

**COMM 494: Communication Research Practicum**  
**Spring 2019 – 2 units**

**Breakin' 'n' Enterin: Early Los Angeles Hip Hop & the Archive**

Meeting Time: TBD  
Prof. Robeson Taj Frazier  
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**Texts**

- Brian Cross, *It's Not About a Salary: Rap, Race, and Resistance in Los Angeles*
- Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation*

**Course Description**

In this course you will take part in a research investigation that examines early Los Angeles Hip Hop culture. This research will contribute to an evolving research project and exhibition that explores histories of Hip Hop music and culture in Los Angeles and the surrounding areas during the early 1980s to mid 1990s, with a specific focus on the spaces, organizations, people and intergenerational relationships that helped nurture early Los Angeles Hip Hop culture. Students who participate will be expected to conduct archival & historical research, participate in the facilitation of interviews and oral histories, visit art and historical exhibitions, and contribute ideas about what an exhibition about early Los Angeles Hip Hop should include and entail. In this course, students will be provided opportunities to interface with people (journalists, media professionals, hip hop artists and producers, hip hop practitioners, hip hop studies scholars, historians and archivists) that have participated and contributed to Los Angeles Hip Hop culture, as well as who have helped to document and cover it in media, academia, entertainment and popular culture.

This research course will ultimately offer students practical skills in conducting archival and qualitative communication research. The course will give you experience in every phase of conducting archival and qualitative research, including formulating proper research questions, finding relevant theoretic and historical research, formulating hypotheses, developing an appropriate research method, conducting and gathering data, analyzing findings, and writing a research report. All of you will work as members of a research team under my direction.

**Format of the Course**

We will meet periodically throughout the semester to discuss central themes, to lay out research responsibilities, to share research findings, and to meet with different stakeholders in the project. This is not a lecture class. Everything we cover will be done

as a research team. What we cover on a specific date depends upon what has to be done. I will send you an agenda each month that relays what tasks we'll be addressing and your assignment for the coming weeks. Periodically you will have to provide an update of your work, new research questions and themes, and new insights (more information to come). Moreover, in these updates you'll note what you've done in connection with the study and how much time you've spent. This will aid me in assessing the quantity and quality of your work based on criteria described below.

### **Grading**

Your grade will be based on three factors:

- 1) Attendance (15 percent)
- 2) Contribution to the research project (60 percent)
- 3) Team and Individual presentations (25 percent)

My evaluation of your contribution to the research project will also be based on the following criteria:

1. **Quality of research and analysis**
3. **Time Contributions:** Gathered journal articles and books, collected data, interviews
4. **Intellectual Contributions:** Proposed projects, suggested methods and procedures, analyses, interpreted prior research, analyzed research findings, wrote/edited final research findings
5. **Leadership:** Suggested areas of focus, distribution of assignments, methods of coordinating work, motivated team members, handled conflict.
6. **Team Player:** Was supportive, positive, and cooperative.
7. **Overall Contributions**