



AFRAM 404 BLACK SOUND STUDIES & THE ARCHIVES

Sonnet Retman

SLN: 10185

T-TH 3:30-5:20

5 CREDITS VLPA/DIV



This course explores Black sound and the archive. If Black people's lived experiences in the transatlantic diaspora have been violently distorted and suppressed--intentionally forgotten--in official archives and histories, how might we listen for an unofficial archive of Black sound and what might we hear if we listen carefully? What complex histories, experiences, memories and feelings might such an archive make audible? What listening practices, what ethics of care, might such an archive demand? How might Black sonic studies "sound" the relationship of Blackness with modernity?

To pursue these questions, we will focus on various aspects of Black sound, including voice, soundscapes, audio technologies, music making, performance repertoires and modes of listening. We will engage with a range of musical genres, including blues, jazz, spirituals, R & B, soul, rock, hip hop, reggae, dub and Afro-Cuban music, and also read recent works in critical sound studies alongside essays, reviews, poetry, fiction, liner notes and other sonic texts. We will attend to the ways that music travels and creates new sonic intimacies, across historical events, social movements, and developments in sound technology. We will account for the ways in which performers, listeners, and critics have pushed against the codification and commodification of aural Blackness to imagine new politics and listening practices and alternative ways of being and belonging.