

BEATS , RHY ME, and CULTURE FALL 2004

Online Assignment Due Friday December 3, 2004

The notion of Hip-hop as culture was new to most of you before entering this course. It became apparent as we went around the room during introductions (on the first day of class) that each person constructed a personal definition of Hip-hop through various interactions with Hip-hop: friends, television, news media, books, music, fashion, videos, parents etc. Since that first class, we have spent a considerable amount of time learning the history of Hip-hop culture, likely deepening your understanding of Hip-hop. This online assignment attempts to investigate the distance between these two points.

Between October 29th and November 15th, you will be asked to record (preferably in real time) every instance where your day-to-day activities (work, school, pleasure, travel) intersect with Hip-hop culture. An example is given below:

Date	Location	Description
10/21/04	TV	Watching baseball playoffs an Lean Back is played at commercial
10/22/04	Magazine	Saw ad for Hip-hop aerobics in fitness magazine
10/23/04	Concert	Saw Hip-hop culture with 900 other people at De La Soul show

On Monday November 15th, you will be partnered with 3 to 4 other students for the online portion of this activity. The activity will call for electronic communication between group members (discussion boards and chat rooms will be made available) to discuss your individual experiences and relate it to course materials. Potential topics of include:

1. Relevancy to Hip-hop culture – was the culture represented as we've discussed in class (keeping in mind the origins of Hip-hop) or was there an ulterior motive?
2. Ability to interpret – was the element of Hip-hop easy to interpret? If not, why?
3. Context – What context was the element used? For instance, the inclusion of the "Lean Back," (by Fat Joe) instrumental during the World Series was likely an attempt to appeal to younger viewers of baseball.

An Excel spreadsheet (identical to the example above) can be found at http://classweb.gmu.edu/ajryan/nclc244_f04/online.xls to aid in your information collection.

Once data is collected (November 15), your assignment is three fold:

1. Read the above articles to provide context and calibrate your thinking on this topic.
2. With your group members, decide on a 60 minute time interval to discuss the following issues via WebCT. Once a time has been chosen, please e-mail me [ajryan@gmu.edu] with the time. You can meet in any of the recorded chat rooms South Bronx, West Side, Dirty South, 5th Ward. Chats must take place before Thanksgiving:

- a. Compare and contrast the definition of Hip-hop we have discussed in class and seen in films versus the connotation presented in the events you recorded in your log. Are they similar/different? How?
 - b. Discuss some of the stranger instances where you saw Hip-hop in society. Share these with the group. I'd like two responses from everyone.
 - c. Discuss the concept of Cultural Imperialism . . . can both a commercial Hip-hop and an authentic Hip-hop exist?
 - d. Answer the Question: "Who Controls Hip-hop?"
 - e. In your individual opinion, what will happen to Hip-hop as it grows overseas? Will the changes in culture which took place in the US also take place abroad? What will be the affect of this?
3. As a group, please provide a 2 page summary of your discussion. This should be submitted online by Dec 3, 2004.

Please read the following articles to prepare you for discussion:

1. "Compa\$\$ionate Capitali\$m" – *Village Voice* by **Ta-Nehisi Coates**
Russell Simmons wants to fatten the hip-hop vote—and maybe his wallet, too
<http://villagevoice.com/issues/0401/coates.php>
2. "Keepin' It Unreal" -- *Village Voice* by **Ta-Nehisi Coates**
Selling the Myth of Blaçk Male Violençe, Long Past Its Expiration Date
<http://villagevoice.com/issues/0323/coates.php>
3. "Hip-Hop Goes Commercial" *Village Voice* by **Erik Parker**
"Rappers Give Madison Avenue a Run for Its Money"
<http://villagevoice.com/issues/0237/parker.php>
4. "How Cultural Imperialism has Hurt Hip-hop" by Andrew Ryan
classweb.gmu.edu/ajryan/coopt.pdf
(if anyone has comments on this paper they would like to send to me directly, I'd be appreciative)

THE GROUPS:

Group	Description	Topic	Members
East Side	None	Online class 11.22.04	Saloumeh Amouhashem (samouhas), Glenn Flanagan (gflanagan), Selome Kidane (skidane), Maame Owusu-Afriyie (mowusuaf), Erin Simon (esimon), Vannessa Williams (vwillia2)
MidWest	None	Online class 11.22.04	Derek Bullington (dbullington), Jinean Carabai (jcarabai), , Lauren McWilliams (lmcwilli), Lauren Sommers (lsommers)
Overseas	None	Online class 11.22.04	Najib Gerdak (ngerdak), Elizabeth Imler (eimler), Robert Roy (rroy1), Eva Stern (estern1), Ada Valaitis (avalaiti)
South Side	None	Online class 11.22.04	Anita Al Haj (aalhaj), Mildred Areas (mareas), Nayoung Choe (nchoe), Peter Gore (pgore), Brandon Robins (brobins)
West Side	None	Online class 11.22.04	Felix Escobar (fescobar), Dennis Hertel (dhertel), Ning Hou (nhou), Thomas McCray (tmccray), Kristina McVay (kmcvay)

Tips for Meeting Online:

1. Elect someone to chair the meeting (this person will go through the agenda and keep the meeting on target) and someone to take notes.
2. Via e-mail, send out a pre-meeting agenda to everyone. Explicitly dictate what is expected of each person before the meeting. The meeting is a time for action, not a time for 'looking for things'.
3. Come up with a way to run the meeting. A way for someone to raise their hand or a means to keep on discussion. It is very easy for the discussion to segue off topic. While there is nothing wrong with going off topic a bit, avoid spending more time on secondary/tertiary issues than the topics listed above.
4. Don't be afraid to correct one another. Also information which is taken as fact (and not pointed out by a group member) will hurt the group grade.
5. Outside of the last question, be very strict in separating FACT FROM OPINION. This is a factual discussion . . . all comments should have some type of evidence/reference.

EXTRA CREDIT:

As an individual extra credit assignment, discuss how your personal 'lens' on Hip-hop has changed throughout this course. On day one, we all had various preconceived notions or established perspective (some would call it a 'cultural/personal lens') which we used to interpret Hip-hop. Citing specific examples from class, the readings or your personal log, in 2-3 pages, discuss your experience.

In order to receive full credit, you must include your log (electronically) when submitting assignment (this is not part of your 2-3 page limit).

http://classweb.gmu.edu/ajryan/nclc244_f04/online.xls [has been updated, though you can submit in MS Word or any other electronic format.]

STUDENTS WHO MISSED class on Monday, November 15 should e-mail their group members ASAP. GMU e-mail aliases are in (parentheses). E-mail should include me (ajryan@gmu.edu) and sent by Thursday November 18 as groups began pre-planning for the assignment on Monday. ALTERNATIVELY, a separate group called 'Underground' has been established for students who do not have a group. Please use the discussion board labeled 'Underground' on WebCT to arrange a time to meet. Feel free to contact me for further info.