectful** with the language you use.

Classroom Culture

I intend this classroom setting to be an **engaged, kind, and generative space**, not only for the benefit of our collective learning, but also as a workshop for practicing the social and intellectual skills needed to build a more just and livable world. Early in the course, **students and instructors will create a list of course agreements** together that we will **hold each other collectively responsible for maintaining.** *Liberation can start in our places of learning.*

Absences & Late Work

Our summer quarter is brief, so it is very important that you plan ahead to complete all your work on time. An absence from class means that you will miss discussion, handouts, notes, and possibly other work that counts towards your grade. You may take **two unexcused absences** in a quarter, but after that, **unexcused absences will reduce your participation grade.** Due to the tight turnaround for grading in this 5-week course, **late assignments will not be accepted,** this includes in-class assignments, papers, and the final. If needed, you may **request an extension, however it is up to the professor's discretion to grant it.** Extension requests must be submitted at least **48 hours in advance of the assignment due date.**

Accessibility & Students with Disabilities

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please **submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by email,** preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. **I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.** I am committed to creating accessible classroom spaces, if you are unable to connect with or provide DRC accommodations for your needs, please reach out to me directly (shahnoor@ucsc.edu) so we can discuss how to make this classroom a learning space for you.

Student Caregivers & Parents

The university does not have a formal policy on childcare, parenting, and caregiving as it relates to academic performance. The following policy reflects my personal commitment to honoring our full selves in the classroom, including acknowledging our role as caregivers to young people, elders, and dependents in our lives.

- This class is synchronous and remote. I understand we may be sharing space with family, children, and others during our shared synchronous time. You are invited to have your camera on and speak aloud in shared space, while maintaining the privacy of your cohabitators. Utilize the noise filter features on your headphones or video conferencing software as well as background or blur effects. I ask that you **do your best to prepare a private space for yourself** when possible and **inform me if that is consistently not possible**. It is your responsibility to plan and notify me in advance.
- Chest-feeding or nursing babies is always permitted in class. Occasionally having children in class to fill gaps in care needs is permitted, however, it should not be a frequent occurrence that interrupts your learning. It is your responsibility to block time for this course.
- **I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of diversity, including diversity in parenting status and respect for caregivers of all kinds.**
- I understand that one of the largest barriers to completing your coursework is the tiredness many caregivers feel once their carework is done. The struggles of balancing school, caring for child or other dependent, and (often) other work are exhausting! While I maintain the same expectations for all students, I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-carework balance.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a basic and important element of academic success. The university treats instances of academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) very seriously. Read more: <https://advising.ucsc.edu/success/integrity.html>

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments. For more on what plagiarism means for you as a Banana Slug, see: <https://ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html>.

AI Software: Using AI software such as ChatGPT or any other software that writes for you is not permitted and considered academic dishonesty. Using software such as Grammarly to format citations or check spelling and punctuation is the *only* permitted use of AI assistance.

Group Work: Beyond plagiarism, academic dishonesty also includes *not pulling your weight in group work*, which is a large part of this course. You will have the opportunity to assess your group members, as well as your own contributions to group projects.

Course Assessment

<i>Attendance & Participation</i>	25%
<i>Reading Engagement</i>	20%
<i>Weekly Media Discussion</i>	20%
<i>Critical Essay or Creative Project</i>	35%

Attendance & Participation – 25% of final grade

ANTH/CRES/FMST 110Q

Version 2 – 07/25/2024

- **Attendance will be taken every day.** You may take two unexcused absences in a quarter, but after that, each unexcused absence will reduce your participation. Each class will have a brief activity to document attendance. You are expected to be in class on time, and to stay for the duration of the class period.
- **Discussion:** Please come to class prepared with any questions that you might have. You are expected to participate as an individual as well as in small group and large group discussions and activities. **Participation** means active listening and encouraging others to speak. Class participation is as much about sharing your voice and ideas as it is about learning to listen and work with others – your grade will reflect both these skills.
- Every class, we will be engaging different media artifacts, and delving into the readings through **individual, paired, and small group activities.** These activities may include short writing prompts or visual practice (creating diagram or meme). **The products of these activities will be graded as participation and used to assess your individual understanding.**
- **Notetaking:** Much of the knowledge produced in this course will happen during class discussion and activities. Each student is expected to take their own notes, and in addition **3-4 students per class session will be selected to upload their notes to the Canvas site.** Together, we will build an archive of our learning experience that can be a resource for you as you prepare for your midterm and final projects.
 - **DUE after class on the day of class assigned**

Reading Engagement – 20% of final grade

- The reading load for this class is purposefully rather light because **you are expected to thoroughly complete all readings before class begins.** You should come to each class with careful & critical observations, comments, and/or questions about the reading materials.
- **Using the Hypothes.is app within Canvas,** you will read and annotate the readings assigned for each class. You will need to make comments on readings 2 out of 3 days each week.
- There may be different annotation prompts as part of each week's reading assignment, but in general you will be asked to:
 - Make 3 of your own annotations
 - Respond substantively to 2 of your peers' annotations
- **Your annotations are DUE 11:59 pm the night before each Monday & Wednesday class.**

Weekly Media Discussions – 20% of final grade

- Every Friday, students will be assigned a piece of media to engage with: such as a film or video to watch, album to listen to, or a website or digital source to explore. *You are expected to spend the equivalent of a class period exploring the media and write a discussion post critically responding to questions about it.* **Your discussion post is due every Fridays at 11:59 pm.** All students are asked to **respond to one of their classmates' posts over the weekend.**

FINAL: Total of 35% of final grade

Option 1: Critical Review Essay – 6-8 double spaced pages

- You will select one piece of popular media, either from the Film and Media Review list provided by me, or you may propose your own piece of media to review (including, but not limited to a film, a gallery show, public art project, or other multimedia audiovisual project).
- This review essay will recap the content of the media under review, place it into the context of the themes addressed in the course, and give your evaluation of the media 'text.' You must cite four or more readings from the course, and 2 or more keywords from our discussions should be the focus of your analysis.

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Version 2 – 07/25/2024

- Full rubric will be provided on Canvas.
 - **Essay Proposal & Media Notes (5% of final grade) - DUE 08/12**
 - **Attach** media notes to the end of the essay proposal. Should be typed, using the sample format on Canvas or your own method of taking notes.
 - **First Draft (10% of final grade) - DUE 08/19**
 - Use feedback from peers and instructor to write your first draft, 6-8 pages.
 - **Peer Reviews (10% of final grade) - DUE 08/23**
 - Using the rubric in Canvas, you will give feedback to two other students on their papers. You will also use the rubric to analyze your own paper.
 - Discuss your feedback with peers and instructor.
 - **Final Draft (10% of final grade) - DUE 08/30**
 - Substantial revision using the feedback from your peers on your first draft.
 - Attach a revision memo detailing which changes you made (and rationale for which changes you declined to make).

Option 2: Keyword Creative Project – 2-4 students working in groups

- This group option for the final is for students who would like to work in groups and create an artistic intervention representing keywords from our course. More details for the assignment will be provided and ample class time will be spent preparing for the final.
- This portfolio has FIVE components: proposal, meeting with the professor, in-class presentation, complete final group portfolios, and peer reviews. (Group portfolios and group feedback for your group must be submitted for the assignment to be considered complete).
- You will choose a collective group of 2-4 students responsible for creating a project around one to three course keywords. Get to know your group members because these are the people you will work with most closely during the quarter. You all will be responsible for a final group presentation and supporting written materials. Throughout the quarter you will be asked to do collective assignments both inside and outside the classroom with your designated group. Hold your group members accountable and show up for your collective. If you happen to miss a class, you should check in with your group members to get caught up. You can use these groups to help you get through this course effectively (e.g. If you feel like the reading is too much, try assigning different group members readings and you can all exchange information before class).
 - **Group Project Proposal Due – 08/12 (5% of final grade)**
 - **Group Meeting with Prof. Shah – 08/14 OR 8/21 (5% of final grade)**
 - **Group presentations and audience Q&A – 08/26 & 08/28 (10% of final grade)**
 - **Group Submission & Curatorial Statement – 08/30 (10% of final grade)**
 - **Individual & Group Feedback – 08/30 (5% of final grade)**

Course Schedule

I: When and Where We Enter: Positionality & Intersectionality

Monday, 07/29

Required Reading:

- Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1979. (110 – 113)
- "The Combahee River Collective Statement," in *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. Boston, MA: Kitchen Table Press, 1983. (15 – 27)

Deeper Dive Reading:

- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University

of Chicago Legal Forum 1.8. (1989): 139-166.

In-Class Viewing:

- Zebra Katz feat. Njena Redd. 2012. “Ima Read.” (music video)

Wednesday, 07/31

Required Reading:

- Gomez, Jewell. “‘But Some of Us Are Lesbians’: The Absence of Black Lesbian Fiction,” in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005 (289 – 297)
- Keeling, Kara. “Joining the Lesbians: Cinematic Regimes of Black Lesbian Visibility,” in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. (213 – 227)

Deeper Diver Reading:

- Declue, Jennifer. “Let’s Play: Exploring Cinematic Black Lesbian Fantasy, Pleasure, and Pain,” in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016. (216 – 238)

Friday, 08/02

At Home Viewing:

- Three short films:
 - *tender* (2020) – 15 mins, *SEVEN* (2021) – 37 mins, *Spilt Milk* (2019) – 19 mins
- OR *Pariah* (2011) – 1 hr 26 mns

II. Gender Judo: Sexuality, Race, & Culture

Monday, 08/05

Required Reading:

- Johnson, E. Patrick. “Introduction,” in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. (1 – 17)
- Green, Kai. 2015. “The Essential I/Eye in We: A Black TransFeminist Approach to Ethnographic Film.” *Black Camera* 6(2): 187-200.

Wednesday, 08/07

Required Readings:

- Johnson, E. Patrick. “Introduction,” in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016. (1 – 26)
- Green, Kai M. “Troubling the Waters: Mobilizing a Trans* Analytic,” in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. (65 – 82).

Friday, 08/09

Required Viewings & Readings:

- Watch or Listen to Media for Critical Review Paper
- Take Media Notes & Submit Essay Proposal
- Bring in two keywords you plan to use for your midterm essay.

At-Home Viewing:

- *The Aggressives* (2005) – 1 hr 15 mins

III. Transgressive Blackness: (Dis)Respectability Politics

Monday, 08/12

Required Reading:

- Keeling, Kara. "LOOKING FOR M— Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future." *GLQ*. 15.4 (2009): 565-582.
- Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. (Excerpts: Preface, vii – xiv, & Introduction, pg 1 – 14)

In-Class:

- Discuss proposals & keywords with prof. shah
- Keyword Collective Review Workshop
- Group Project Meetings

**DUE: Essay Proposal & Media Notes – Music Album, Visual Album, or Film
OR Creative Project Proposal – 08/12**

Wednesday, 08/14

Required Reading:

- Ridley, LaVelle. "Imagining Otherly: Performing Possible Black Trans Futures in Tangerine." *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6.4 (2019): 481-490.
- Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. (Excerpt: Chapter 3, pg 101 – 136)

In-Class:

- Group Project Meetings

Friday, 08/16

At-Home Viewing:

- *Tangerine* (2015) – 1 hr 28 mins

IV. Queer African Diaspora

Monday, 08/19

Required Reading:

- Allen, Jafari S. "Black / Queer / Diaspora at the Current Conuncture." *GLQ*, 18.2-3 (2012): 211-248.
- Walcott, Rinaldo. "Outside in Black Studies: Reading from a Queer Place in the Diaspora," in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. (90 – 105)

DUE: Draft Critical Review Essay – 08/19

Wednesday, 08/21

Required Reading:

- Babacar, M'Baye. "Variant Sexualities and African Modernity in Joseph Ramaka's *Karmen Geii*." *Black Camera: An International Film Journal*, 2.2 (2011): 114-129.
- Johnstone, Lyn. "Queer Worldmaking in Wanuri Kahiu's Film *Rafiki*." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 33.1 (2021): 39-50.

In-Class:

- Group Meetings w prof. shah

Friday, 08/23

Required Reading:

- Each Other's Papers

At-Home Viewing:

- *Karmen Gei* (2001) – 1 hr 25 mins
- *Rafiki* (2018) – 1 hr 23 mins

DUE: Peer Review of Papers – 08/23

V. Afro-Diasporic Futures of Healing & Survival

Monday, 08/26

Required Reading:

- Livermon, Xavier. *Kwaito Bodies: Remastering Space and Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020. (Excerpts: Introduction, pg 1 – 28.)

Deeper Dive:

- Lara, A.M. "Of Unexplained Presences, Flying Iife Heads, Vampires, Sweat, Zombies, and Legbas: A Meditation on Black Queer Aesthetics," *GLQ*, 18.2-3 (2012):347-359.

DUE: Creative Project Presentations – 08/26

Wednesday, 8/28

Required Reading:

- Livermon, Xavier. *Kwaito Bodies: Remastering Space and Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020. (Excerpts: Chapter 6, pg 188 - 223)

Deeper Dive:

- Livermon, Xavier. *Kwaito Bodies: Remastering Space and Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Duke University Press, 2020. (Excerpts: Coda, pg 224 – 234.)

DUE: Creative Project Presentations – 08/28

Friday, 08/30

- Keyword Collective Review Workshop

Required Reading:

- Rivera-Servera, Ramón H. "Reggaetón's Crossings: Black Aesthetics, Latina Nightlife, and Queer Choreography," in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016. (95 – 112)

DUE: Creative Project Final Submission OR Final Draft Critical Essay – 08/30

DUE: Creative Project Individual & Group Feedback– 08/30

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Submit assignments on-time or *early*:** All coursework and assignments must be turned in online at the date and time specified. If you are unable to submit an assignment by its deadline, you must alert the instructor as soon as possible with a well-reasoned excuse and a proposed solution. **Late assignments will not be accepted without prior notice.** Due to the accelerated nature of summer quarter coursework, it is essential for you to plan ahead and schedule your time for coursework.
- **Required readings are listed under the day and week that it is due** on the schedule, so you should look ahead to the next week to complete your reading for the next class. **Completing the class reading before class** will greatly assist your classroom experience. If you happen to have a slow week, go ahead and start your reading for the following week.
- Students should **actively read all texts**; take notes and complete study guides. Document any questions about the material. Prepare adequately! We will be covering a lot of material each week; **it is crucial that you keep up with attendance, weekly assignments, and larger multi-part projects.** Don't fall behind, it's hard to catch back up.
- Reviewing your class notes as soon as possible after class will greatly increase your success in the class. **I encourage you to ask questions for clarification. Contact the instructor via email to set up a meeting during office hours.**
- **Please don't:** Suffer silently. If you have questions or confusion about the class in general or specific assignments, talk to your instructor. We are committed to seeing the class go well and have lots of ideas that can help you study and succeed. Arrange time to discuss anything via telephone or in-person by e-mailing the instructor and TA!