

BEATS, RHYME, AND CULTURE NCLC 244 -- FALL 2004

Professor: Andrew J. Ryan

Office Hour: Monday 6.00-6.30 and Wednesday's 5.30 to 6.00 PM or by appointment

Meeting Times: Enterprise Room 274, Monday 7.20 to 10.00PM

Course Web-site: http://classweb.gmu.edu/ajryan/nclc244_f04

Collaborative Learning Space: webct38.gmu.edu

Contact Information: 703.993.1436 (school)

703.234.0750 (work)

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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 four-credit 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 historical, socio-economic, and musical/aesthetic contexts from which Hip-hop emerged will be analyzed. Distinct themes and phenomena that define Hip-hop will be presented and discussed as well. The goal of this course is to have you critically think, write, and discuss the origins, themes, and direction of Hip-hop in the context of contemporary American culture and abroad.

Grading Policy:

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| • Experiential Learning | 20% |
| • Response Papers (3 – 10/10/10) | 30% |
| • Online Quizzes (4 pts each) | 40% |
| • Class Participation | 10% |

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 will hurt your participation grade.

Late work will not be accepted. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due, via e-mail <ajryan@gmu.edu>, 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 of not being 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:

- Fricke, Jim and Charlie Ahearn. *Yes Yes Y'all: The Experience Music Project Oral History of Hip-hop's First Decade*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2002.
- Light, Alan, ed. *The Vibe History of Hip-Hop*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999.
- Kitwana, Bakari. *The Hip-hop Generation*, New York: Basic Books, May 2002

[There will also be handouts and on-line readings.]

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 2 events, each involving a different aspect of Hip-hop, and record your findings. You must complete the EL component of this course to receive credit for the class.

Participation: You will be assigned to groups and are expected to work with group members on group projects [primarily online] and to help each other as you are learning. If a student does not actively participate in the group projects, that student's individual project grade may be downgraded accordingly. Participation in classroom and electronic class discussion [webct.gmu.edu] 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.

Quizzes: In reinforcing the aforementioned category, online quizzes will be given 12 times throughout the semester. These quizzes will be 5-8 questions, multiple choice or short answer. I will drop the lowest two (2) grades and take a simple average of the remaining scores. There will be a practice quiz given during the first week of class to familiarize you with the online system and the types of questions you will be expected to answer.

Online Collaboration: We will primarily employ WebCT, GMU's online collaboration tool for web chats, discussion groups, quizzes and even polls and surveys. Understandably, each student will have various levels of comfort with this technology. I will dedicate time in the second and third class meetings to answer questions on WebCT.



TML Breakers family photo, circa 1983