THE ROOTS OF LATINE HIP HOP
FALL 2026

A) COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructor: Roberto "Rob Nice" Santos, MFA
Contact Information: rasantos3@utep.edu
Course: CHIC 3345 & AFST 4390 | CRN: 17830 & 14960
Meetings: T/TH | 10:30 AM - 11:50 AM
Office Hours Location: EDU 301
Office Hours: Fridays | 10:30 AM - 11:50 AM

B) TEXTS & MATERIALS:

Mandatory Texts:

Source and reference materials such as articles, podcast episodes, book excerpts, and YouTube videos will be provided to students.

Optional Texts:

Hip Hoptionary by Alonzo Wesbrook
The Gospel of Hip Hop by KRS-One

If you want to learn about rapping and lyricisim: *Ink: A Lexicon of Elite Rap Techniques* by Pendulum Ink

C) CONTENT OVERVIEW:

This class digs into the roots of Latine Hip Hop and the culture it helped shape. We'll trace Hip Hop's story back to Africa, through the trauma of enslavement and forced migration, and into the Bronx of the 1970s—a time and place where Black and Latine communities turned struggle into sound, style, and movement. From there, we'll look at how those traditions grew into Hip Hop's four main elements—breaking, graffiti, deejaying, and emceeing—along with the five cultural elements that keep the movement alive.

Throughout the semester, we'll shine a light on the contributions of Latine pioneers, from the East Coast to the West Coast, and study how Hip Hop became more than music: a creative response to adversity, a way to speak truth, and a culture built on resistance, rhythm, and raw ingenuity.

E) BLACKBOARD USAGE:

This is an in-person course, but students will submit their assignments and retrieve course materials through Blackboard.

F) COURSE GRADING:

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 0-59

G) ASSIGNMENTS, ACTIVITES, & POINT VALUES:

Everyone:

Where Hip Hop Lives — 20 PTS (10 PTS per location. Due the week before finals)
Class Participation — 10 PTS (get points for discussion participation all semester)
Attendance — 5 PTS (keep all 5 points for perfect attendance / lose a point for each absence)
Youtube Playlist Contribution — 5 PTS (due during the final exam meeting)
Pop Quizzes on Course Content — 10 (2 PTS per quiz / five quizzes total)

Everyone Only Choose Three:

Album Review — 10 PTS (due week 3)
Hip Hop Contributor Presentation — 20 PTS (due week 6)
Create Your Own Work of Hip Hop — 20 PTS (due week 12)
Hip Hop Live Event — 10 PTS (due week 14)

H) MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Where Hip Hop Lives: Interactive Google Map & Class Discussion

You'll help create a living map of Hip Hop in El Paso. Each student will add two locations that represent where Hip Hop lives in the city—graffiti walls, music venues, fashion stores, studios, record shops, etc. Toward the end of the semester, we'll hold a class discussion where each student shares their findings and explains why those spots matter. The goal is to see El Paso's Hip Hop culture through many perspectives, piecing together a community map of our city's Hip Hop identity.

Album Review: Multimedia or Live Presentation

Choose one album by a Latine Hip Hop artist and create a review that shows how the artist brings their culture into the music, visuals, and overall aesthetics. You can either:

- Record your review using multimedia tools (audio, video, slideshow, podcast, etc.), or

- Deliver it live in class as a short presentation (3-5 mins.)
- Either way, focus on how the album blends Hip Hop with cultural identity, language, storytelling, and visuals. This is your chance to not only break down an album but to bring your voice and perspective into the conversation.

Experience Hip Hop Live (BB Discussion Post)
Hip Hop has to be felt in person. Attend one live Hip Hop event (concert, graffiti jam, breakin' battle, multi-element showcase, etc.). Then share your experience in a Blackboard discussion post, describing what you saw and connecting it to class themes. Respond to at least one classmate's post to keep the discussion going. This assignment captures the vibe of live Hip Hop and keeps the energy flowing online.

Presentation: A Hip Hop Contributor
Choose one individual who has Latine contributed to Hip Hop culture in any element (MC, DJ, graffiti artist, breaker, fashion innovator, cultural organizer, etc.—reggaeton excluded). Create a class presentation outlining their roots, their message, their medium, and their impact. This is your chance to introduce the class to someone who helped build or expand the culture, showing why their contributions matter.

Create Your Own Work of Hip Hop
Hip Hop is action—so you'll create your own piece of Hip Hop work. Choose an element (rap verse, graffiti piece, DJ set, breakin' routine, street fashion design, street language example, entrepreneurial idea, etc.) and bring it to life. Present your work to the class and explain the choices you made. This is where your creativity meets the culture.

Class Discussions
In the spirit of Hip Hop, our class discussions serve as the cypher of our course, a space for sharing, self-expression, and showcasing intellect. A cypher is where opinions are voiced, knowledge is shared, and where we actively listen to and consider our peers' perspectives, fostering a community of exchange. With a total of five discussions aligned with our weekly topics, these sessions are designed to spark insightful conversations and deeper reflection on the course material.

I) DEADLINES AND LATE WORK:

All assignments are due on there respective calendar dates. Late submissions will incur a 5% penalty for each day they're overdue. After ten days, no late work will be accepted unless there's a documented emergency.

J) COMMUNICATION:
General questions that are not time specific: Please message me in BB.

K) PRIVATE CONCERNS:
Email or schedule a meeting during office hours. Response Time: I aim to respond to all emails and queries within 24 hours during weekdays.

L) TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:
For optimal participation in this course, students need a stable internet connection. It's imperative to have access to the UTEP Blackboard platform, which will be the primary hub for course materials, and assignments. Additionally, students should have word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs, readily available. For video meetings with the instructor, having a functional webcam and microphone is encouraged for optimal communication.

M) NETIQUETTE POLICY:
It's essential to establish a set of guidelines to ensure that our interactions remain respectful, supportive, and conducive to a positive learning experience for everyone. Our Netiquette Policy outlines the expectations for behavior in all online communications related to our course, including discussion forums, emails, video conferences, and any other digital platforms we may use.

1. Respect and Courtesy
   - Treat others as you would like to be treated. Always communicate with your peers and instructors with respect and kindness. Derogatory, offensive, or disrespectful comments are strictly prohibited.
   - Be mindful of tone and context. Without face-to-face cues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Aim for a polite and clear tone, avoiding sarcasm unless you're sure it will be understood.

2. Communication Clarity
   - Proofread your contributions. Take a moment to review your messages for spelling and grammatical errors, which can distract from your point.

3. Engagement and Participation

- Stay on topic. Keep discussions relevant to the course material or the topic at hand. This helps maintain focus and ensures valuable and productive conversations.
- Contribute positively. Share your knowledge, experiences, and questions to enrich our learning environment. Constructive feedback and debate are welcome, but always approach disagreements with respect and an open mind.

4. Privacy and Confidentiality
   - Respect privacy. Do not share personal information about yourself or others without consent. Be cautious about what you disclose in a public or shared online space.
   - Be considerate of others' content. Do not copy or use someone else's work without proper attribution or permission. Plagiarism and unauthorized sharing are unacceptable.

5. Digital Etiquette in Video Conferences
   - Be punctual. Try to join video calls a few minutes early to address any technical issues.
   - Mute your microphone when not speaking. This reduces background noise and distractions.
   - Use video responsibly. Turn on your camera if required, but be mindful of your background and appearance to maintain a professional and distraction-free environment.

Failure to adhere to this Netiquette Policy may result in warnings, removal from discussions, or other appropriate actions depending on the severity of the violation. Our goal is to create a supportive and engaging online learning community, and following these guidelines will help us achieve that.

By participating in this course, you agree to abide by this Netiquette Policy. Let's work together to ensure a respectful, productive, and enriching experience for everyone involved.

N) PLAGIARISM:

“Plagiarism” means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors. Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating

will be reported to the Academic Dean, will receive a zero on their assignment, and will lose credibility as a writer in the class. In order to avoid the temptation to plagiarize, students should start their assignments early.

O) USAGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted in this course must be your own and completed in accordance with the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures Chapter 1 Section 1.2.3. AI generated submissions that use ChatGPT, Grammarly, Claude or other AI composition software *is prohibited*, will be treated as cheating. Repeated use of AI may result in you being reported to the academic dean.

P) STUDENT SUPPORT CENTER:
The Student Support Center (SSC) is dedicated to providing a quality advising experience. This website is a supplement to the advising services offered to College of Health Sciences (CHS) students. It aims to provide students with the tools and resources needed to make the best academic decisions possible! The CHS Student Support Center staff is currently available to serve and assist you both in-person and remotely. The SSC is located in HSSN Room 200. Phone number: 915-747-7234. Email: studentsupportcenter@utep.edu.

Q) THE CENTER FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES:
Should you need accommodations, The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) aspires to provide students with disabilities, accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals.Visit their website at, https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/.

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please contact the University's Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) as soon as possible. Once your accommodations are approved, it's your responsibility to communicate with me so we can ensure your learning needs are met.

R) COVID-19 SAFETY:
If you are COVID-19 positive, or have any symptoms at all please stay home.

S) CALENDAR
(dates are tentative and subject to change):

Week 1: Hip Hop Origins (Aug 25–Aug 27)

- Tues: Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview
- Thurs: Watch: DJ Kool Herc and the Birth of Hip Hop; Watch: Wild Style; Read: Amiri Baraka, "African Slaves/American Slaves: Their Music"

Week 2: From Africa to the Bronx (Sept 1–Sept 3)

- Tues: Discussion & Quiz: Baraka reading; Lecture: Hip Hop Origins: From Africa to the Bronx and Beyond
- Thurs: Read: "A Guide to Hip-Hop Culture in the Bronx, Past and Present" (Alvin Blanco)

Week 3: Spirituals & Survival (Sept 8–Sept 10)

- Tues: Read: "Negro Spirituals Are the Foundation of Black American Music" (Cordova)
- Thurs: Watch: Negro Spirituals (Detroit Public TV); Listen: Bessie Griffin + Ghostface Killah versions of Motherless Child: Discussion

📌 Assignment Due: Album Review (10 pts)

Week 4: Resilient Brilliance (Sept 15–Sept 17)

- Tues: Read: David Romo, "The Bath Riots" + Ortiz & Telles on racial treatment of Mexican Americans
- Thurs: Read: Simon Romero, "Indian Slavery Once Thrived in New Mexico": Discussion

Week 5: Elements of Hip Hop (Sept 22–Sept 24)

- Tues: Lecture: The Elements of Hip Hop & How Many Elements Actually Exist?; Read: Rock the Bells Staff, "Breaking Down the 5 Elements"
- Thurs: Read & Watch: Kennedy Center, "Hip Hop: A Culture of Vision and Voice"; Read: Red Bull Editorial, "History of Breakdancing"

Week 6: Breakin' & Style (Sept 29–Oct 1)

- Tues: Read: "Venezuelans Create Community Around Break Dance in Colombia" + HipLatina, "The Latinx B-Boys & B-Girls Who Started a Revolution"
- Thurs: Watch: KRS-One at EPCC; Watch: Style Wars; Quiz

📌 Assignment Due: Hip Hop Contributor Presentation (BB Discussion Post, or In-class Presentation, 20 pts)

Week 7: Early Sazón — Latines Enter Hip Hop (Oct 6–Oct 8)

- Tues: Lecture: DJing; Watch: From Mambo to Hip Hop (Chalfant)
- Thurs: Watch: Scratch (Doug Pray); Listen: "The Hidden History of the Hip Hop Mixtape"

Week 8: DJs as Historians (Oct 13–Oct 15)

- Tues: Read: "Disco Wiz" (Fordham Commons); Read: Wanda Hernández, "The Sazón in Hip-Hop"; Watch: Bobbito Garcia Bio
- Thurs: Read: ZIPDJ, "History of DJing"; Discussion + Quiz: DJs as historians

Week 9: Graffiti Culture (Oct 20–Oct 22)

- Tues: Video Lecture: Graffiti; Watch: Cornbread Lives; Watch: LA Originals
- Thurs: Watch: Miami's Graffiti Style Gods; Listen: Lee Quiñones (KEXP); Read: "Walls that Speak"

Week 10: The Great Debate (Oct 27–Oct 29)

- Tues: Read: "Latin American Graffiti"; Read: Cholo Graffiti (Bojórquez, Cesaretti, Oriol, Marin)
- Thurs: Lecture: Emceeing; Watch: Pigmeat Markham — Here Comes the Judge

Week 11: Spoken Word to Rap (Nov 3–Nov 5)

- Tues: Watch: Right On! (The Last Poets); Read/Listen: "As Hip Hop Turns 50" (NPR)
- Thurs: Watch: Freestyle: The Art of Rhyme

Week 12: West Coast Voices (Nov 10–Nov 12)

- Tues: The Soul Assassins
- Thurs: Watch: Kid Frost Interview; Listen: Hispanic Causing Panic; Quiz

📌 Assignment Due: Create Your Own Work of Hip Hop (BB Submission, or Class Performance, 20 pts)

Week 13: Latine Contributions (Nov 17–Nov 19)

- Tues: Lecture: Latine Contributions to Hip Hop; Read: "Felipe Luciano" (Smithsonian)
- Thurs: Group Activity

Week 14: Reflection & Review (Nov 24–Nov 6)

- Tues: Recap of Latine Contributions; Course Feedback
- Thurs: Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class)

Week 15: Closing the Circle (Dec 1– Dec. 3)

Tues, Dec 4: Final Regular Class Day; Course Review & Closing Discussion

📌 Assignment Due: Where Hip Hop Lives (In-class Discussion, 20 pts)

📌 Hip Hop Live Event (BB Discussion Post / In-class Discussion, 10 pts)

Final Exam Day & Time: TBA

- 📌 **YouTube Hip Hop Playlist Submission (In-class) & Final Class Discussion**

Important Academic Dates

Sept 7th	Labor Day holiday - University Closed
Sept 9th	Fall Census Day Note: This is the last day to register for classes. Payments are due by 5:00 pm.
Sept 21st	20th Class Day Note: Students who were given a payment deadline extension will be dropped at 5:00 pm if payment arrangements have not been made.
Oct 2nd	Graduation application deadline for degree conferral
Oct 21st	Freshman Midterm grades are due
Oct 30th	Fall Drop/Withdrawal deadline Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.

Nov 13th	Deadline to submit candidates' names for commencement program
Nov 26-27th	Thanksgiving Holiday - University Closed
Dec 3rd	Fall last day of classes
Dec 4th	Dead Day
Dec 7-11th	Fall Final Exams
Dec 12-13th	Fall Commencement
Dec 15th	Grades are due
Dec 16th	Grades are posted to student records; students are notified of grades and academic standing

XX) PROMINENT (MOSTLY) AMERICAN LATINE CONTRIBUTORS TO HIP HOP CULTURE:

Kid Frost (artist)	N.O.R.E. (artist & podcaster)	Fabulous (artist)	Angie Martinez (radio)
Mellow Man Ace (artist)	Cypress Hill (rap group)	Chino XL (artist)	Joe Conzo, Jr (photographer)
Hurricane G (artist)	Vico C (artist)	The Beatnutz (rap group)	MC Ruby Dee (artist)
Big Pun (artist)	AZ (artist)	Cardi B (artist)	Tony Touch (deejay)
Fat Joe (artist)	Baby Bash (artist)	Snow Tha Product (artist)	Dj Doo Wop (deejay)
Cipha Sounds (deejay)	Bobbito Garcia (deejay)	Lil Rob (artist)	Immortal Technique (artist)
Danny Hastings (photographer & multimedia creator)	Dave East (artist)	Lil Pump (artist)	Jim Jones (artist)
Tres Delincuentes (rap group)	Control Machete (rap group from Mexico)	Bocafloja (artist from Mexico)	Akwid (rap group)
Krystall Poppin (artist)	Lápiz Conciente (artist)	Ice Spice (artist)	Mr. Cartoon (visual artist)
Estevan Oriol (photographer & videographer)	Crazy Legs (breaker)	Mr. Capone-E (artist)	2MEX (artist)

Berner (artist & entrepreneur)	Bone Weso (producer)	That Mexican OT (artist)	Cartel de Santa (rap group)
Canserbero (artist)	April Walker (clothing designer & brand owner)	Lee Quiñones (graffiti artist)	Coyote “The Yotes” (artist)
Estee Nack (artist)	Three Flavors “Tres Sabores” (artist)	Frankie Cutlass (producer & deejay)	Prince Markie Dee (artist & producer)