

PRESENTATION TOPICS

1. Film Response - PRECIOUS

Go and watch Lee Daniels's film *Precious* (2009), based on the novel *Push* (1996) by Sapphire. Compose a response to the film and working with your group, discuss the movie's relevance to questions we have raised or might raise in the future in the Black Matters course. Some questions you might consider: How does this film's narrative relate to themes raised in *Caucasia* or *Sula*? How are the performances evocative or explicit? What does the film offer as a depiction of black ways of being in the world? Of course, your questions and presentation should move well beyond these questions.

2. Film Response – DO THE RIGHT THING

Watch or re-watch Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989). Compose a response to the film and working with your group, discuss the movie's relevance to questions we have raised or might raise in the future in the Black Matters course. Some questions you might consider: How does this film's narrative relate to themes raised in *Caucasia* or *Sula*? How are the performances evocative or explicit? What does the film offer as a depiction of race relations in New York in the 1980s? Of course, your questions and presentation should move well beyond these questions.

3. Film Response – RIZE

Watch David LaChapelle's documentary *Rize* (2005). Compose a response to the film and working with your group, discuss how this film represents connections between popular culture and sexuality; men and women; innovations in African American performance. Connect the film's contents to the conversation that we had about Melville Herskovits and his work. Recall that he was the anthropologist whom we were introduced to in the beginning of the course through the documentary film *Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness* (2009).

4. Respond to Whitehead, Colson. “Satire on Post-Racial Living.” *New York Times*, November 3, 2009.

Create a response to the Whitehead essay. Your response could be a satirical performance, a short film, or a bit of performance poetry. Or you could draw a time line that explains how we ended up in this so-called post-racial moment, and explain this time line to the class.

5. Walking Tours, Slave Ships, and Mapping Black Matters

Create a response to the walking tour of Harlem, the walking tour of Boston, and Stephanie Smallwood's accounts of the interior of the slave ships. Imagine a science-based fictional future of black movements. How will black families or communities be recognizably black in the future? How will blackness account for its many Asian, White, Latino, and Aboriginal elements as it coheres in a future of planetary travel? Your speculative presentation should build on accepted engineering theory and also include reference to Smallwood's accounts of previous modes of travel. Be creative and have fun with this one!

6. Your Choice

This is the hardest assignment of all! Based on themes raised over the semester, work as a group to create a presentation that extends ideas toward a future of Black Matters. Note Well: unlike the other topics, this assignment involves first choosing a topic, and then researching it and creating a presentation.

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