Learning objectives:

- Develop critical understanding of race and gender in specific contexts and comparatively
- Explore the dynamics of music, dance and public performance
- Introduce key concepts and theories of cultural analysis
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct primary and secondary research
- Enhance student abilities to express ideas orally and in writing.
- Have fun!

Carnivals – raucous, noisy street parades, featuring elaborately costumed marchers and live (usually) music – are found throughout the Afro-Atlantic world, from West African masquerade traditions to the well-known (and highly commercialized) Brazilian Carnival and New Orleans’ famous (or infamous) Mardi Gras. Carnivals, which usually last for several days, are often celebrated as symbols of national, regional or local identity (prior to Hurricane Katrina, for example, New Orleans was synonymous in most people’s mind’s with Mardi Gras.). Governments sometimes support or sponsor carnivals to promote a particular vision of national (or regional) culture and enhance national unity. Alternately, they are sometimes dismissed as nothing more than crassly commercial entertainment, nothing more than “bread and circuses” thrown out by governments or corporations to distract people’s attention from “real” issues (like poverty and corruption), and the elaborate pageantry is decried as a water-down or debased version of “authentic” culture. From a different perspective, they have been criticized as simply opportunities for people to engage in all sorts of bacchanalian excess – usually drunkenness and debauchery. At the same time, others argue that carnivals provide opportunities for those who are usually silenced or marginalized – particularly racial and ethnic minorities – to poke fun at, or even criticize, those in power.

This course will look at carnivals as complex cultural performances that reflect larger social realities – in particular, the interplay of race, gender, social class, and national identity. We will draw upon anthropological and other cultural theories about carnivals – in particular, Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the “carnivalesque”. While our study will be broadly comparative – we will look at Haiti, Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and New Orleans – we will pay close attention to the specific historical circumstances that shaped Carnival traditions in each of these areas.

We will look at the historic conditions in which these cultural forms evolved, beginning with the medieval European pre-Lenten festivals and West African masquerades, through the Middle Passage and continuing through plantation slavery, colonialism and national independence. Throughout, we will pay close attention to how different social actors (colonial regimes, the police, anthropologists and performers) have viewed these racialized performances. We will examine how popular attitudes towards African-derived music and religion - which are often associated with unruliness and loose morals – reflect larger national anxieties about race, class and sexuality.

Books:
 ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Weekly reading response blog entry 260
Short essays 200 points (2 essays, 100 pts. each)
Research paper 350 points
  Preliminary proposal 20 pts
  Revised proposal 50 pts
  Draft paper 50 pts
  Peer review 30 pts
  Final paper 200 pts
Fieldwork assignment 190 points

Total 1,000 points

A- to A+ 900-1000  C- to C+  700-799
B- to B+ 800-899  D- to D+  600-699

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Blog
Each student will post a blog entry on the assigned reading once a week. Blog entries should be about 200-250 words in length and should demonstrate that you have done the reading (i.e. summarize a few key points). They should also include critical comments or discussion points for class discussion. You are welcome to respond to other students’ entries but you must include your own summary and comments. These are to be posted to the MyCourses discussion board by noon on Thursday and they must focus on the readings assigned for THAT day. These should be written in complete sentences with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation (these are not Facebook updates). No credit given for late submissions. Each entry is worth 20 points.

Short essays
There are two short essays (4-5 pages) that ask you to analyze specific themes from readings and class discussions. They are due on the dates listed on the syllabus.

Field research or film assignment
Since there is no substitute for firsthand experience, all students will complete a hands-on assignment. You will attend a parade, festival or other carnivalistic activity and analyze it using some of the theoretical concepts introduced in this class. Alternately, you will write an analysis of a film (from a list provided by the instructor) that depicts carnivalistic festivities. The paper will be 4-5 pages long.

Research paper
All students will conduct independent research and write an 11-12 page research paper. The topics CANNOT duplicate exactly what we are covering in class. It must address some of the central themes of this class: the relationship between race/ethnicity, gender and national identity, public space, music and dance as national symbols, the commercialization of popular culture. You can look at “black”-identified Carnival celebrations in some of the many countries we are not discussing in this class (Jamaica, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, to name a few examples). You can do a cross-cultural comparison of two or more Carnival traditions around a specific theme (such as the relationship between black and indigenous cultures). Or you can go much more in-depth on issues like gender and sexuality in a specific cultural form or cross-culturally (for example, you can analyze song lyrics, the social role of women as musicians and singers within specific musical genres, or the relationship between sacred and secular performances). One option is to do a mini-field research project involving participant observation and interviews.
The project is structured so that you will not be able to “let it slide” and throw something together in the last two weeks of the semester. Written assignments are due at several stages throughout the project (proposal, revised proposal, bibliography) and all of these will count towards your grade on the project. **No final paper will be accepted without these materials.**

**Class format and expectations**

This class will involve a combination of lecture, discussion and student presentations. You are expected to do the assigned reading BEFORE coming to class (that is, if something is on the syllabus under the date September 10, that means that when you come to class on September 10, you should have done the reading!!!!). You will get the most out of this class if you come to class prepared. The readings are meant to provide you with some background or descriptive material about each of these cultural practices, so that you can get more out of my presentations, which will often cover material that is NOT in the reading. Please bring questions, comments, and ideas to class, and feel free to interrupt me (politely) if I say something that isn’t clear. Because we are also exploring music and performance, there are additionally “listening” and “viewing” assignments (usually YouTube videos that I have uploaded onto MyCourses).

**Papers: writing and deadlines**

I will give more specific guidelines for the various assignments. In all cases, your writing should be clear, elegant and grammatically correct. Papers should be double spaced using 12 point type, with 1-inch margins. (these are the default settings on Microsoft Word). Do not use larger type or big margins. Put your name and the paper title on a cover sheet and DO NOT use headers or footers with the paper title or your name (they take up space and are unnecessary). Please proofread your work carefully. Use the spellchecker on your word processing program but also print the paper out and proofread it manually.

Students should submit their papers on MyCourses as Microsoft Word (for Windows) attachments. Please make sure that your paper is formatted correctly. This way I can “mark up” your papers electronically and send them back to you via email with comments. BACK UP YOUR WORK. Make sure you have a copy of the paper on your hard drive AND on a flash drive or CD.

In writing analytic essays and research papers, you must understand how to cite and reference your sources properly. In general, for short papers such as the ones you will write in this class, do not use direct quotations unless absolutely necessary. Instead, learn to summarize and paraphrase an author’s arguments. If you are unsure about how to write a short essay or a research paper, please make an appointment with the Writing Center.

I am always happy to reward outstanding work. With some effort on your part, you should be able to do well in this class. In order to receive an A, you need to have consistent attendance and participation, and produce high-quality written work: your essays must not only be concise, grammatically correct and neat, but well organized and show original thought

**Communication**

**MyCourses:** This is a “blended” class and you will need to activate your UMD email account to use MyCourses. Updates to the syllabus will be made on MyCourses and all of your assignments are to be handed in electronically. Some readings will be posted on MyCourses. Also, I will send out reminders, updates, changes to the syllabus and announcements on MyCourses. You should check MyCourses at least twice a week. If you have something to communicate to the entire class, use the “discussion” or “mail” features of MyCourses. If you have something you need to discuss with me privately, send me an email message at: llknauer@umassd.edu

**Netiquette:** Please compose electronic messages to me as though you were writing a business letter, not a text message. The subject line should contain the course number so that when I scan my inbox I can quickly see what the message is about (i.e. “Question about paper in ANT
Communicating with the professor: Email or phone is fine; however, I will only respond to phone messages on the days that I am on campus (T and Th this semester.) During the week I will respond to student emails within 24 hours. If you write to me and say it’s important, please check YOUR email for the response.

Office hours and professor’s availability: You need to have one face-to-face meeting with me during the semester. If my office hours (on first page) are not convenient, contact me to schedule an alternate time or schedule a phone conversation. However, if you cannot make a scheduled appointment, please call or email me in advance to cancel since I have other demands on my time.

Policies

➢ Show up on time, with cell phones and pagers turned off. Consistent lateness will result in a lowered grade. Any student using an electronic device will be asked to leave and will be marked absent.
➢ Do the reading before the class for which it is assigned. Bring the reading materials to class so we can refer to them during our discussion.
➢ Take active part in class discussions.
➢ Papers are due on the dates listed on the syllabus. Late work will be marked down (24 hours late: 5% deduction; 48 hours late: 10% deduction). No papers will be accepted more than 48 hours after the due date. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and require a face-to-face meeting with the instructor before the deadline.
➢ If you have trouble with an assignment contact me IMMEDIATELY. If you wait until the night before the paper is due, I may not even read your email until after the deadline.
➢ Since this class meets only once a week, you are permitted 1 absence with no penalty. Each additional absence takes your final grade down by 1/3 of a letter grade. Exceptions will only be granted for truly extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances and will require documentation and a personal meeting with me. You will be permitted to do one extra credit assignment to partially compensate for an absence.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to hand in original work. Using others’ ideas or words without citation is considered plagiarism. The University’s policy on academic honesty can be found in the student handbook: http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/academicregs/ethicalstandards.cfm All instances of plagiarism will be documented and reported to the Assistant Dean of the College of Art and Sciences. Specific penalties will depend upon the nature and severity of the plagiarism Handing in a wholly unoriginal paper will result in your failing the class. A paper with substantial amounts of unoriginal material will result in a failing grade on the assignment and no opportunity to rewrite.

Schedule

Sept 3. Introductions, history of carnival, theory:
Power point presentation on African masking traditions, Bakhtin.
Shanti Elliot, “Bakhtin’s Carnival and Dialogue in Bakhtin’s Poetics of Folklore”
View: The Other Side of the Water

Sept. 10 Haiti: Rara and Carnival
Elizabeth McAlister, Rara, Intro. Chapters 1-3
Donald Consentino, “My Heart Don’t Stop’. Haiti, the Carnival State” in Carnaval! edited by Barbara Mauldin, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004
Sept. 17        Haiti
Rara, Chapters 4-7
Research paper proposals due

Sept. 24        Brazil: Samba and National Identity
Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba*
Peer review of proposals

Oct. 1           Brazil 2
Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba* (finish book)
Other articles TBA
Screen: Orfeu
Revised proposals due

Oct 8            Brazil 3
Antonio Riserio, “Carnival: The Colors of Change” in *Black Brazil*. (handout)
Other readings TBA

Oct 15           Cuba
Fernando Ortiz, *Ensayos Etnograficos*. (article on Carnival, photocopy).
Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness*. Chapter on Carnival. (photocopy)
Ned Sublette. *Cuba and Its Music*. Excerpts. (photocopy)
No changes to topic allowed after this date.
First short essay due

Oct 22           Cuba

Oct 29           Trinidad and Tobago: Overview and historical background
Green and Scher, *Trinidad Carnival: The Cultural Politics of a Transnational Festival*
Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
Milla Riggio, “Resistance and Identity: Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago

Nov. 5            Trinidad: Race, Gender, Ethnicity
Green and Scher, Chapter 3
Pamela Franco. 1998. "Dressing up and Looking Good": Afro-Creole Female Maskers in Trinidad
Other articles TBA.

Nov 12           Globalization of Trini Carnival
Reading: Green and Scher, Chapters 4-8
Allen, Ray. “J’ouvert in Brooklyn Carnival: Revitalizing Steel Pan and Ole Mas Traditions.” Western Folklore, Vol. 58, No. 3/4, Crowley (Summer - Autumn, 1999), pp. 255-277
Gordon Rohlehr, "We Getting the Kaiso That We Deserve": Calypso and the World Music Market TDR Vol. 42, No. 3, Trinidad and Tobago Carnival (Autumn, 1998), pp. 82-95

Fieldwork/film assignment due

Nov. 19 New Orleans
Reading TBA
First draft research paper due

NOTE: No class Thanksgiving week BUT you must return the peer review of your partner’s paper by Weds. November 25. Failure to do so will mean 30 points off YOUR paper.

Dec 3 New Orleans: Professor out of town, class will screen film and have online discussion of film and readings
View Tootie’s Last Suit

Dec. 10 New Orleans: Mardi Gras and Second lines post-Katrina
Reading TBA
Research paper due

Second short essay due December 22 via MyCourses.