

NCLC 195 – 007 Beats, Rhyme, and Culture: Trends in Black Musical Expression (Spring 2002)

Professor: Andrew J. Ryan

Office Hours: ENT 4th Floor Conference Room, Monday 5.00 to 6.00 PM or by appointment

Meeting Times: Robinson Hall A208, Monday 6.15 to 7.10PM

Course Web-site: http://classweb.gmu.edu/ajryan/nclc195_s02/syll.html

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Course Description and goals: BEATS, RHYME AND CULTURE will examine the history of hip-hop and the effect it has had on our society. The primary focus of this course is to engage hip-hop not as a mode of entertainment, but as a medium of communication which impacts, represents, and misrepresents the life experiences of youth (especially inner-city youth) in the United States.

The course will meet approximately seven times throughout the semester with an experiential learning component covering the remaining class hours. There will be weekly reading and a final paper. Students will also be encouraged to participate in hip-hop related conferences as a source of experiential learning.

Course Goals:

- Introduce hip-hop culture and its effect on society
- Examine hip-hop's role in academia
- Articulate how your learning experiences in this course relate to the New Century College [Competencies](#).

Grading Policy:

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| • Class Attendance | 35% |
| • Report on Hip-Hop Culture (group) | 30% |
| • Paper on Hip-hop Culture (individual) | 35% |

Attendance will be taken at the **beginning** of every class. We will only meet seven times and it is expected that you attend each class. One excused absence is permitted **IF** prior notice is given. Much of what we do in class is interactive and depends upon your regular attendance and enthusiastic participation. Your being absent not only diminishes your learning, but it keeps the class from benefiting from your experiences and ideas. Arriving late, leaving early, and being absent may cause your final grade to be lowered.

Late work will not be accepted. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class. Any exceptions are permissible, but require **prior permission of instructor**.

Mid-term grades will be tabulated as of Fall 2001. GMU has instituted a new policy requiring all 100 and 200 level classes to submit mid-term grade reports. These reports will be available during the eighth week of class.

Final grades will be calculated using the University grading system. **No curve** will be used -- this is to your advantage!

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any project or paper suspected not be the original work of the author will be forwarded to the **George Mason University Honor Council**. When in doubt, please consult me *before* handing your work in.

Required Texts:

- **Hip-Hop America** Nelson George

Optional Text:

- **Vibe History of Hip-Hop** Alan Light (ed.)

Experiential Learning: This course has a **required** [experiential learning](#) component, for which you and your group members will assess some aspect of hip-hop culture. You will be required to attend **ONE** of the pre-approved events listed on the web-site.

Participation: You will be assigned to groups and are expected to work with group members on group projects and help each other as you are learning new technology skills. If a student does not actively participate in the group projects, that student's individual project grade may be downgraded accordingly. You will evaluate each other's group performance at the end of the semester. Participation in in-class and electronic class discussion is included in your participation grade. You are expected to come to class having read the material for the class and have ready any course work due for that class.

I feel no obligation to accept or respond to work turned in late. Quality of work, not just completing it, determines the grade you earn.

About Group Work: During the course of the semester, you will be required to work in groups. In the past, this has been a very rewarding experience for students. However, there have been occasions where inequity in workload has been a problem. You are encouraged to write a group contract, to be signed by all members, which outlines the penalties involved for not fulfilling group duties. At the end of the project, I will collect these contracts and incorporate them into the final grade for the project. I will hold the group responsible for resolving any issues that may arise throughout the semester. As a last resort, I will mediate in the matter, **if** all group members agree to abide by my decision.