

Contrapalatatization: A Struggle, A Rebellion, A Perspective

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Course Description

Whether it be a play, a concert, a movie or a dance performance, there is something in the world of the arts that cannot be replicated. Authenticity. And yet, when Black and Brown artists are continuously subject to the rules, regulations and norms of Eurocentric spaces, what does that authenticity look like? Is it shifted? Molded? Or simply made appealing to the white palate? This class will question and work to answer just that in regards to music, film, theatre and arts education. By learning, adapting and applying the term "contrapalatatization", we will begin to discover that the rule of Eurocentricity does not have to last forever. It's up to us to make it fall.

What is this Word?

con·tra·pa·la·ti·za·tion

[contrapalatatization]

NOUN

1. The intentional action or process of working against the agreeable methods of a cultural artform to make palatable to Eurocentricity.

Why is it Important?

We will be using contrapalatatization as the scope in studying the history of Hip-Hop and the history of Black theatre, individually and as a whole. My studies have shown that the Eurocentric grasp of contrapalatatization has led in the opposite direction of progress for Theatre, Hip Hop and Black artistry in general. Throughout this course, I aim to provide pertinent new information that you will then apply to other forms of Black and Brown Cultural artistry.

Who are you to be lecturing on this?

My name is Angel Miguel Lopez, I am a theatremaker, musician, educator and aspring scholar in the world of Theatre and Performance Studies. My research interests lie in questioning, documenting and evaluating why and how Black and Brown cultural artforms have been brought into professional theatre spaces and are forced to become watered down and made palatable for the Eurocentric gaze of theatre audiences and funders. This trend of co-optation and appropriation has been seen across the board for oppressed communities as long as the American theatre has existed, and I am continuously working to apply the knowledge of scholars and artists that have held the same critiques and create new avenues for liberation and true artistic agency.

Course Information

Course Level

This is a graduate level seminar, offered to graduate students and undergraduate students on an individual, case-by-case basis. Students will be expected to read one book or scholarly work per week and will be asked to write both a midterm and final paper, the latter of which being research focused. Though it may seem daunting, the material will

Class Norms & Expectations

Class Norms	
Expectations of Students (You)	Expectations of Professor (Me)
1) To be present for as many classes as possible	1) To create a comfortable classroom environment that makes you want to attend
2) To complete readings prior to the class which they are assigned	2) To provide all reading materials needed for students to succeed within a reasonable timeframe
3) To complete all benchmarks and your final project	3) To provide clear expectations, adequate work time and tools for success

Attendance

The school in which we are attending has their own respective policies and procedures on handling attendance, so ultimately I will adhere to those.

However, in terms of illness, I will always recommend prioritizing your own health for your sake and the sake of others.

There will be an opportunity for students to make up absences towards the end of the semester.

Materials

All assigned readings will be available to you as PDF's, through links at open source websites or through our library's database.

Students are expected to keep a small notebook for this class, in addition to having access to a computer for final papers. Any students needing technological accommodation can reach out to me personally and we can make arrangements with the library.

Grading

Project Proposal: 10%

Participation: 20%

Midterm Paper: 30%

Final Research Paper: 40%

Day in a Life of Class

- 1) Check In
- 2) Reading Discussion
- 3) Lecture
- 4) Group Breakouts
 - a. To answer discussion questions for the class
- 5) Reflections and Check-Out

Week by Week

W.1 - Intros / First Depth

Readings:

- 1) Angel Miguel Lopez - "The Contrapalation of Hip Hop in the American Theatre"

W.2 - Contrapalation vs Cultural Appropriation

Readings:

- 1) Amirah Lockhart - A Stolen Culture: The Harmful Effects of Cultural Appropriation
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W.3 - Black Theatre

Readings:

- 1) W.E.B DuBois – "Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre"
- 2) Suzan Lori Parks – "Essays"

W.4 - Hip Hop

Readings:

- 1) Jeff Chang – "Can't Stop, Won't Stop"

W.5 - The Play That Shall Not Be Named, It Shall be Called Out (aka Hamilton)

Readings:

- 1) Watch: Hamilton
- 2) Watch: Holla If You Hear Me – The Tupac Story

W.6 - Contrapalation in Music

Readings:

- 1) Lakeyta M Bonnette, PULSE of the PEOPLE : Political Rap Music and Black Politics

W.7 – Midterm Paper Week, Open Office Hours

W.8 - Contrapalation in Arts Education

Readings:

- 1) Shehla Burney - Erasing Eurocentrism: "Using the Other as the Supplement of Knowledge"

W.9 - Individual Research Time, Proposal Presentations

W.10 – Contrapalatzation: What Do We Do About It?

Readings:

1) August Wilson: The Ground Upon Which He Stands

W.11 – One on Ones for Projects, Individual Research Time

W.12 – Group Study / Work Jam, Final Checks

W.13 – Final Presentations (1/2)

W.14 - Final Presentations (2/2)

W. 15 - Reflections and Circle Day

W. 16 – Field Trip

To see a play that truly fights against contrapalatzation

Where to Get Support

Me (Professor)

TA's (Grad Students)

Library / Writing Center

Health Services / Mental Health Services

Accommodations

As a neurodivergent person myself (ADHD), I completely understand and support your needs and requests for accommodations. Please reach out to the Office of Students with Disabilities for any formal assistance you need, and if you feel so comfortable, reach out to me directly for anything you would like to share or make me aware of.

We are here to make higher education accessible for you, and I hope to see you all in class!

Institute Information

Critical Studies Academic Policies

Attendance Policy

A student will be assigned a No Credit (NC) grade for Critical Studies courses after missing in excess of three classes without a reasonable excuse, unless the student withdraws from the course by the 10th week of the semester, as per the grading policy (see below).

Grading Policy

Standard Grading Options

High Pass (HP): Passing with Excellence

Pass (P): Passing with Quality

Low Pass (LP): Passing

No Credit (NC): Work did not meet the criteria for credit.

Other Grading Options

Incomplete (I): A temporary Incomplete grade may be given to a student who has maintained satisfactory attendance and completed passing work throughout most of a course, but as a result of extenuating circumstances is unable to complete the course requirements by the end of the semester. Incomplete grades are not assigned for Summer, Interim, Practicum, or Winter Session courses. Incomplete grades are assigned through submission of an Incomplete Contract to the Registrar's Office. The Incomplete Contract is an explicit agreement between student and faculty of the work remaining to be completed, and the date by which the work must be submitted for final review. The contract must also be approved by the school or program responsible for the course. Incomplete grades assigned for fall semester courses must be resolved no later than the end of the following spring semester. Incomplete grades assigned for spring courses must be resolved no later than the end of the following fall semester. Earlier deadlines for completion may be set at the discretion of the faculty and must be specified on the Incomplete Contract. Incomplete grades not replaced by final LP, P, or HP grades by the stated deadline will revert to NC (No Credit) grades on the transcript.

No Grade Recorded (NG): Placeholder grade entered by the Registrar's Office at the close of the grading period which indicates that no grade has yet been assigned by the faculty of record. "NG" grades not changed to a final evaluation by the end of the following semester will convert to "NC" on the transcript.

Withdrawn (W): Grade assigned by the Registrar to indicate withdrawal from a course after the end of the add/drop period. Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty through the 10th week of the semester. The course remains on the student's record with a "W" grade. "W" grades have no impact on semester or cumulative grading calculations, and do not count toward a student's residency or full-time status.

Grade Appeals

When a student wishes to appeal a grade: the student must first appeal to the instructor who assigned the grade in question. Where there is no satisfactory remedy through appeal to the instructor, the student may file written appeal to the dean of the school in which the course is offered. The decision of the dean is final. "NC" grades may not be changed to a grade except by means of a petition to the dean of the School involved. Such changes must be initiated by the instructor of the class or, in the instructor's absence, the dean of the school offering the course and submitted to the Registrar. Such a petition must include a written explanation from the instructor of the class explaining the reasons for changing the grade and a signature of support from the dean of the school offering the course. Petitions for the change of an NC grade must be submitted during the student's term of residency at the Institute and are considered only under exceptional, extenuating circumstances.

Auditing

Auditing a class is an arrangement made between the student and the instructor. No official record will be kept and no credit will be given.

GPA Equivalencies

On the official academic transcript, CalArts calculates student progress by indicated attempted units and the completed units, but does not use a Grade Point Average (GPA) as part of its marking system. However, when a GPA is required for external purposes, the following formula may be used: HP=4.00, P=3.00, LP=2.00, NC=0.00.

Services for Students with Disabilities

CalArts will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have registered with the Student Affairs office. Registration with the Office of Student Affairs is on a voluntary, self-identifying basis. Services are available only after a student has presented certified, current documentation of the disability from an appropriate medical or educational specialist, and this documentation has been reviewed and accepted as complete.

Plagiarism

Critical Studies endeavors to teach students the essential skills and basic ethics involved in any academic enquiry. To this end, we are committed to observing the policy on plagiarism set out in the CalArts Course Catalog. This stipulates that plagiarism is the use of ideas and/or quotations (from the internet, books, films, television, newspapers, articles, the work of other students, works of art, media, etc.) without proper credit to the author/artist. Critical Studies holds to the view that plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and is a serious breach of acceptable conduct. It is also the policy of CalArts that students who misrepresent source material as their own original work and fail to credit it have committed plagiarism and are subject to disciplinary action. In the case of Critical Studies, any student caught plagiarizing will immediately be given a 'no credit' for that class. The student will not be allowed to re-write the paper, and if there is further evidence of plagiarism, Critical Studies will recommend more severe disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or want direction on how to credit source material, ask the member of faculty and refer to reference guides on permanent reserve in the CalArts library. The CalArts reference librarians may be able to offer additional information as well.