SCA-UA 9115, Black Urban Studies

Instructor Information
- Dr Deirdre Osborne

Course Information
- Monday 9am-12pm
- G07, 6 Bedford Square

Course Overview and Goals
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 automatic 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, three 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.
Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

Show knowledge and understanding of the

- 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.

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

Course Requirements

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to these assessment components:

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<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>Description of Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<td>Class presentation and participation</td>
<td>Presentation exercise of one critical article distributed in advance. This should be 10-15 minutes long and cover the synopsis of the overall argument and your own evaluation of it.</td>
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<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>1x 1,500 -2,000 paper (30%) submitted in session 5. Topics will be distributed in the first session of classes. 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.</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>1 x 3,500-4,000 words (60%) submitted in session 14. Topics will be distributed in session seven. You are welcome to devise your own essay question which must be</td>
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Assignments/Activities | Description of Assignment | % of Final Grade | Due
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| approved by your tutor in advance. 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 fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class

**Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Example: 93.5% and higher</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Example: 82.5% - 87.49%</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Example: 72.5% - 77.49%</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Example: 62.5% - 67.49</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Example: 59.99% and lower</td>
<td>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.</td>
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Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials


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.

Optional Textbooks & Materials
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.


Korhonen, Anu. ‘Washing the Ethiopian White: Conceptualising Black Skin in Renaissance England’ in


### Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](library.nyu.edu)
- **NYUL Library Collection:** [Senate House Library](catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

### Course Schedule

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<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| Session 1:   | What’s in a name? | Overview of the presence of black people in Britain pre-1945 to chart the changing definitions of 'black', 'Britishness' and 'Englishness' in relation to arriviste-settler-indigene generations. 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. | COURSE READER
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<td>Session 2:</td>
<td>The Chief Commodity: Sugar, Slavery and London</td>
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<td>From this session onwards, the class presentation will be allocated.</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker:</td>
<td>Mr Burt Caesar</td>
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<td>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. Mr Burt Caesar, co-curator of the permanent exhibition will be our guide around the museum.</td>
<td>COURSE READER Kushnick, Louis, “We’re Here Because You Were There” <a href="http://www.tradingfacesonline.com">www.tradingfacesonline.com</a> <a href="http://www.museuminthedocklands.org.uk">www.museuminthedocklands.org.uk</a> <a href="https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/blog/windrush-anniversary-reflections">https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/blog/windrush-anniversary-reflections</a></td>
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<td>Session 3:</td>
<td>‘Know whence you came’. (James Baldwin)</td>
<td>CORE TEXT Martin, S.I. <em>Incomparable World</em></td>
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<td>Evoking the past to create legitimacy, lineage and positive identities in the present in both fiction and polemic. Performing blackness across geography, gender and history.</td>
<td>COURSE READER Hall, Stuart. ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’ in <em>Identity, Community, Culture, Difference</em>, Rutherford ed. 1990. 222-237.</td>
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<td>Session 4:</td>
<td>From postwar to post-colonial to Black British (I): City, Dwelling, Imaginings</td>
<td>CORE TEXT Selvon, Sam. <em>The Lonely Londoners</em></td>
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<td>Session 6:</td>
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<td>We are attending the performance of <em>Misty</em> at 7.30pm</td>
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<td>Session 7:</td>
<td><strong>From postwar to post-colonial to Black British (III) : Arenas of Contestation in the Arts</strong> 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</td>
<td>COURSE READER Back, Les. ‘Voices of hate, sounds of hybridity: Black music and the complexities of racism’ 2000. 127-49. Phillips, Mike. and Phillips, Trevor. <em>The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain</em>, Ch. 24. 311-320 GUEST SPEAKER: DR MALACHI MCINTOSH will be talking to the class about heritages of black British music, featuring Grime.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>Session 8:</td>
<td><strong>At Face Value: Representing Black Experience in Film, Television and the Visual Arts</strong>&lt;br&gt;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</td>
<td><strong>COURSE READER</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mercer, Kobena. <em>Welcome to the Jungle</em> 69-81.  &lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;In-class viewing of extracts from: <em>Whoever Heard of a Black Artist: Britain’s Hidden Art History</em> (BBC)  &lt;br&gt;<em>Desmond’s Channel 4</em> – second longest running British television situation comedy series.</td>
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<td>socio-cultural context of adversity projection.</td>
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<td><strong>Mixed Heritages: Mixed Messages</strong>&lt;br&gt;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</td>
<td><strong>CORE TEXTS</strong>&lt;br&gt;Kay, Jackie. <em>The Adoption Papers</em> 10-34.&lt;br&gt;SuAndi <em>The Story of M</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>COURSE READER</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ifekwunigwe, Jayne O. “Diaspora’s Daughters, Africa’s Orphans?: On Lineage, Authenticity and ‘Mixed Race’ Identity.” in <em>Black British Feminism</em>. Mirza, ed. 1997. 127-132, 144-152.&lt;br&gt;AND&lt;br&gt;Kay, Jackie. ‘So you think I’m a mule?’ in Heidi Safia Mirza. ed. <em>Black British Feminism</em></td>
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<td>demographic measurement.</td>
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<td><strong>The Care System: Facts, Aesthetics and Fictionalising</strong></td>
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<td>In contemporary representations of the institution of the family and</td>
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<td>in particular that of the mother/child relationship, a unique</td>
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<td>British manifestation of African diasporic inheritances has emerged,</td>
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<td>produced by writers who embody a protean identity in terms of racial</td>
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<td>and cultural knowledge and standpoints which have traditionally</td>
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<td>been edited out of the familial story. “Trans-raised” (coined by</td>
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<td>writer and performer Valerie Mason-John) describes a generation of</td>
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<td>people who grew up in Britain in the 1960s and 70s who self-identify</td>
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<td>as black or mixed race but were reared by white people: adoptive</td>
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<td>or foster parents or in white-run care institutions. This session</td>
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<td>looks at representations of looked-after and adopted children (as</td>
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**CORE TEXTS**


**GUEST SPEAKER**

DR FIONA PETERS will talk about her work with adoption, fostering and the care system in Britain.
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<th>Assignments Due</th>
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|              | themselves as adults) to investigate how the parameters of the national story are being flexed. | CORE TEXT
Levy, Andrea. *Small Island*


**COURSE READER**

| Session 11:  | **Black Women: Activism and Visibility, Textuality and Sexuality (I).** 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. | CORE TEXT
Adebayo, Mojisola. *Moj of the Antarctic* in Osborne, e
*Hidden Gems* 149-190.


**COURSE READER**

(A refresher on ‘Intersectionality’ can be found in an essay by Sharon Smith at http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality )

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/arts/

http://www.100greatblackbritons.com/archive/blg.html |
<p>|              | <strong>Black Women: Activism and Visibility, Textuality and Sexuality (II).</strong> The perspectives of LGBTQI+ in relation to Kimberlé Crenshaw’s intersectionality framework. | Students to offer 5-10 minute presentation work-in-progress for final essay. |</p>
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<th>Session/Date</th>
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**CORE TEXT**


**COURSE READER**


Zephaniah, Benjamin. ‘Another World’ in Richardson, ed. 86-7.
### Co-Curricular Activities

- For the three extra-curricular visits (Docklands Museum, Misty and White Teeth) Costs are limited to travel within the Zone 2 area on London Transport.
- 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)
- FREE ENTRY

### Classroom Etiquette

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. **You are not to check social media or email accounts while the class is in session.**

Students will attend class having read the required materials.
NYUL Academic Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

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

Assignments, Plagiarism, and Late Work

- You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL website (https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html) and on the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website for students studying away at global sites (https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.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 behaviour 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 Disruptive Student Behavior Policy for examples of disruptive behavior and guidelines for response and enforcement.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

Australian-born Deirdre Osborne is a Reader in English Literature and Drama at Goldsmiths, University of London and promotes the work of black British writers in all contexts in which she has taught, from universities to high security prisons.

She edited The Cambridge Companion to British Black and Asian Literature (1945-2010) and co-edited Modern and Contemporary Black British Drama. Her published interview-led critical essays on key black British writers over the past decade include Kwame Kwei-Armah (first black Artistic Director of a major British theatre), Andrea Levy, debbie tucker green, Roy Williams, Lemn Sissay, SuAndi, and Courttia Newland) appear in a range of journals such as
New Theatre Quarterly, Women: A Cultural Review and in the anthologies, Performing Poetry: Race, Place and Gender, Hybrid Cultures Nervous States (both Rodopi), Contemporary Poetry in Crisis (Palgrave), and "Black " British Aesthetics Today. She edited the Methuen classic of Lorraine Hansberry’s A Raisin in the Sun. Her writing has been translated into Portuguese.

She has organized many public events such as: ‘D-Day: Celebrating Diane Abbott’s 25 Years as an MP’ on 26th October 2012, a day of panels and performances to honour Britain’s first black woman to be elected to the House of Commons and in 2013 launched Radical Raconteurs with the first event 3Rs: An Evening with Darcus Howe’ to honour one of Black Britain’s longstanding and leading political activists, writers and broadcasters. She convenes the MA Black British Writing with Professor Joan Anim-Addo at Goldsmiths, University of London (the first degree in this field in the world) which was awarded the Students Union student-led teaching award for ‘compelling and diverse curriculum content’ in 2018.