<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>NYU London</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class code</td>
<td>SCA-UA9115001</td>
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<td>Instructor Details</td>
<td>Dr Deirdre Osborne</td>
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<td>Class Details</td>
<td>Location to be confirmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
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**Class Description**

This course negotiates the complex range of influences that construct black culture and identity in Britain today from socio-cultural, historical, geo-political and aesthetic standpoints. The changing conceptions of Black British identity (and its detractors), is explored in a cross-disciplinary curriculum which attempts to straddle the perhaps irresolvable division between the recognition of cultural differences and the refusal of marginalisation, as played out in the urban context, namely London. Key areas of investigation include: representation via literature, drama, film, television, music, sport and the visual arts and the ways in which these areas are shaped by and shape black citizens’ experiences of society’s institutions through the media, education, criminal justice system and the arts. As an indicative rather than definitive hold-all, or framing device, the use of the term ‘Black British’ follows the Parekh Report’s lead, that ‘belonging is about full acceptance, being recognised as an integral part of the community’ (2000:54). The course assumes automa cultural constituency as indigene black Britons belong to and contribute distinctively to the contemporary society of their birthland. It moves beyond centralising inheritance in terms of the immigrant or arrivalist sensibility in order to explore Britain’s unique manifestation of the African diaspora as sited firmly within contemporary Europe, whether or not Britain remains in the EU. The focus is upon the context of London purely for practical reasons and also as an international city that has significant evidence of the longstanding presence of a black population. The breadth of the course aims to: introduce students to cultural criticism and theory, apply this to Black Urban Studies in the British context and encourage research into a wider range of questions that will arise from investigating the above.

The course format will involve lectures, seminar discussions, two field trips and sessions with guest speakers. Supplementary material will also be distributed from time to time in class and can be used as material to underpin assessed work. All students will give one 10-15-minute presentation in pairs or small groups in relation to a specific essay in the Course Reader and/or from the supplementary materials distributed in advance.

**Desired Outcomes**

By the end of the programme, students should have gained knowledge and understanding of:

- significant intellectual and historical contexts that inform contemporary Black British culture and its relationship to the urban space.
- selected critical and theoretical debates about the characteristics of literary and socio-cultural innovation in writing and representation.
- factors which facilitate or impede cultural citizenship and their connection to a sense of belonging.

Written coursework should demonstrate ability in and evidence of:

- writing lucidly and with focused relevance.
identifying and examining key issues in relation to the work in hand

drawing upon and evaluating primary and secondary sources as appropriate

sustaining a critical response through the development of coherent analysis

presenting written criticism that displays insight, intelligence and stylistic aptitude

structuring and sustaining a coherent argument at an appropriate level

**Class participation : 1**

10% of your grade is based upon the preparation of the presentation exercise of one critical article weekly as detailed under Class Description). This should be 10-15 minutes long and cover the synopsis of the overall argument and your own evaluation of it.

**Essays : 2**

1x 1,500 -2,000 paper (30%) submitted in session 5

1 x 3,500-4,000 words (60%) submitted in session 14.

Topics will be distributed in the first session for essay one and in week seven for essay two. Students may NOT re-write their own versions of these topics but must follow the rubric exactly and answer the set question. You must write out the question at the top of the essay.

For the second longer essay (60%) you will be expected to incorporate the ideas and material covered on the course and to take this in new directions based upon your area of particular interest.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Be as specific as possible about your expectations regarding student work

**Grade A:** At the top end of this grade, the assessed work would need to demonstrate evidence of exceptionally rigorous and sophisticated analytical research in its conceptualization; a highly secure and discriminating knowledge of the field of study in its cross-disciplinarity and to be stylistically exceptional and accomplished in its presentation. At the lower end, work will show evidence of rigorous analytical research in its conceptualization; feature a secure and discriminating acquaintance with rather than knowledge of the field of study, engage with the subject in a notably intelligent way; offer clear and efficient presentation with careful and accurate scholarly procedure and consistently display outstanding merit in all or a combination of these areas

**Grade B:** To achieve this grade, the assessed work would need to demonstrate an overall achievement of the learning outcomes to a good level which would indicate some qualities of Grade A work at the lower end of the scale. The difference would be in the degree of realisation. Thus, the work would show evidence of good analytical research, registering cross-disciplinary aspects; a soundness of argument or analysis; a good acquaintance with the field of study; a good level of coherence, relevance and efficiency in its style of presentation, largely following correct scholarly procedure. The work should be of high merit in all of these areas, or considerable merit in some areas and a good standard in others.

**Grade C:** A mark in this category would mean that the assessed work would demonstrate a majority of the learning outcomes had been achieved to threshold level. The grade would reflect solid competence and achievement, although the work might be partial rather than consistent in clarity, precision and effectiveness. Research would show some evidence of the ability to identify relevant issues, but might, for example, be inconsistent in its recognition of the need for a contextual framework in its deployment of ideas and registering of cross-disciplinarity; or, it might rely too heavily on secondary sources at the expense of developing an independent critical standpoint; be insufficiently detailed; or tend towards
description rather than analysis. The work should be of a good standard in the areas listed above or good in some areas and of a satisfactory standard in others

**Grade D:** This grade would indicate that the majority of outcomes have been achieved to a less than satisfactory state. Marks in this category would reflect work that is significantly inconsistent in its level of response to the set task or the conceptualisation and realisation of the project. It would be applied to work which does not utilise a sufficient range of processes or materials; or, its research shows limited evidence or little ability to identify the relevant issues. There would be limited or inconsistent deployment of analytical or contextual skills and poor scholarly presentation.

**Grade F:** A mark in this category would represent a significant failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. While the work may not be without merit, the concept may have been realised inappropriately or ideas may have remained under-developed; the range of research may have been limited, with little interpretation or analysis of material; or, it may be lacking in breadth or largely devoid or unaware of the need for a conceptual framework and lacking in focus or coherent argument. It would be scholastically and stylistically incompetent.

**Required Text(s)**

These can be purchased on-line, second hand or new. Any edition is acceptable. All are available in paperback except Kurt Barling’s book. Most texts are also available secondhand.

**LOOK AT THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE TO PLAN WHEN YOU NEED TO HAVE PREPARED WORK FROM THESE IN ADVANCE OF CLASS**


The following texts will be distributed in extract form as photocopies in the COURSE READER in advance of class. They are to be read in the order directed by the weekly schedule that follows the list - in conjunction with the reading set from the required texts above.

**COURSE READER CONTENTS IN ORDER THEY APPEAR ON THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE**


-----, Ch. 23. ‘Suspected Persons’, 301-304, 308-310.


Fuentes, Consuelo Rivera. ‘Two Stories, Three Lovers’in Mirza ed. 216-225.


John, Gus. ‘Parental and Community Involvement in Education: Time to Get the Balance Right’ in Richardson, 97-107.

Zephaniah, Benjamin. ‘Another World’ in Richardson, 86-7.

**Supplemental reading for essays and your own research can be taken from this INDICATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY below.**

It is not exhaustive and certainly not prescriptive. There are also television programmes listed ** that can be sourced by Youtube.


**Black and White in Colour: Black People in British Television Since 1936 Directed by Isaac Julien BFI/BBC2, 1992.**


**Storm Damage** Written by Lennie James, directed by Simon Cellan-Jones. BBC 2000.

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Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment

Session 1

*What’s in a name?*

(William Shakespeare)

  *Patsy:* I ain’t British though.
  *Tanya:* Yes you are. You’re as English as I am.
  *Patsy:* No I ain’t.
  *Tanya:* Yes you are. You was born here.
  *Patsy:* So? Just ‘cause you born in a stable, that don’t make you a horse.

*(Urban Afro-Saxons* by Kofi Agyemong and Patricia Elcock 2003:72)

Overview of the presence of black people in Britain pre-1945 to chart the changing definitions of ‘black’, ‘Britishness’ and ‘Englishness’ in relation to indigenousness. Traces and spaces: settlement patterns, evolving cosmopolitanism, political and representational presence before the beginnings of mass migration. As this is the first class, we will read through the critical materials in class as the basis for our initial discussions.

Preparatory reading: from *Course Reader*


**TOPICS FOR FIRST ESSAY DISTRIBUTED**

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Session 2

The Chief Commodity: Sugar, Slavery and London

This session is a museum *field trip to The Museum in the Docklands* to reflect upon London’s role in the enslavement trade and the competing cargoes that supplied the imperial centre. It should be used as a basis for developing an evaluation of the legacy of this aspect of empire in contemporary urban mapping.
Preparatory reading/consultation:

Kushnick, Louis, “‘We’re Here Because You Were There’” COURSE READER
www.tradingfacesonline.com
www.museuminthedocklands.org.uk

Please note: you will be set an investigative task for which you will provide feedback in session 3

Session 3

‘Know whence you came’.
(James Baldwin)

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past.
(Stuart Hall 1990)

Evoking the past to create legitimacy, lineage and positive identities in the present in both fiction and polem. Performing blackness across geography, gender and history.

Preparatory reading:

CORE TEXTS

Martin, S.I. *Incomparable World*

COURSE READER
Hall, Stuart. ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’ in Identity, Community, Culture, Difference, Rutherford ed. 19 222-237.

Session 4

From postwar to post-colonial to Black British (I): City, Dwelling, Imaginings

In a post-colonial context, the front room deserves further study because it raises questions about modernity and migrant aesthetics, the process of decolonisation and the subjective desire to redefine oneself through material culture in the home.
(Michael McMillan 2008)

Racialised restrictions and ‘white open spaces’; the legacy of “No Irish, No Dogs, No Coloured”; the aspirational domestic and the aesthetics of marking out territories in a changing urban landscape and socio-economic circumstances, the 1950s/60s then and now.

Preparatory reading:

CORE TEXT
Selvon, Sam. *The Lonely Londoners*

COURSE READER

In Class - viewing of Tales From the Front Room Prod. and Dir. Zimena Percival.

Session 5

From postwar to post-colonial to Black British (II): Political Activisms
FROM THIS SESSION ONWARDS STUDENT PRESENTATIONS WILL BE BEGIN EACH WEEK. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE 10% CLASS CONTRIBUTION MARK THAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR FINAL GRADE.

‘Come what may, we’re here to stay’

(Linton Kwesi Johnson)

The post-imperial city and the imperial mindset, 1970s/80s. The Deptford Fire, mobilisation of the black London community against racism and establishment disregard. Class and political affiliation, ‘black’ as political affiliation rather than ethnic identity.

Preparatory reading:

**COURSE READER**


IN-CLASS viewing of excerpts from *The Stuart Hall Project* dir. John Akomfrah (2013)

**Essay 1 (1,500-2,000) words due.**

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**Session 6**

**From postwar to post-colonial to Black British (III) : Arenas of Contestation in the Arts**

Traditionally sport, carnival and music have been the cultural spaces accorded to the black community in British culture. This session looks at the interfaces in politicised expression of those circumscribed by delimiting stereotypes and the resistances to them by considering representations and receptions of black people’s contributions to the arts.

Preparatory reading:

**CORE TEXT**

Barling, Kurt. *Racism: The ‘R’ Word ‘Section II’*

**COURSE READER**


DJ Daniel Campbell will talk to the class about the grime artists he has worked with since early in their careers

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**Session 7**

**No Justice, Just Us’ : The Black Body in the Criminal Justice System**

As The Parekh Report reinforces, the longstanding problematic relationship between the criminal justice system and the black body in the public space has defined contemporary social relations and degrees of belonging and unbelonging for indigenous black Britons. The watershed of the publication of the Macpherson Report (2000) and its findings of endemic institutional racism in Britain is negotiated implicitly in the polemic and representational forms of this session.

In the light of recent uprisings in London and other urban spaces in the UK, we will consider the political and media viewpoints of who constitutes the “feral underclass” that the Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke termed in relation to the history of discrimination and disenfranchisement.

**CORE TEXT**

Johnson, Linton Kwesi. ‘Sonny’s Letter’ – CLASS HANDOUT

Preparatory reading:

**COURSE READER**
Kushnick, Louis. "'Over Policed and Under Protected': Stephen Lawrence and Police Practices".


**FIRST ESSAY RETURNED, TOPICS FOR FINAL ESSAY DISTRIBUTED**

* On Thursday October 12th at 7.30pm you will be attending a rare performance of *The Story of M* by SuAndi at the Bernie Grant Centre, Tottenham. We study this in session 9 of the course.*

**Session 8**

**At Face Value: Representing Black Experience in Film, Television and the Visual Arts**

As black figures were habitually invisibilised in history and their demographic and social presence discounted, in the visual arts and its counterparts of film and television, the scarcity of black people has been notable and sustained – despite changing social realities – up to the present. This session traces contemporary artists whose work across various media literally illuminates and restores the contribution of black people to the field. It also looks at comedy as a genre in a socio-cultural context of adversity projection.

Preparatory reading:

**COURSE READER**

Extracts will be shown in class from:
- *Desmond’s Channel 4* – second longest running British television situation comedy series

**Session 9**

**Mixed Heritages: Mixed Messages**

Struggles over ethnic or racial classification are emblematic of struggles over the right to a social identity and over the matter of self-definition.
(Jill Olumide 2002)

Children born to parents of different or intermixed racial lineages have similarly, historically, traversed straightforward categories of upbringing and cultural affiliation. This has produced conundrums of political identification and self-terming that was frequently at odds with social nomenclature - which aimed to do this identifying for them - indicated by the indiscriminateness of 1980s social policies where black and Asian people for example, were housed under the same (discriminatory), multicultural umbrella. This session considers how we are to make sense of the census featuring a methodology of comparison and contrast between British and American approaches to demographic measurement.

Preparatory reading:

**CORE TEXTS**
Kay, Jackie. *The Adoption Papers* 10-34.
SuAndi *The Story of M*

**COURSE READER**
FALL BREAK OCCURS 30TH OCTOBER TO 5TH NOVEMBER

Session 10

The Care System: Facts, Aesthetics and Fictionalising

In contemporary representations of the institution of the family and in particular that of the mother/child relationship, a unique British manifestation of African diasporic inheritances has emerged, produced by writers who embody a protean identity in terms of racial and cultural knowledge and viewpoints which have traditionally been edited out of the familial story. “Trans-raised” (coined by writer and performer Valerie Mason-John) describes a generation of people who grew up in Britain in the 1960s and 70s who self-identify as black or mixed race but were reared by white people: adoptive or foster parents or in white-run care institutions. This session looks at representations of looked-after and adopted children (as created by themselves as adults) to investigate how the parameters of the national story are being flexed.

Preparatory reading:

CORE TEXTS

Session 11

Black Women: Activism and Visibility, Textuality and Sexuality.

British Black lesbians write in a variety of styles and employ many different forms: [...] Of course we share much common ground with other Black people, especially heterosexual Black women writers, and with white lesbian writers. However, Black lesbian literature is not a fusion of these two with an extra dash of feminism and race awareness.

(Anita Naoko Pilgrim, 1999)

Considering black women’s historical marginalisation and resistances to this in a range of activisms from historical retrievals of black women’s presence to assertions of difference and the relationship to feminism. The perspectives of LGBTQI+ in relation to Kimberlé Crenshaw’s intersectionality framework. (A refresher on ‘Intersectionality’ can be found in an essay by Sharon Smith at http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality )

Preparatory reading:

CORE TEXT
Levy, Andrea. *Small Island*

COURSE READER

To augment the above if you have further interest:
A British LGBTQI archive, The Rukus Archive webpage can viewed accessed at: http://rukus.org.uk/art:

http://www.100greatblackbritons.com/archive/blg.html
http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/pride-lgbt-black-pride-otherness-fetishisation-gay-rights-racism-uk-a7830451.html

Your attention is also drawn to the Contemporary Black British Women’s Writing Network http://www.vub.ac.be/TALK/BBWW/ and http://mediadiversified.org/2014/10/30/black-british-feminism-it-is-collective-and-collaborative/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dscx4h2L-Pk;

Session 12

Hearing Voices: Women’s Life Writing and Perspectives
Debbie Tucker Green is one of Britain’s leading playwrights and film makers. Her texts place poetry in the heart of theatre and also stage taboo topics and black-centred experiences from women’s perspectives. In *Nut* we shall consider how mental health issues are rendered in her distinctive poetic-dramatic style. This will be followed by:

**Hannah Azieb Pool, will discuss her book My Fathers’ Daughter.**
Hannah is a journalist, memoirist, Chair of UK Feminista, and currently Senior Programmer, Contemporary Culture at the Southbank Centre, where she curates the talks and debates at the acclaimed annual *Women of the World (WOW)* and *Africa Utopia* festivals.
Preparatory reading:

**CORE TEXTS**
tucker green, debbie. *Nut*
Pool, Hannah *My Fathers’ Daughter*

**Session 13**
Activate and Commemorate: Education and Other Processes of Publishing and Archiving Black British Experience

I was educated to be English. Alongside me – learning, watching, eating and playing – were white children. But those white children would never have to grow up to question whether they were English or not. (Andrea Levy, 2000)

The critical attention given to black writers in Britain has been dominated by white scholars at home and abroad, leaving many writers feeling that they are left on the sidelines, de-authorised to participate in critical conversations about their own work or a field in which they have expertise. Many anthologies on the field have contextualised artistic endeavour within socio-cultural and issues-based frameworks of analysis or else, Black British writing’s admission to critical discourses is frequently premised upon connections being made to established, white-dominated, authoritative traditions and aesthetic models, or, as responses to specific socio-political conditions. The ramifications of this upon black British identity are explored through issues surrounding the education system and the still developing networks of archiving.

Preparatory reading:

**CORE TEXT**
Barling, Kurt. ‘Section III’

**COURSE READER**


Zephaniah, Benjamin. ‘Another World’ in Richardson, ed. 86-7.

Students are to offer a 5-10 minute outline of their research for the final essay topic and be prepared to answer questions on work-in-progress

**Session 14**
Post-show discussion of *Barbershop Chronicles* by Inua Ellams. Re-cap of course.

Final essay (3,500-4,000 words) due.

Hand in final essay
Session 15

THE THERE IS NO EXAMINATION FOR THIS COURSE

Eating is not permitted in any classrooms in 6 Bedford Square or at Birkbeck College. Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided. Although use of a laptop for note-taking is acceptable, any other use in class is prohibited as is the use of mobile (cell) phones. Students will attend class having read the required materials.

Classroom Etiquette

Note the extra-curricula activity to Inua Ellams’s play Barbershop Chronicles at the Royal National Theatre in November and we will be attending one other event during Black History Month in October.

Required Co-curricular Activities

Costs are limited to travel within the Zone 2 area on London Transport.

Estimated Travel Costs

Suggested Co-curricular Activities

Take advantage of the range that is offered by NYU and try to supplement these with attending events related to Black culture as advised by your tutor and also as derived from your own research. YOU ARE ADVISED TO VISIT THE BLACK CULTURAL ARCHIVE www.bcaheritage.org.uk while you are in London.

1 Windrush Square, London, Brixton, London SW2 1EF
020 3757 8500. Underground stop – Brixton (Victoria line)

Your Instructor

Australian-born Deirdre Osborne is a Reader in English Literature and Drama at Goldsmiths, University London and promotes the work of black British writers in all contexts in which she has taught, from universities to high security prisons. She has edited The Cambridge Companion to British Black and Asian Literature (1945-2010) which will be available at the end of 2016 and has interviewed and published critical essays key black British writers over the past decade (Kwame Kwei-Armah, Andrea Levy, debbie tucker green, F Williams, Lemn Sissay, SuAndi, and Courtia Newland), in a range of journals such as New Theatre Quarte. Women: A Cultural Review and in the anthologies, Performing Poetry: Race, Place and Gender, Hyb Cultures Nervous States (both Rodopi), Contemporary Poetry in Crisis (Palgrave), Methuen Modern Brit Playwrights, and “Black “ British Aesthetics Today. She edited the Methuen classic of Lorraine Hansberr A Raisin in the Sun Her writing has been translated into Portuguese. Her edited anthologies of Black Brit plays and critical introductions are, Hidden Gems Vol.I and Vol.II (Oberon, 2008 and 2012). Two further books are in preparation: the monograph Critically Black: Black British Dramatists and Theatre in the N Millennium (Manchester University Press), the edited Contemporary Black British Women’s Writing: Contradictions and Heritages. She co-edited Modern and Contemporary Black British Thea (Palgrave, 2014). In 2012 she organized ‘D-Day: Celebrating Diane Abbott’s 25 Years as an MP’ on 2 October 2012, a day of panels and performances to honour Britain’s first black woman to be elected to House of Commons and in 2013 launched Radical Raconteurs with the first event 3Rs: An Evening w Darcus Howe’ to honour one of Black Britain’s longstanding and leading political activists, writers & broadcasters. She convenes the MA Black British Writing with Professor Joan Anim-Addo at Goldsmith University of London (the first degree in this field in the world.
NYU GLOBAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

Policies and procedures for Global Academic Centres, including policies on academic integrity and the Study Away Standard, can be found here: https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html

Absences: Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html

NYU London work submission policies can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html

Classroom conduct: Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behavior that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services.

Please refer to the NYU London Disruptive Student Behaviour Policy at https://goo.gl/Nvt5Vu for examples of disruptive behaviour and guidelines for response and enforcement.