

**ENGL 3347 - 002**

**“The Life and Times of S. Carter”**

**Spring 2018**

**Class Meetings:** MW, 253 College of Business (COBA), 1:00 – 2:20 PM

Instructor: Dr. Kenton Rambsy **Office Number:** 413 Carlisle

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**Office Hours:**

Mon & Wed 10:00 - Noon

And, by appointment

**Course Description:** This semester, we will analyze Jay Z’s 2017 *4:44* album and place it in a broad African American literary continuum of autobiographical and semi-autobiographical works. In this course, we will use text-mining software to quantify linguistic and thematic trends between Jay Z’s albums and classic literary texts by writers such as Frederick Douglass, James Weldon Johnson, Ralph Ellison, Malcolm X, and others. We will compile quantitative and qualitative datasets on Jay Z in order to produce thematic data visualizations, literary timelines, and a list of key terms, pinpointing intellectual and cultural components of rap music.

**In this course, students will cultivate skills in order to:**

* Explain and analyze how context shapes the composition, reception and interpretation of texts.
* Develop a working knowledge of black male authored autobiographical and semi-autobiographical texts
* Use text mining, content management, and data visualization software in humanities research
* Use digital medium to present content to wide and diverse audiences

**Grading Criteria**

**30% — Daily Grade**

* Because this is a discussion course that covers topics in African American literary history and digital humanities, class attendance is mandatory to fully master concepts.

**35% — Quizzes and Writing Assignments**

* Every week, there will be at least two quizzes given at the beginning of each class. The 10 – 20 question quizzes will cover basic information from the day’s reading such as author biographical information and story content. For the writing assignments, you will compose one paragraph that responds to a specific prompt.

**35% — Final Project**

* For the final project, you will complete an individual portion of a group project. See the next page for descriptions for each group.

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**Total 100%**



**Reading Schedule**

**Week 1: Why Jay Z?**

Jan. 17 - First day – Course Introduction

* Reading:
  + Kenton Rambsy, *#TheJayZMixtape*
    - <https://iopn.library.illinois.edu/scalar/the-jay-z-mixtape/index>

**Week 2: The Jay-Z Dataset**

Jan. 22 - The Jay Z Dataset and Microsoft Excel (How to Use Excel)

* **Reading:** 
  + Jay Z, *Decoded*, 2010
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Decoded-Jay-Z/dp/0812981154> (Pages 3-7)

Jan. 24 - Data Visualizations (How to Make charts using Excel)

* **Reading:** 
  + Jay Z, *Decoded*, 2010
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Decoded-Jay-Z/dp/0812981154> (Pages 10 - 13)

**Week 3: Who is Jay Z?**

Jan. 29: The Life and Times of S. Carter

* **Reading:**
  + Frederick Douglass, The *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 1845
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Narrative-Life-Frederick-Douglass/dp/0486284999> (Pages 1- 3)
* **Songs:**
  + Moment of Clarity (*The Black Album,* 03)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-moment-of-clarity-lyrics>
  + “December 4th” (*The Black Album*, 03)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-december-4th-lyrics>

Jan. 31 – The King of New York

* **Reading:**
  + Hau Nguyen, “The Ruler’s Back: A History Of Rappers Who Were King Of New York”
* <http://www.stopthebreaks.com/hip-hop-features/history-of-rappers-who-were-king-of-new-york/>
* **Songs:**
  + “Brooklyn’s Finest” ft. The Notorious BIG (*Reasonable Doubt*, 96)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-brooklyns-finest-lyrics>
  + “A Dream” ft. The Notorious BIG & Faith Evans (*The Blueprint 2*, 02)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-a-dream-lyrics>

**Week 4: Capitalism and Jay-Z**

Feb. 5 - The Businessman Jay Z

* **Reading:** 
  + Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery,* 1901
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Up-Slavery-Dover-Thrift-Editions/dp/0486287386> (Pages 1-4)
* **Songs:**
  + “Can’t Knock The Hustle” (*Reasonable Doubt*, 96)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-cant-knock-the-hustle-lyrics>
  + “Dead Presidents II” (*Reasonable Doubt*, 96)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-dead-presidents-ii-lyrics>

Feb. 7 – Sampling American History

* **Reading:**
  + Kenton Rambsy, *#TheSamples: Visualizing Jay-Z’s Samples*
    - <https://iopn.library.illinois.edu/scalar/the-jay-z-mixtape/thejayzmixtape-the-samples-1?path=thejayzmixtape-the-samples-1>
* **Songs:** 
  + “Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem)” (*Vol. 2 Hard Knock Life*, 98)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-hard-knock-life-ghetto-anthem-lyrics>
  + “IZZO (H.O.V.A.)” (*The Blueprint*, 01)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-izzo-hova-lyrics>

**Week 5: Jay Z in Love**

Feb. 12 – Bonnie & Clyde

* Reading:
  + James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, 1912
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Autobiography-Ex-Colored-Dover-Thrift-Editions/dp/048628512X> (Pages 1-4)
* Songs:
  + “’03 Bonnie &Clyde” ft. Beyonce (*The Blueprint 2*, 02)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-03-bonnie-and-clyde-lyrics>
  + “On the Run” ft. Beyonce (*Magna Carta, Holy Grail*, 13)
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-part-ii-on-the-run-lyrics>

Feb. 14 – Crossover Appeal

* Reading:
  + Constance Grady, “How Jay-Z and Beyoncé use music to control the narrative around their marriage”
    - <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/7/7/15914660/jay-z-beyonce-444-marriage>
* Songs:
  + “Crazy In Love” (*Dangerously In Love*, 03, Beyoncé)
    - <https://genius.com/Beyonce-crazy-in-love-lyrics>
  + “Drunk In Love” (*Beyoncé*, 13, Beyoncé)
    - <https://genius.com/Beyonce-drunk-in-love-lyrics>

**Week 6: 4:44 Part I**

Feb. 19 4:44 Introduction

* Readings:
* “Jay-Z Discusses Rap, Marriage and Being a Black Man in Trump's America”
* <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/29/t-magazine/jay-z-dean-baquet-interview.html>

Feb. 21 – songs 1 & 2

* **Readings:** 
  + Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Invisible-Man-Ralph-Ellison/dp/0679732764> (Pages 1 -8)
* **Songs:** 
  + “Kill Jay Z”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-kill-jay-z-lyrics>
  + “The Story of O.J.”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-the-story-of-oj-lyrics>

**Week 7: 4:44 Part II**

Feb. 26 - tracks 3 & 4

* **Readings:**
  + Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1965
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Autobiography-Malcolm-Told-Alex-Haley/dp/0345350685> (Pages 1-6)
* **Songs:**
  + “Smile”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-smile-lyrics>
  + “Caught Their Eyes”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-caught-their-eyes-lyrics>

Feb. 28 - tracks 5 & 6

* **Reading:** 
  + Elahe Izadi, “Breaking down Jay-Z’s ‘Family Feud,’ the star-studded music video featuring Beyoncé”
    - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2018/01/01/breaking-down-jay-zs-family-feud-the-star-studded-music-video-featuring-beyonce/?utm_term=.039be7f251ce>
* **Songs:**
  + “4:44”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-4-44-lyrics>
  + “Family Feud”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-family-feud-lyrics>

**Week 8: 4:44 Part III**

Mar. 5 - tracks 7 & 8

* **Reading:**
  + Barack Obama, *Dreams From My Father*, 1995
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Dreams-My-Father-Story-Inheritance/dp/1400082773> (Pages 1-8)
* **Songs:**
  + “Bam”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-bam-lyrics>
  + “Moonlight”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-moonlight-lyrics>

Mar. 7 - tracks 9 & 10

* **Songs:**
  + “Marcy Me”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-marcy-me-lyrics>
  + “Legacy”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-legacy-lyrics>

**Week 9: Spring Break**

*Mar. 12 - Spring Break*

*Mar. 14 - Spring Break*

**Week 10: Race & Racism**

Mar. 19 Race and Racism

* Readings:
  + W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 1903
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Souls-Black-Dover-Thrift-Editions/dp/0486280411> (Pages 1 - 4)
* Songs:
  + “Somewhereinamerica”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-somewhereinamerica-lyrics>
  + “Oceans”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-oceans-lyrics>

Mar. 21 Institutional Racism

* Reading:
  + Jay-Z, “The Criminal Justice System Stalks Black People Like Meek Mill”
    - <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/17/opinion/jay-z-meek-mill-probation.html>
* Song:
  + “99 Problems”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-99-problems-lyrics>

**Week 11: The Controversy of the Art Form**

Mar. 26 – Jay Z and Women

* Readings:
  + Mythili Sampathkumar, “Jay-Z says America is 'way more sexist than racist' during speech to young girl mid-concert”
    - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jay-z-concert-us-sexist-racist-speech-girl-president-video-a8070851.html>
* Songs:
  + “Girls, Girls, Girls”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-girls-girls-girls-lyrics>
  + “Big Pimpin”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-big-pimpin-lyrics>

Mar. 28 – Wordplay

* Song:
  + “22 twos”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-22-twos-lyrics>
  + “D’Evils”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-devils-lyrics>

**Week 12: The Emotions of Jay-Z**

Apr. 2 – Emotion

* Songs:
  + “Regrets”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-regrets-lyrics>
  + “Song Cry”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-song-cry-lyrics>
  + “Lost One”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-lost-one-lyrics>

Apr. 4 - CLA

**Week 13: Encore**

Apr. 9 – Persona Rapping

* Songs:
  + “I Know”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-i-know-lyrics>
  + “American Dreamin’”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-american-dreamin-lyrics>

Apr. 11 – “Public Service Announcement”

* Song:
  + “Public Service Announcement”
    - <https://genius.com/Jay-z-public-service-announcement-lyrics>

**Final Projects**

Apr. 16 – Group work on Final Project

Apr. 18 –Group work on Final Project

Apr. 23 –Group work on Final Project

Apr. 25 –Group work on Final Project

Apr. 30 –Group work on Final Project

May 2 –Final Presentation

**Classroom Policies**

**Civility Statement:** I enjoy student ideas and welcome them! Comments, questions, and opinions about the topics covered in class are encouraged, but please be mindful to express yourself using respectful and appropriate language. We would like to maintain a constructive learning environment. Therefore, no one is permitted to make offensive, intimidating, or malicious comments or behave in a disruptive manner. Additionally, the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices will not be tolerated. Thank you in advance for adhering to the policy.

**Attendance Policy:** Because this course is a discussion course and the work we do in the class is designed to help you understand the reading and improve your writing, you must attend class.

To be excused, you must present sufficient documentation. Approved forms of documentation include medical excuses, police records, and documentation of funeral attendance. Of course, you are excused from class for religious holidays. If you are a member of a group that travels on behalf of the University (intramural teams are non-applicable), you must provide a letter from your coach or director along with a schedule of the classes you will miss due to travel.

**Late Work:** In the event that you are absent, you are STILL RESPONSIBLE for turning in all work by the dates listed on the syllabus. Unless we have made other plans together, in advance of the absence or missed assignment, I will not accept late work, so I encourage you to make arrangements with a classmate to submit any assignments if you will be absent.

**University Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations: UT** Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).** Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*. For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR)**: Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In ***Quick Hits*** sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information.