

## **BEATS, RHYME, and CULTURE**

**FALL 2004**

**Assignment 1**

**Due Friday September 24, 2004 [by 1159PM via [WebCT](#)]**

As discussed in class, Brooklyn, New York has produced numerous emcees, deejays, and producers including Jay-Z Notorious BIG, Big Daddy Kane, ODB, Black Moon, . . . While the scenic backdrops of lavish music videos often veil the grim reality of their humble beginnings, the message in the music remains hauntingly similar. The demographic which make up this borough are disproportionately represented in the lower rungs of the social, political, and economic ladder.

In class Monday, you received a CD with songs from various Brooklyn artists. After listening to the CD at least once, reflect on KRS-One's statement: 'Rap is something you do, Hip-hop is something you live.' Consider the following questions as you write a 2 page (1.5 spaces, Times New Roman font 12) short essay:

1. Is Hip-hop purely a means of entertainment?
2. What compels a listening audience to patronize artists with so little in common with them?
3. Should artists be held responsible for educating/uplifting their respective communities?
4. How do images of successful rap artists affect inner city youth?
5. How does excessive materialism, misogyny, and violence affect mainstream America's perception of Hip-hop culture?

The goal of this assignment is to help calibrate your perspective of Hip-hop. To view Hip-hop as anything less than a multi-dimensional culture is akin to believing the earth is flat. This course attempts to introduce the less profitable and often overlooked aspects of Hip-hop culture. Please keep this in mind as you approach this and other assignments.