

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2021

HONORS 242: BEYONCÉ, MADONNA, NINA SIMONE

Instructor Contact Information:

Ian Barnard, Ph.D.

Zoom Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays by appointment

Email Office Hours: barnard@chapman.edu

Course Format:

This is an online course. I know that some of you are disappointed and would prefer to meet in person (I would, too!), but I believe that an online format is the safest and most effective way for us to conduct the class.

We will meet via Zoom each Monday at 1 p.m. California time to check in and discuss course materials and assignments, watch videos, and, occasionally, to do in-class writing. Zoom fatigue is real, so we will only meet once a week on Zoom! Most of the course work will be completed on Canvas, some during the assigned class time on Mondays and Wednesdays, some at your own pace during the course of the week. It's important to work on the self-paced assignments throughout the week, and not to try to complete them right before they are due! If you are not able to participate in our live Zoom discussions, please let me know so that I can give you an alternate assignment.

I hold Zoom office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays. Email me if you'd like to chat, and we can set up an appointment.

Zoom Protocol:

If possible, please turn your camera on—the purpose of Zoom discussions is to create a sense of class community; this is facilitated if we are able to see you! If we get tired of the cameras, we may decide to turn them off later in the semester...

Please mute yourself when you are not speaking so that we reduce sound distractions to a minimum.

Use the “raise hand” icon if you'd like to speak or ask a question, and lower your hand after you have spoken so that I can keep track of those who are still waiting to speak; if you'd like to write a comment or question, feel free to use the chat box.

I'd like everyone to have an opportunity to participate in each Zoom discussion; if you've already spoken, I may wait for others to speak before calling on you again—I hope you will understand and won't be offended!

Land Acknowledgment:

Although this is an online course, we (students and faculty) are connected to the physical campus of Chapman University in the city of Orange, California. [Click here](#) to find out more about the original inhabitants of this land.

Catalog Course Description:

Prerequisite, acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. In a New York Times conversation following Beyoncé's explosive 2016 Superbowl performance, critic Wesley Morris suggested that Beyoncé "lands somewhere between" Madonna and Nina Simone. This course brings these three artists from different generations together, situating their work historically, within contemporary critical discussions around race/gender/sexuality and cultural appropriation, and in dialogue with one another. The course offers a cultural studies-based examination of the work of the three artists; our method is not primarily sociological or biographical, though relevant biographical and sociological evidence may inform our analysis. We listen to the music of the three artists, watch their music videos, and read scholarship in critical race studies and feminist cultural criticism. Students develop collaborative oral presentations on each of the three artists and a final critical or creative mashup or disentangling of Beyoncé/Madonna/Nina Simone. Discussion-based seminar. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course:

you will

understand the historical, political, and cultural contexts that inform the work of Beyoncé, Madonna, and Nina Simone, in keeping with Honors Program Learning Outcome #1's call for developing a starting point for intellectual exploration (see below)

intervene in scholarship in critical race studies and feminist cultural studies, orally, in writing, and using New Media, in keeping with Honors Program Learning Outcome #4's emphasis on the development of effective communication skills (see below)

develop nuanced critical and creative interdisciplinary analyses of a variety of cultural artifacts through the application of terminology, perspectives, and texts from the fields of critical race studies and feminist cultural studies, in keeping with Honors Program Learning Outcome #2's focus on analysis and synthesis and Honors Program Learning Outcome #3's attention to the application of interdisciplinary understandings (see below)

Honors Program Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have

Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;

Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);

Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;

Developed effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

GE Learning Outcomes:

Artistic Inquiry: Students compose critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a baccalaureate/pre-professional level.

Social Inquiry: Provides students an opportunity to explore processes by which human beings develop social and/or historical perspectives.

Required Texts:

Books (digital or hard copies are ok):

Barcella, Laura, ed. *Madonna and Me: Women Writers on the Queen of Pop*.

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

Ward, Jesmyn, ed. *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race*.

Films:

Garbus, Liz, dir. *What Happened, Miss Simone?* (available on Netflix).

Lee, Spike, dir. *When the Levees Broke* (available on Swank).

More films may be added.

Your colleagues and I will post additional articles on Canvas for you to read. You should also expect to conduct outside research for your oral presentations and final project. In addition, we'll be watching music videos, and listening to music--most of this material is available for free online, but you may choose to purchase music and music videos.

Additional Resources:

Films related to Madonna unit:

Evita (Amazon)

Madonna and the Breakfast Club (Amazon)

Truth or Dare (Amazon)

Strike a Pose (tubitv.com)

bell hooks: Cultural Criticism and Transformation (Kanopy)

Paris is Burning (iTunes)

Books related to Madonna unit:

Digital Music Videos (Shaviro)

Encyclopedia Madonnica 20: Madonna From A to Z (Rettenmund)

The Madonna Companion: Two Decades of Commentary (edited by Benson and Metz)

Madonnarama: Essays on Sex and Popular Culture (edited by Frank and Smith)

Films related to Beyoncé unit:

Say Her Name (Kanopy)

Whose Streets? (Amazon)

Daughters of the Dust (Amazon)

What You Gonna do When The World's on Fire? (Amazon)

Lemonade

Books related to Beyoncé unit:

Aint I a Diva?: Beyoncé and the Power of Pop Culture Pedagogy (Allred)

The Beyoncé Effect: Essays on Sexuality, Race and Feminism (edited by Trier-Bieniek)

Beyoncé in Formation: Remixing Black Feminism (Tinsley)

From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation (Taylor)

The Lemonade Reader: Beyoncé, Black Feminism and Spirituality (edited by Brooks and Martin)

Grade Distribution:

Collaborative Presentation on Nina Simone.....	20%
Collaborative Presentation on Madonna.....	20%
Collaborative Presentation on Beyoncé.....	20%
Final Project: Mash-Up.....	30%
Other Assignments.....	10%

Due to the highly interactive nature of this course and the emphasis on seminar-style discussions, I expect you to participate in all Zoom discussions. Chapman University "recommends as a minimal policy that students who are absent 20 percent of the course should be failed" (university catalog), but I am allowing for extra flexibility this semester due to the many COVID-related challenges we are all facing. If you are not able to participate in a Zoom discussion, please let me know ahead of time so that I can give you an alternate assignment. You may complete up to four alternate assignments without any grade penalty. If you miss any Zoom discussion without completing the alternate assignment or if you miss more than four Zoom discussions, you will lose points in your final course grade.

Course Requirements:

Collaborative Oral Presentations: The three presentations give you an opportunity to research Beyoncé, Madonna, and Nina Simone in depth and to offer your own analysis of the artists and their work. You must reference at least one outside scholarly source during each of your three presentations. In addition, you may reference class readings and films and other sources. We'll discuss effective ways of engaging with secondary sources during our Zoom meetings. All presentations will be followed by questions from the class. Your presentation should last no longer than 15 minutes. You'll work with your partner(s) (via Zoom, email, text message, phone, Google docs, etc.) to create your presentation using Zoom. You'll record a Zoom session with your partner(s), and upload your recording to Canvas. You can use the screen share function on Zoom to show PowerPoint slides, video clips, images, websites, etc. Please consult with me if you'd like to use a different technology for your presentation. My evaluation of your presentations will be based on the quality of your research and analysis, how well you present your ideas, your ability to answer questions, how well your group members work together, and your adherence to the time limit. If you use PowerPoint or Prezi, do not read your slides! All group members will earn the same grade unless a group member fails to make a substantial contribution to the presentation. You are welcome to meet with me before the date of your presentation to discuss your presentation plans.

Collaborative Oral Presentation on Nina Simone: With one or two colleagues you will create an oral presentation on one political Nina Simone song of your choice and post your presentation on Canvas. I will provide a list of suggested songs. You should research your song and listen to multiple recordings of your song before deciding which version to use. For your presentation, you'll play your chosen song, give us pertinent background information about the song (e.g.,

composer, date of the recording you have chosen), discuss its historical and political contexts and references, offer your own analysis of the song, and say why you find the song interesting/significant/problematic.

Collaborative Oral Presentation on Madonna: With one or two colleagues you will create an oral presentation on one Madonna music video (excluding the music videos we analyze in class) and post your presentation on Canvas. I will provide a list of suggested music videos. You should show your chosen video and offer your own analysis of the video. Your analysis could include discussion of camerawork, editing, lyrics, music, singing, costumes, and ideas around cultural appropriation, gender, sexuality, race, and class, as well as other controversies the video has stoked.

Collaborative Oral Presentation on Beyoncé: With one or two colleagues you will create an oral presentation on one Beyoncé "event" and post your presentation on Canvas. I will provide a list of examples of Beyoncé events. You should explain your chosen event to the class, show media excerpts if applicable, and offer your own analysis of it, including a discussion of what you think the broader cultural significance is of your event.

Final Project: Mash-Up: You have the option of developing a collaborative or individual critical or creative final project. Your mash-up should bring together Beyoncé, Madonna, and Nina Simone to make connections among the three artists or point out differences among them (or both?). You may create your mash-up in any form/genre/medium (e.g., video, podcast, performance, essay, story, website, tabloid, zine). You'll include a brief (one paragraph) introduction to your project explaining what you have done and your goal for the project. You'll have an individual conference with me to discuss a draft of your mash-up before you post the final version (or a link to it) on Canvas.

Other Assignments: These include responses to presentations, a draft of your Final Project, a mid-semester course evaluation, responses to readings and to colleagues' Canvas discussion posts, your conference, and in-class activities. I grade these assignments on a credit/no credit basis. In class we will discuss the criteria for earning credit for these assignments. You cannot make up a missed in-class assignment.

Course Policies:

Citation of Sources: Plagiarism is a contested and context-specific topic. We will discuss effective ways of using sources and issues around plagiarism in class. [Click here to read Chapman University's policy on academic integrity.](#)

Email Protocol: I acknowledge all email messages within 48 hours. If you email me but don't get a response, I haven't received your email. Feel free to email me concerning any questions you have about the course or about your work. Do not email your work to me for feedback; I'd be happy to discuss your work with you via Zoom. It's important to practice composing professional emails: be sure that your emails to me include appropriate subject lines, salutations, and closes.

Class Dynamics: Honors seminars are discussion-oriented. I do not spend much time lecturing and expect you to participate vigorously in the Zoom discussions around which the course is organized. We all teach and learn in this course--I do not believe in a one-way transmission of “knowledge” from instructor to students. I don’t have all the answers, and I look forward to learning as much as teaching in this course. You should direct your questions and comments to your colleagues as much as to me. I encourage you to talk during our Zoom discussions and to encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Diversity: Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students, and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy. [Click here to read Chapman University's Statement on Diversity.](#)

Students With Disabilities: Please contact me early in the semester if you have a documented disability, so that we can discuss what accommodations, if any, I might make to help you to succeed in this class. [Click here to read Chapman University's Policy Statement for Assisting Students with Disabilities.](#)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

2/1/21

Zoom Discussion at 1 p.m.: introduction to the course; in-class reading/video and discussion; introduction to Nina Simone

Homework Assignments: post your Flipgrid video introduction on Canvas by 2 p.m. on 2/3; sign up for presentations by 2 p.m. on 2/3; listen to Nina Simone songs before the next Zoom discussion; start reading Anthem

Unit 1: Nina Simone

2/8/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss introduction videos, Nina Simone songs, and first presentation; review presentation groups; introduce Anthem and discuss reading and annotation strategies

Homework Assignments: read the Introduction and Chapters 1-3 from Anthem; email me your presentation preferences by 2 p.m. on 2/10; Canvas discussion post #1 due by 12 p.m. on 2/15

2/15/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading and Canvas discussion posts; review Nina Simone presentations and discuss finding and using scholarly sources

Homework Assignments: read Chapters 4-6 and Conclusion from Anthem; watch What Happened, Miss Simone? (on Netflix); respond to at least two colleagues' Canvas discussion post #1 by 12 p.m. on 2/22

2/22/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss film, reading, and responses to Canvas discussion posts

Homework Assignments: post your Nina Simone presentation on Canvas by 2 p.m. on 2/24; watch colleagues' presentations and respond to each presentation with a comment or question by 12 p.m. on 3/1

3/1/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss presentations and responses; introduction to Madonna

Homework Assignments: watch Madonna videos and Nightline interview; read articles about Madonna on Canvas; respond to the questions and comments about your Nina Simone presentation by 12 p.m. on 3/8

Unit 2: Madonna

3/8/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss Madonna music videos, interview, and reading; discuss second presentation

Homework Assignments: read Foreword, Introduction, Track 1, and Track 2 from Madonna and Me; email me your presentations preferences by 2 p.m. on 3/10; Canvas discussion post #2 due by 12 p.m. on 3/15

3/15/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading and Canvas discussion posts; review Madonna presentations and finding and using scholarly sources; watch and discuss "American Life"

Homework Assignments: complete your mid-semester feedback on the course by 2 p.m. on 3/17; read any ten essays from Tracks 3-6 and Bonus Tracks from Madonna and Me; respond to at

least two colleagues' Canvas discussion post #2 by 12 p.m. on 3/29; read Madonna's Sex book or watch a Madonna film from the list above

SPRING BREAK

3/29/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading, responses to Canvas discussion posts, and mid-semester course feedback; discuss Madonna films or Madonna's Sex book

Homework Assignments: post your Madonna presentation on Canvas by 2 p.m. on 3/31; watch colleagues' presentations and respond to each presentation with a comment or question by 12 p.m. on 4/5

4/5/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss presentations and responses; introduction to Beyoncé; watch "Hymn for the Weekend" and discuss cultural appropriation

Homework Assignments: respond to the questions and comments about your Madonna presentation by 12 p.m. on 4/12; read articles about Beyoncé on Canvas; watch When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (on Swank; watch all four acts)

Unit 3: Beyoncé

4/12/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading, film, "Formation" music video, and third presentation

Homework Assignments: read selections from The Fire This Time; email me your presentations preferences by 2 p.m. on 4/14; Canvas discussion post #3 due by 12 p.m. on 4/19

4/19/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading, Canvas discussion posts, and final project; review Beyoncé presentations

Homework Assignments: read selections from The Fire This Time; respond to at least two colleagues' Canvas discussion post #3 by 12 p.m. on 4/26; watch "Are You Still a Slave?"

4/26/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss reading, "Are You Still a Slave?," and responses to Canvas discussion posts

Homework Assignments: post your Beyoncé presentation on Canvas by 2 p.m. on 4/28; watch colleagues' presentations and respond to each presentation with a comment or question by 12 p.m. on 5/3; sign up for your conference by 12 p.m. on 5/3

5/3/21

Zoom Discussion: discuss presentations, responses, final project, and conference protocol; course debrief; students evaluations of the course

Homework Assignments: post a draft of your final project on Canvas by 12 p.m. on 5/9; respond to the questions and comments about your Beyoncé presentation by 12 p.m. on 5/10

5/10/21-5/14/21

Conferences

Homework Assignment: post your revised final project on Canvas by 1 p.m. on 5/17