

**MUS 103: HIP HOP  
SEMESTER/YEAR????**

<b>?? Shepard Hall Days/Times</b>	<b>Prof. Chadwick Jenkins (cjenkins@ccny.cuny.edu) Office: 78B Shepard Hall; Phone: X7666 Office Hours: ??</b>
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**Course Objectives:**

This course will explore the history of hip hop from the earliest formations of the genre in the 1970s to the current moment. This course will have four primary areas of emphasis. First, although we will be interested in other elements of hip hop culture (including dancing, graffiti, literature, etc.), our primary focus will be on the music (the DJ, MC, and production techniques that go into producing hip hop tracks and albums). Second, this class will emphasize the development of the business and promotional aspects of hip hop. Hip hop has become a major business venture for recording studios, record labels, fashion venues, etc. and has had a huge impact on Black and White business in the US. Third, we will devote a large portion of our time to the developing technologies surrounding hip hop including turn tables, drum machines, MPCs, etc. Fourth and finally, we will explore the cultural and political impact hip hop has had on representations of Blackness, political views of violence and equity, and constructions of gender, race, and authenticity. Thus, this class will contribute to the following **Departmental Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Outline major periods in the development of hip hop and recall key facts, writers, performers, technological advances, producers, and ideas;
- 2) Identify the technological developments contributing to hip hop, the business of hip hop production, and the impact hip hop has had on the social and political life of the US and beyond;
- 3) Identify different genres, performers, and musical styles through listening;
- 4) Demonstrate proficiency in writing about key concepts in hip hop history with a focus on descriptive writing (accounting for the sounds of the musical tracks and not just the lyrics, history, and biographical background).

**Course Requirements** (300 points total):

Descriptive Sentences: 10 points  
Descriptive Paragraph: 20 points  
Outline for Final Paper: 10 points  
Descriptive Paragraph for Final Paper: 20 points  
Historical Paragraph for Final Paper: 20 points  
Opening Paragraph for Final Paper: 20 points  
Final Paper: 20 points  
Quizzes (4): 10 points each; lowest scoring quiz dropped  
Midterm: 60 points  
Final Exam: 60 points  
Participation: 30 points

**Participation counts.** This class will be conducted following the Socratic method. Therefore, you must do all the listening and viewing assignments carefully and be prepared to criticize them in class. There will be **no make-ups for tests or quizzes** so it is recommended that you attend class consistently.

Courtesy would dictate that you send me an email prior to the class to inform me of your impending absence. After eight absences, you will be dropped from the class. I reserve the right to count multiple cases of tardiness as an absence. Class begins immediately **at TIME??** and the roster will be taken. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are marked as present (though, of course, late).

I **do not** provide students with extra-credit assignments. **KEEP UP WITH YOUR WORK!!!!** If you miss a class you must get the handouts from another class member or come to my office hour. Do not expect

me to email you materials. Stay healthy and be in class or be social, make a friend, and get materials from that person.

**Policy concerning written assignments:** All assignments must be typed in 12-point **Times New Roman** font and double-spaced. Only your name and the name of the class should appear in the upper right hand corner of the first page (not on subsequent pages and do not add additional information like the date, your birthplace, etc.). Assignments may be turned in via email but will only be considered on time if mailed **on or before** the due date and you get acknowledgment of receipt from me by that date. **ALL EMAILED ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE IN PDF FORMAT**—otherwise, I will not even attempt to open them. If these requirements are not met, the paper will be considered late and points will be deducted accordingly. The major analysis papers will drop 10% of the overall grade off the top per day late (including weekend days). Informal Writing Assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted late at all. The deadlines on all of these assignments are firm. Computer and printer malfunctions and other related excuses would **not** be considered valid reasons for late papers. I recommend that you save your work to disk and back it up regularly while writing. These papers are to represent your work. Any evidence of **academic dishonesty** will be severely punished and may result in **expulsion**.

**Electronic Devices/Food and Drink Policy:**

All electronic devices are to be turned completely off for the duration of each class session, with the exception of the allotted break time. This includes all cell phones, smart phones, tablets, laptop computers, gaming devices, and all other handheld personal electronic devices. Though sometimes useful, these items are incredibly distracting in the educational environment and they are inappropriate for the classroom setting. There will be ample periods of break-time each class session to use the restroom, check your electronic devices, and get a small snack and/or something to drink. However, there will be no eating or drinking during the class lecture, discussion, or examination time. Any and all food or drinks must be consumed outside of the classroom before or after class, or during break. Bottled water is always an exception. Please keep the classroom clean and distraction free, so that all students can fully benefit from the course they paid to learn from and enjoy.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:**

The definition of plagiarism is the practice of presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. It is imperative that students cite all sources, all the time. Be aware that penalties in cases of proven violation of the university's Academic Integrity Policy can include grade deductions, academic sanctions and/or expulsion from the college. The City University of New York Policy on Academic Integrity can be downloaded at:

<http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf>

**Disability Statement:**

In compliance with CCNY policy and equal access laws, appropriate academic accommodations are offered for students with disabilities. Students must register with The AccessAbility Center for reasonable academic accommodations. The AccessAbility Center is located in the North Academic Center, Rm. 1/218. Tel: (212) 650-5913. Under The Americans with Disability Act, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If you have any such issues, I encourage you to visit the AccessAbility Center to determine which services may be appropriate for you.

## Weekly Assignments:

There are reading and listening assignments for every class session. The assignment listed under each date is to be prepared **for that date**. It is important that you read and listen to the material prior to our discussion of it in class. You are expected to have read the assignments critically and to be prepared to offer your thoughts about the music and analysis of the readings in our class discussion. At times, discussion may be replaced by an unannounced quiz.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

### Session 1: Intro: Approaches to Hip Hop

Topics:

- 1) Black Expression in the 1970s: Blaxploitation Films
- 2) An introduction to the “five elements” of hip hop culture as a deconstruction of past styles/concepts: DJing; MCing, Beatboxing, B-boying (breakdancing), and Graffiti
- 3) Brief history of Graffiti: Julio 204, Fab 5 Freddy, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat

### Session 2: Antecedents: Pulp Literature, Spoken Word Recordings, Funk, and Disco

Topics:

- 1) Black English, Black Writing, Black Speech: Pulp Literature
- 2) Puns, Preaching, and Politics: Spoken Word Recordings
- 3) Layers of Repetition: Funk and Disco

Listening:

- 1) Pigmeat Markham, “Here Comes the Judge” (1968), here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRS62nccwmw>
- 2) Iceberg Slim, *Pimp: The Story of My Life* (available as an audiobook on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RysEc8aUcdM-> listen to the first 20 minutes or so to get a sense of the use of language, self-representation, and imagery).
- 3) Gil Scott-Heron, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” (available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwSRqaZGsPw>)
- 4) James Brown, “The Payback”
- 5) Parliament, “Flashlight”
- 6) Chic, “Good Times”

Viewing:

- 1) “27 Styles of Rapping:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izgsppAKtjE>

### Session 3: The Early DJs: The Jamaican Connection, Kool Herc and the Party DJs, the Club DJs

Topics:

- 1) The Sound System Men in Jamaica
- 2) The Beginnings of the Bronx Party DJ Scene: DJ Kool Herc
- 3) Malcom McClaren and the Beginnings of Public Awareness

Listening:

- 1) DJ Starski, “Free,” available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7JDvcYK-IE>
- 2) DJ Starski, “Live at the Fever,” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rP37qhOi9cw>
- 3) DJ Hollywood and Starski at the Armory, 1979: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqLL9Tw2i6c>

Viewing:

- 1) Rian Dundon on Early Hand-drawn Flyers for Hip Hop Parties: <https://timeline.com/early-hip-hop-flyers-c4fa9c6b62e5>
- 2) Kool DJ Herc on the Merry Go Round Technique: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw4H2FZjfpo>
- 3) Kool Herc Old School: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhisX4mVoDI>

**Session 4:** The First Recordings: The Sugar Hill Gang, Kurtis Blow, and Afrika Bambaataa

Assignment Due: Quiz 1 (sessions 1-3)

Topics:

- 1) Sylvia Robinson, Sugar Hill Records, and “Rapper’s Delight”
- 2) Kurtis Blow, Quincy Jones, and Mercury Records: The Majors Pay Attention
- 3) Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation

Listening:

- 1) Spoony Gee, “Spoonin’ Rap” (1979): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxN1xrLRvGU>
- 2) Sugar Hill Gang, “Rapper’s Delight” (1979)
- 3) Blondie, “Rapture” (1980)
- 4) Kurtis Blow, “The Breaks” (1980)
- 5) Kurtis Blow, “Basketball” (1984)
- 6) Afrika Bambaataa, “Zulu Nation Throwdown” (1980)
- 7) Afrika Bambaataa, “Looking for the Perfect Beat” (1982)

Viewing:

- 1) Afrika Bambaataa, “Party Rock,” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J3lwZjHenA>

**Session 5:** Innovations: Grandmaster Flash, Grand Wizzard Theodore, and the Fat Boys

Assignment Due: Descriptive Sentences

Topics:

- 1) Advanced Techniques: Grandmaster Flash and the Quick Mix Theory
- 2) Grand Wizzard Theodore and Scratching
- 3) The Fat Boys and the Art of Beatboxing

Listening:

- 1) Grandmaster Flash, “The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel” (1981)
- 2) Grand Wizzard Theodore, “Subway Theme” (1982)
- 3) The Fat Boys, “Fat Boys/Human Beat Box” (1984)

Viewing:

- 1) Grandmaster Flash on *Wildstyle*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHIsNQ3eh2g>
- 2) Grandmaster Flash masterclass (hour long—watch at least the first 20 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3YXyK-gWvc>
- 3) Grand Wizzard Theodore, 2010 Performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRzIyuXCIPw>

**Session 6:** The End of Old School: “The Message” and the Birth of Rap Beefs

Assignment Due: Descriptive Sentence Revision

Topics:

- 1) *The Wild Style*: Mainstream Attention
- 2) The Cold Crush Brothers vs. Fantastic Five; Kool Moe Dee vs. Busy Bee Starski
- 3) “The Message:” A Call to Seriousness

Listening:

- 1) Kool Moe Dee vs. Busy Bee Starski: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am9C2\\_DZ7s4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am9C2_DZ7s4)
- 2) Cold Crush Brothers live at Harlem World in 1981: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCTjA9zapLc>

Viewing:

- 1) *Wild Style* (full film, watch what you can): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaXMfw0IJ0o>
- 2) Focus on Cold Crush Brothers in *Wild Style*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yddfVHmr9Os>
- 3) “The Message” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PobrSpMwKk4>

**Session 7: Sampling, Drum Machines, MPCs: Marley Marl**

Topics:

- 1) Marley Marl, the Art of Sampling and the Roland TR-808 Drum Machine
- 2) The Hip Hop Radio DJs: Mr. Magic, Bill Stephney
- 3) The Emergence of a Queens Sound: The Juice Crew

Listening:

- 1) Roxanne Shante, "Roxanne's Revenge" (1984)
- 2) Marley Marl, "The Marley Marl Scratch" (1985)
- 3) MC Shan, "The Bridge" (1987)
- 4) Biz Markie, "Vapors" (1988)
- 5) Marley Marl, "The Symphony" (1988)

Viewing:

- 1) Interview with Marley Marl:  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/microphonecheck/2013/09/11/221440934/marley-marl-on-the-bridge-wars-ll-cool-j-and-discovering-sampling>

**Session 8: The Birth of the Golden Era: Run-D.M.C. and the Hip Hop Album**

Assignment Due: Quiz 2 (sessions 4-7)

Topics:

- 1) Run-D.M.C: New Style, New Influences
- 2) Rick Rubin, *Raising Hell*, and the Rise of the Hip Hop Album
- 3) Russell Simmons and Marketing: The Case of "My Adidas"

Listening:

- 1) Run-D.M.C, "It's Like That/Sucker MCs" (1983)
- 2) Run-D.M.C, "Rock Box" (1984)
- 3) Run-D.M.C, "King of Rock" (1985)
- 4) Run-D.M.C, "It's Tricky" (1986)
- 5) Run-D.M.C, "My Adidas" (1986)

Viewing:

- 1) Run-D.M.C and Aerosmith, "Walk This Way," video:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B\\_UYYPb-Gk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B_UYYPb-Gk)

**Session 9: DefJam Records: Early Recordings to The Beastie Boys**

Topics:

- 1) Rick Rubin and the Launch of DefJam
- 2) Russell Simmons as the Hip Hop Mogul and *Krush Groove*
- 3) The Beastie Boys and White Rap

Listening:

- 1) T La Rock and Jazzy Jay, "It's Yours" (1984)
- 2) LL Cool J, "I Need a Beat" (1984)
- 3) LL Cool J, "I Can't Live Without My Radio" (1985)
- 4) Beastie Boys, "Fight for Your Right" (1986)
- 5) Beastie Boys, "Sounds of Science" (1989)

Viewing:

- 1) "Russell Simmons on how he created Def Jam with Rick Rubin:"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDFriNj1l-w>
- 2) Scene from *Krush Groove*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3caXgI2\\_cs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3caXgI2_cs)

**Session 10:** Rap Politics: Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions

Assignment Due: Descriptive Paragraph

Topics:

- 1) BDP and Violence: *Criminal Minded*
- 2) The Expansion of the Rap Crew and the Hype Man (Flavor Flav)
- 3) Public Enemy and the Nation of Islam

Listening:

- 1) Boogie Down Productions, “The Bridge is Over” (1987)
- 2) Boogie Down Productions, “9MM Goes Bang” (1987)
- 3) Boogie Down Productions, “Stop the Violence” (1988)
- 4) Slick Rick, “Children’s Story” (1989)
- 5) Public Enemy, “Don’t Believe the Hype” (1988)
- 6) Public Enemy, “Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos” (1989)

Viewing:

- 1) *Public Enemy: Prophets of Rage*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMCvWeWnsJw>

**Session 11:** Beginnings of Modern Flow: Eric B. and Rakim, MC Lyte, Big Daddy Kane

Topics:

- 1) Analyzing Flow
- 2) The Emergence of the Smoother Style: Big Daddy Kane
- 3) Rhythmic Complexity in the Flow of Rakim

Listening:

- 1) Big Daddy Kane, “Ain’t No Half Steppin’” (1988)
- 2) MC Lyte, “I Cram to Understand U (Sam)” (1988)
- 3) Eric B. and Rakim, “I Ain’t No Joke” (1987)
- 4) Eric B. and Rakim, “Lyrics of Fury” (1988)

Viewing:

- 1) “The Fundamental Rhyme Schemes of Rap:”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96JFmjgtKA>
- 2) “Rapping, deconstructed” (watch up through 3:20):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWveXdj6oZU>

**Session 12:** Emergence into Popularity: MC Hammer, Tone Loc, Vanilla Ice

Assignment Due: Outline for Final Paper

Topics:

- 1) Rap on Television: *Yo! MTV Raps*
- 2) Rap Slams into the Mainstream: Source Magazine
- 3) The Superstars: MC Hammer, Tone Loc, and Vanilla Ice

Listening:

- 1) Tone Loc, “Wild Thing” (1989)
- 2) MC Hammer, “U Can’t Touch This” (1990)
- 3) Vanilla Ice, “Ice Ice Baby” (1990)

**Session 13:** Midterm (sessions 1-12)

**Session 14:** Gangsta Rap: Schoolly D, Ice-T, N.W.A

Topics:

- 1) The Beginnings of Gangsta Rap: Schoolly D
- 2) Gang Violence and Representations of the Ghetto: Ice-T, *Colors*, *Boyz in the Hood*
- 3) Defining the West Coast: N.W.A.

Listening:

- 1) Schoolly D, “PSK What Does It Mean?” (1985)
- 2) Ice-T, “6 in the Mornin’” (1986)
- 3) N.W.A., “Fuck tha Police” (1988)

**Session 15:** Court Cases and the Mainstream: Geto Boys, “Cop Killer,” 2 Live Crew, Biz Markie

Topics:

- 1) The 2 Live Crew Trial and the Miami Bass Sound
- 2) The Geto Boys and Horrorcore; “Cop Killer” Controversy
- 3) *Grand Upright Music, Ltd. vs. Warner Bros.* (1991): Sampling Under Fire

Listening:

- 1) 2 Live Crew, “Throw the D” (1986)
- 2) 2 Live Crew, “Me So Horny” (1989)
- 3) Geto Boys, “Mind of a Lunatic” (1989)
- 4) Geto Boys, “Mind Playing Tricks on Me” (1991)
- 5) Biz Markie, “Alone Again” (1991)

**Session 16:** Jazz Rap: Native Tongues: Queen Latifa, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul

Assignment Due: Descriptive Paragraph for Final Paper

Topics:

- 1) Jazz Collectives: Native Tongues
- 2) Conscious Rap: Re-Imaging the Ghetto
- 3) Jazz Influences on Rap

Listening:

- 1) Jungle Brothers, “Straight Out the Jungle” (1988)
- 2) A Tribe Called Quest, “Scenario” (1991)
- 3) Gang Starr, “Jazz Thing” (1990)
- 4) De La Soul, “Me, Myself, and I” (1989)
- 5) Queen Latifa, “U.N.I.T.Y.” (1993)

**Session 17:** West Coast Sounds: G Funk, E-40, Too Short, and Tupac

Topics:

- 1) Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, G Funk, and *The Chronic*
- 2) Too Short, E-40 and the Bay Area Sound
- 3) Tupac and the Poetic Consciousness

Listening:

- 1) Dr. Dre, “Nuthin’ But a ‘G’ Thang” (1992)
- 2) Too Short, “Life is Too Short” (1988)
- 3) E-40, “Outsmart the Po Pos” (1993)
- 4) Tupac, “Brenda’s Got a Baby” (1991)
- 5) Tupac, “California Love” (1996)

**Session 18:** Hip Hop Sublime: Wu-Tang Clan and Nas

Assignment Due: Quiz 3 (sessions 14-17)

Topics:

- 1) The Hip Hop Sublime
- 2) Wu-Tang as Collective
- 3) Nas and Accelerating Flow

Listening:

- 1) Wu-Tang Clan, "Can It All Be So Simple" (1993)
- 2) Raekwon, "Criminology" (1995)
- 3) Nas, "The World Is Yours" (1994)
- 4) Nas, "If I Ruled the World (Imagine That)" (1996)

**Session 19:** Shiny Suit Era: Notorious B.I.G and Puff Daddy; Missy Elliott

Topics:

- 1) Puff Daddy and Big Boy Entertainment
- 2) Notorious B.I.G., and the Junior Mafia
- 3) The Hit Men and the Shiny Suit Era

Listening:

- 1) Notorious B.I.G., "Hypnotize" (1997)
- 2) Notorious B.I.G., "Mo Money, Mo Problems" (1997)
- 3) Puff Daddy, "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" (1997)
- 4) Mase, "Feel So Good" (1997)
- 5) Missy Elliott, "The Rain" (1997)

Viewing:

- 1) "Rapping, deconstructed" (watch 3:20-4:40):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWveXdj6oZU>

**Session 20:** Approaches to Freestyle: Eminem, Proof, Big L, Jay Z

Assignment Due: Historical Paragraph for Final Paper

Topics:

- 1) *Freestyle: The Art of Rhyme*
- 2) Eminem and Proof as Battle Rappers
- 3) Jay Z and Roc-A-Fella Records

Listening:

- 1) Jay Z and Big L, freestyle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKPXDPKFtmM>
- 2) Eminem and Proof, freestyle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRpuE0d-suE>
- 3) Eminem, "My Name Is" (1999)
- 4) Proof with 50 Cent, "Forgive Me" (2005)
- 5) Jay Z, "Dead Presidents" (1996)



**Session 21:** Southern Hip Hop: LaFace Records, OutKast, Goodie Mob, Three 6 Mafia

Topics:

- 1) LaFace Records, Organized Noize, and the Dirty South: OutKast, Goodie Mob
- 2) Crunk and the Art of Hype
- 3) The Memphis Scene: Three 6 Mafia

Listening:

- 1) OutKast, “Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik” (1994)
- 2) OutKast, “Ms. Jackson” (2000)
- 3) Goodie Mob, “Cell Therapy” (1995)
- 4) Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz, “Who U Wit?” (1997)
- 5) Three 6 Mafia, “Da Summa” (1995)

Viewing:

- 1) “Rapping, deconstructed” (watch 4:40-7:26):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWveXdj6oZU>

**Session 22:** Trap, Bounce, and Crunk

Assignment Due: Quiz 4 (sessions 18-21)

Topics:

- 1) New Orleans: Cash Money Records
- 2) Master P, No Limit, and Bounce
- 3) Trap and New Possibilities

Listening:

- 1) Juvenile, “Back that Azz Up” (1999)
- 2) Hot Boys, “We On Fire” (1999)
- 3) Master P, “Make Em Say Uhh!” (1997)
- 4) DJ Jubilee, “Back that Thang Up” (1998)
- 5) Big Freedia, “Bootie-Whop” (2012)
- 6) T.I., “Be Easy” (2003)
- 7) Gucci Mane, “Icy” (2005)

Viewing:

- 1) “Extremely Short History of Trap Music:” <http://lab.cccb.org/en/extremely-short-history-of-trap-music/>

**Session 23:** Mixtapes and Lo Fi: DJ Screw, UGK, and J Dilla

Topics:

- 1) Sound with a Drawl: The Screwed-Up Click
- 2) UGK and Texas Hip Hop
- 3) J Dilla and the Art of Lo-Fi

Listening:

- 1) DJ Screw, Mixtape of Mr. Mike’s “Where Ya Love At?” (1996)
- 2) DJ Screw, Mixtape of 2Pac, “No More Pain” (1997)
- 3) UGK, “One Day” (1996)
- 4) UGK, “3 in the Mornin’” (1996)
- 5) J Dilla, “One” (2001)
- 6) J Dilla, “So Far to Go” (2006)

Viewing:

- 1) “How J Dilla Humanized his MPC3000:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SENzTt3fiU>

**Session 24:** Alternative Hip Hop: MF Doom, Blackalicious, and Mos Def

Assignment Due: Opening Paragraph for Final Paper

Topics:

- 1) Rhyme as Rhythm: Blackalicious
- 2) Holorimes and Increasing Complexity of Flow: MF Doom and Mos Def
- 3) Soundscapes: Madvillain

Listening:

- 1) MF Doom, “Rhymes Like Dimes” (1999)
- 2) MF Doom, “Hoe Cakes” (2004)
- 3) Blackalicious, “Blazing Arrow” (2002)
- 4) Madvillain, “Figaro” (2004)
- 5) Mos Def, “Re:Definition” (1998)

Viewing:

- 1) Color Analysis of Madvillain, “Great Day” (2004): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jkRRgEIp5g>
- 2) Color Analysis of “Meat Grinder” (2004): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms0mes\\_vLk8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms0mes_vLk8)
- 3) “Rapping, deconstructed” (watch 7:26-end): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWveXdj6oZU>

**Session 25:** Mixtapes as a Rapper’s Art: Nicki Minaj, Lil Wayne, and Drake

Topics:

- 1) Mixtape Culture: Legalities and Opportunities
- 2) Don’t Call it a Comeback: Lil Wayne and the Mixtape
- 3) Making Space: Minaj and Drake’s Debut Efforts

Listening:

- 1) DJ Paul and Juicy J, *Volume 3: Spring Mix* (1995): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-kG4UduoO0>
- 2) Pharrell with DJ Drama, *In My Mind, The Prequel* (listen to the opening tracks): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0ry2TrwDyw>
- 3) Lil Wayne, “King Kong” (2007): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHZCxT1afPs>
- 4) Nicki Minaj, “Beam Me Up Scotty” (2009): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj\\_t3VuZwgk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj_t3VuZwgk)
- 5) Drake, “Best I Ever Had” (2009)

Viewing:

- 1) “The Evolution of the Mixtape: An Oral History with DJ Drama.” <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/hip-hop/7669073/history-dj-drama-mixtape-evolution>

**Session 26:** The Art of Production: The Neptunes, Kanye West, Mike Will Made-It

Assignment Due: Final Paper

Topics:

- 1) Modern Production Techniques: The Producer as Star
- 2) “Black Beatles” and Virality
- 3) Kanye West and the Concept Album

Listening:

- 1) Kanye West, “Through the Wire” (2002)
- 2) Kanye West, “Monster” (2015)
- 3) Ludacris, “Southern Hospitality” (2000)
- 4) 2 Chainz, “No Lie” (2012)
- 5) Future, “Move That Dope” (2014)
- 6) Rae Sremmurd, “Black Beatles” (2016)

Viewing:

- 1) “Kanye, deconstructed:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgJyhKEZ8QU>

### **Session 27:** Grime, Reggaeton, Cloud Rap

#### Topics:

- 1) Grime and the UK Reception of Hip Hop
- 2) Reggaeton and Latinx Hip Hop
- 3) Cloud Rap and the New Obscurity

#### Listening:

- 1) Daddy Yankee, "Gasolina" (2010)
- 2) Luis Fonsi, "Despacito" (2019)
- 3) Ivy Queen, "Papi Te Quiero" (2003)
- 4) Dizzee Rascal, "I Luv U" (2003)
- 5) Wiley, "Wot Do U Call It?" (2004)
- 6) cLOUDDEAD, "The Keen Trip Skip" (2004)

#### Viewing:

- 1) Caitlin Donohue, "Reggaeton: A Beginner's Guide:"  
<https://www.factmag.com/2018/06/22/beginners-guide-reggaeton/>

### **Session 28:** Mumble Rap, Cloud Rap and Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly* as Concept Album

#### Topics:

- 1) Mumble Rap and Soundcloud Artists
- 2) The New Flow
- 3) Kendrick Lamar and the Concept Album

#### Listening:

- 1) Viper, "You'll Cowards Don't Even Smoke Crack" (2008)
- 2) Future, "Tony Montana" (2011)
- 3) Migos, "Versace" (2013)
- 4) Desiigner, "Panda" (2016)
- 5) Lil Xan, "Betrayed" (2018)
- 6) A\$AP Rocky, "Goldie" (2013)
- 7) Kendrick Lamar, *To Pimp a Butterfly* (2016): focus on "For Free? (Interlude)," "u" and "i".

#### Viewing:

- 1) How the Triplet Flow Took Over Rap:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3la8bsi4P-c>
- 2) "The Rise of Mumble Rap:" <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/hip-hop/7625631/rise-of-mumble-rap-lyricism-2016>

#### Writing Assignments:

- 1) Descriptive Sentences (10 points total, 5 points per sentence, one sentence gets revised): Write a descriptive sentence for two different tracks of your choosing from those covered in the first four sessions of the class (that is, write two sentences total, one per track). The sentences should attempt to *describe* as clearly as possible what you are *hearing* in the section of the track you discuss. No historical or biographical information should be included; no discussion of lyrics. Describe the sounds you hear. Try to use vocabulary that we have developed thus far in the class. The instructor will mark up ONE of the sentences and provide a point score for it (0-5 points). The student will then revise the *other sentence* based on that feedback and resubmit it the next session and the instructor will then grade that sentence (0-5 points).
- 2) Descriptive Paragraph (20 points): Write a descriptive paragraph on any track of your choosing that was covered in the first nine sessions of class (the only stipulation is that you may NOT use the tracks you wrote about in the Descriptive Sentences Assignment). Like the previous assignment, this paragraph should attempt to *describe* as clearly as possible what you are *hearing* in the section of the track you discuss. No historical or biographical information should be included; you may, however, discuss the lyrics as long as the majority of your discussion focuses on the sounds you hear. Try to use vocabulary that we have developed thus far in the class. Make sure

your paragraph builds logically. In other words, start with a clear claim such as “The refrain—‘It’s such a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from going under’—from Melle Mel’s rap on Grandmaster Flash’s “The Message” ends in a stuttering laugh (“ha-ha, ha-ha-ha”) that emphasizes the underlying anger and sarcasm of the track.” Then build on that claim throughout the paragraph by drawing on other aspects of the track or other moments. Do NOT just string together random ideas—build an argument.

- 3) Outline for Final Paper (10 points): Pick any hip hop track of any era that interests you other than the tracks listed on this syllabus. You may choose any artist, although it would be preferable if you focused on an artist NOT discussed in class. You may NOT choose a track you have written about in earlier assignments. Write an outline for what will become a final paper on that track. See below for details regarding the final paper. The outline should clearly present the architecture of that paper (at least what you think it will be). Lay out each paragraph; specify what type of paragraph it is (opening, historical, descriptive, or closing) and outline the argument each paragraph covers.
- 4) Descriptive Paragraph for Final Paper (20 points): Follow the instructions for the Descriptive Paragraph above. This paragraph, however, will be included (after revision) in your final paper (see below).
- 5) Historical Paragraph for Final Paper (20 points): Write a paragraph providing historical background for the track you will discuss in your final paper. You MUST cite sources (using footnotes or inline citations) for the information you provide. Don’t write about the artist’s life EXCEPT insofar as it prepares us to understand the track you will discuss in your final paper. So, if you are writing about a track from Kendrick Lamar’s *DAMN*, do not go back to the beginnings of his career. Focus on what is pertinent to the track you will discuss. DO try to provide some important background information. For instance, one might discuss the album as a whole or discuss what influenced this particular track, etc. This paragraph will be included (after revision) in your final paper (see below).
- 6) Opening Paragraph for Final Paper (20 points): Write an engaging opening paragraph for your final paper. This paragraph should have a captivating opening sentence that grabs the reader’s attention. It should provide a glimpse of where you are going in the paper as a whole, preferably by laying out the main concern of the paper in some larger sense. Make sure you end with a “This paper will show (or examine, or whatever)” statement. Here is an example:

“The Message” by Melle Mel and Grandmaster Flash presents a vivid representation of a New York City ghetto in the early 1980s that is both thrilling and dangerous. The underlying beat, with the futuristic synthetic sound, suggests a menacing vision of the modern city while Melle Mel’s evocative verses portray a neighborhood in decay and under threat. Mel’s delivery (particularly the memorable, staccato laughter) and the track’s closing skit drive home the disadvantages Blacks in the Bronx faced in their daily lives. Coming out of the context of old school party rap, “The Message” presented a new sound and a new challenge to the burgeoning hip hop community. This paper will examine three elements that contributed to the critical message conveyed here: the synthesizer sounds in the beat, Mel’s rap (with a focus on that laugh), and the skit of the arrest.

Notice this paragraph really lays out everything you can expect to read in the rest of the paper.

- 7) Final Paper (20 points): Prepare a final paper (minimum of two full pages of double-spaced text) on any track of your choosing (except those listed on the syllabus). The paper must have the following structure:
  - a. Opening Paragraph (revised from above)
  - b. 1-2 Historical Paragraphs (including the one you revised from above)
  - c. 2-4 Descriptive Paragraphs (including the one you revised from above)
  - d. Closing Paragraph

Clearly the emphasis should be on the descriptive elements of your paper. Roughly half of your paper will be compiled from your revision of previous assignments.