

**HOME AND THE WORLD: URBAN REPRESENTATIONS OF HARLEM AND
THE SOUTH BRONX**

**Mellon Seminar: Urban Representations Lab
Africana 6819/Arch 6819/ SOH 6819
Professor Noliwe Rooks and Mary N. Woods
Wednesday 10:10-12:05 - Spring 2014**



Nikki Lee, *Hip Hop Project*, 2001

Collection: Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University

This seminar explores how a focus on "place" allows for creative and scholarly engagement with questions of urban representation across the humanities and design disciplines. Harlem and the South Bronx, two places that loom large in local and global imaginaries, are the sites for these explorations. Highly collaborative and interdisciplinary, the seminar traces both historical and contemporary flows, migrations, and movements of people, ideologies, capital, and culture in and out of Harlem and the South Bronx. How do vectors of race, class, gender, and identity shape urban representations of these two communities and their built environments? And how do these representations impact our understandings of history, culture, and national and international ways of belonging?

Drawing extensively on collections of Olin Library, Kroch Rare Books and Papers Library and the Johnson Museum of Art, as well as other Cornell resources, we will focus on various methods of making, collecting, exhibiting, and studying the "urban" in Harlem and the South Bronx over time and space. Our aim is to make clear yet also trouble contemporary understandings of how urban representations are created, destroyed, remade, disseminated, consumed, and finally understood within local and global communities.

Grading:

Seminar Projects and **40%**

Final Collaborative Projects **60%**

Texts:

Websites

Digital Harlem: Everyday Life 1915-1930

(http://129.78.67.200/harlem_black_metropolis/)

Digital Harlem Blog: News and Analysis of the web site “Digital Harlem: Everyday Life, 1915-1930 (<http://digitalharlemblog.wordpress.com/>)

Required Books

- 1) *The Bronx: Columbia History of Urban Life*, Evelyn Gonzalez
- 2) *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History from Dutch Village to Capital of Black America*, Jonathan Gill
- 3) *Touring Historic Harlem*, Andrew Dolkart and Gretchen Sorin,

Recommended Books

Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance Beyond Harlem, Davarian Baldwin

Recycling and the Politics of Urban Waste, Mathew Gandy

Legendary: Inside the House Ballroom Scene, Gerard Gaskin

Harlem Nocturne: Women Artists and Progressive Politics During World War II, Farah Jasmine Griffin

Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Black Renaissance, Carla Kaplan

Gastropolis: Food and New York City, Annie Hauck-Lawson et al

Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora, Shana Redmond

Whatever it Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America, Paul Tough

UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS and ARCHIVAL MATERIAL:

Archival resources and secondary literature:

<https://cornell.box.com/s/m462lu5zbb01vq1oj5r5> (Excel spreadsheet)

<https://cornell.box.com/s/6e9d41pnbatotjz8sb3b> (PDF version)

<https://cornell.box.com/s/hls3oo2cxb7ohsxt6jaz> (Olin map collections scanned)

Johnson Resources:

<https://cornell.box.com/s/3yikyx0lebi3793l9qas> (Excel spreadsheet)

<https://cornell.box.com/s/997377yrqstod1y8fxlf> (PDF version)

<http://library24.library.cornell.edu:8280/luna/servlet/view/group/122>
(Online collection of the images in Luna media group: Home and the World)

WORKSHOPS:

To facilitate the historical, theoretical, and creative explorations of Harlem and the South Bronx, Oya Rieger and Mickey Casad will offer a series of workshops as part of the spring seminar. These workshops will equip you with the interdisciplinary and collaborative skills and methodologies for your research and final projects on urban representation. Digital as well as analog skill sets and methods will be offered and workshop topics include:

Research Tools - Part 1: Introduction to research and analysis tools such as text-mining, topic modeling, geographical mapping, data visualization. Includes both a hands-on workshop and a showcase of sample projects.

Research Tools - Part 2: This session introduces students to open source multimedia publication platforms and authoring & blogging tools to create rich and interactive narratives. For example, Omeka: <http://omeka.org/> & Scalar: <http://scalar.usc.edu/>. Includes both a hands-on workshop and a showcase of sample projects.

Digital Scholarship in the Disciplines: Considering the increased embeddedness of digital and networked media in everyday life, this session

discusses a number of online ethnographic methods to study of the communities and cultures created through computer-mediated social interactions. Also involves a discussion of digital technologies' impact in different areas of professional academic life, with time for open conversation about concerns, opportunities, and resources.

FINAL PROJECTS:

Given the collaborative and interdisciplinary thrusts of the seminar, instead of simply writing papers, you will bring your research, analysis, and methods to bear on projects that involve in-depth explorations of the seminar themes. These will be collaborative projects grounded in humanities research and methods as well as design and creative arts. Projects include, but are not limited to: oral histories; mapping; site-specific installations; online sites; sonic soundscapes; still and video projects; and campus and community symposia or exhibitions.

Course Calendar:

Week 1 January 22 RMC, Olin Library

Part I - Representing Harlem and the South Bronx: The Power of Stories and Places

Noliwe Rooks, Mary Woods, and Faculty Colleagues: Anindita Banerjee (Comparative Literature); Jeremy Foster (Architecture); Bill Gaskins (Art); and Sabine Haenni (Performing and Media Studies)

Readings:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: "The Danger of a Single Story," Ted Talk, posted July 2009

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Part II - Hip Hop Collection, Katharine Reagan and Ben Ortiz, Archivists RMC, Olin Library

Week 2 Project: Unpacking Assumptions Due January 29

Instructions:

At the end of the first class, students will pair up in four groups of three and bring in two representations of their selected locations (either Harlem or the South Bronx). Two groups will present on Harlem and the other two on the South Bronx. One representation should be an icon of the place, and the other a cliché or stereotype. This representation does not have to be visual, it could be auditory, written, haptic, olfactory, etc. The related readings are listed below under Week 2 January 29

Week 2 January 29 RMC, Olin Library

Project: Unpacking Assumptions

Ed Dimendberg, "The Kinetic Icon: Reyner Banham on Los Angeles as Mobile Metropolis" *Journal of Urban History*, 33 (November 2006)

Dolores Hayden, "Contested Terrain," Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space," *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1995)

Hughes and Decarava, *Sweet Flypaper of Life*

Part II - Digital Art Archives – Mickey Casad, Archivist, Rose Goldsen Archives

Week 3 February 5 Olin Library

Digital Research Tools Workshop I (Introduction to research and analysis tools such as text mining, topic modeling, geographical mapping, and data visualization. Includes both a hands-on workshop and showcase of sample projects)

Oya Rieger, University Librarian and Mickey Casad, Archivist, Rose Goldsen Archives

Week 4 February 12 Citrin Center, Johnson Museum

Johnson Museum of Art Collections Stephanie Wiles, Johnson Museum Director and Cathy Klimaszewski, Associate Director and Curator of Education

Week 4 Project: Archives and Museumes, What Goes Where

Week 5 Project: Maps and Itineraries Due February 19

Instructions

Again there will be four groups of three students collaborating on a map and itinerary (as differentiated by de Certeau) of a Harlem or South Bronx community, be it resident or transient. First, a mapping of that community's migration into Harlem or the South Bronx and then an itinerary for a place or built form created or appropriated by that community. Here the Gill and Gonzales texts will be helpful as well as the above readings. Finally, your map and itinerary should make use of materials from the RMC or Johnson Museum, or Kheel Labor Archive. See related readings listed under Week 5 February 19.

Week 5 February 19 Africana Study and Research Center

Part II Visualizing Harlem and the South Bronx through Place and Built Form

Mary Woods and Jeremy Foster

Readings:

Michel De Certeau, map and itinerary, from *Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

Andrew Dolkart and Gretchen Sorin, *Touring Historic Harlem* (New York: New York City Landmarks Conservancy, 1997)

Jonathan Gill, *Harlem* (New York: Grove Press, 2011)

Evelyn Gonzalez, *The Bronx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

Dolores Hayden “Invisible Angelinos,” *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1995)

Craig Wilkins, (W)rapped Space: The Architecture of Hip Hop,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 54 (September 2000)

Mabel Wilson, “Black Bodies, White Cities: Le Corbusier’s Harlem, *Any* 16, (1996)

Week 6 February 26 Africana Study and Research Center

Map and Itinerary of the Seminar: Where We Are at Week 6

Noliwe Rooks and Mary Woods

Week 7 March 5 RMC, Olin Library

Listening to Harlem and the South Bronx: Oral Histories and Sounds of Cultural Identity

Travis Gosa and Oneka LaBennett, Africana Study and Research Center

Readings TBA:

Collections: Hip Hop and Oral History

Week 8 March 12 Africana Study and Research Center

Representing the Present of Harlem and the South Bronx in the News, Africana

Bill Gaskins

Project: Racial Representation and Newspapers

Readings:

Howard Zinn, "Drawing the Color Line,"

Walter Lippman, "The Nature of News"

Tim Wise, Preface to *Color Blind*

Thulani Davis, "Foreword" *For All the World to See*

Weeks 9 and 10 March 19 and 26 Africana Study and Research Center

**First Presentation of Student Projects with Rooks, Woods, Banerjee, Foster,
Gaskins, and Haenni**

**Students may use spring break to do research on site in Harlem and/or the South
Bronx on your own or research in Cornell collections (analog and digital)**

Week 11 April 9 Olin Library

Digital Research Tools II (Introduction to open source multimedia publication platforms and authoring and blogging tools for rich and interactive narratives like Omeka & Scalar. Includes a hands-on workshop and showcase of sample projects)

Oya Rieger and Mickey Casad

Week 12 April 16 Africana Study and Research Center

**Consuming Harlem and the South Bronx I: Cinema, Representation and Afro
Futurism**

Sabine Haenni and Anindita Banerjee

Haenni Readings:

Jacqueline Stewart, Introduction to *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (U of California P, 2005)

Alison Griffiths and James Latham, "Film and Ethnic Identity in Harlem, 1896 – 1915," in Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, eds., *American Movie Audiences: From the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (BFI, 1999)

Paula Massood, "Heaven and Hell in Harlem" in *Making a Promised Land: Harlem in 20th Century Photography and Film* (Rutgers UP, 2013)

Alessandro Jedlowski, "From Nollywood to Nollyworld: Processes of Transnationalization in the Nigerian Video Film Industry," in Matthias Krings and

Onookome Okome, eds., *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry* (Indiana UP, 2013)

Claudia Hoffmann, "Made in America: Urban Immigrant Spaces in Transnational Nollywood Films," also in *Global Nollywood*

Newspaper articles: Eileen Markey, "Where West Africa Goes Straight to Video," *New York Times*, 10 April 2005; Paul Berger, "The Other Tinseltown," *New York Times*, 20 February 2009; Kareem Fahim, "Pirated Films from Nigeria are Seized in Brooklyn," *New York Times*, 4 November 2010; Leslie Goffe, "Nollywood Movies, Counterfeiters Beware! Law enforcement authorities in New York are clamping down on 'criminals' who pirate Nollywood movies and rob Nigerian filmmakers of what would have been millions of dollars of hard-earned income," *New African* Feb. 2011: 70+; Kirk Semple, "Of Nigeria, but Casting a Wider Net," *New York Times*, 23 September 2012

Recommended:

Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," *New German Critique* 3 (Autumn 1974): 49-55.

Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, Introduction to *Public Sphere and Experience*

Houston A. Baker, Jr. "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere," in Black Public Sphere Collective, ed., *The Black Public Sphere* (U of Chicago P, 1995), 7-37.

Jacqueline Stewart, "Negroes Laughing at Themselves"? Black Spectatorship and the Performance of Urban Modernity," in *Migrating to the Movies*, 93-113.

Banerjee Readings TBA:

Collections: (NYSCA Archives)

Week 13 April 23 Africana Study and Research Center

Consuming Harlem and the South Bronx II: Fashion and Foodways

Noliwe Rooks and Mary Woods

Readings:

Annie Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch, *Gastropolis: Food and New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008)

Marcus Samuelsson with Veronica Chambers, *Yes, Chef: A Memoir* (New York: Random House 2013)

Shane and Graham White, "Stylin'"
Film Clips : *Paris Is Burning*

Week 14 April 30, Africana Study and Research Center

Sustaining Harlem and the South Bronx: Race, Urban Space and Environmental Justice

Noliwe Rooks

Readings:

Mathew Gandy, "Between Borinquen and the Barrio," in *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*, MIT Press, 2003

Robert Bullard, "Overview and Legacy of Early Struggles, in *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*, Sierra Club Books, 1994

Project: This is another group project where four groups of three students will work together to offer a contemporary redesign of the 1972 Cornell University Extension Food Justice Collective from materials in RMC.

Week 15 May 6 Africana Study and Research Center

Summing Up the Semester

Noliwe Rooks and Mary Woods

**Presentation of Final Projects on Assigned Exam Date for Class TBA
with Noliwe Rooks, Mary Woods, Anindita Banerjee, Jeremy Foster, Bill Gaskins,
and Sabine Haenni**

OFFICE HOURS

NOLIWE ROOKS: Wednesday 1-3 or by appointment (207 Africana)

**MARY WOODS: TUESDAYS 1-2; WEDNESDAYS 2-3 (please use sheet on my
office door, 235G E. Sibley to sign up) or by appointment
Phone: 607-255-6416; Email: <mnw5@cornell.edu>**