

Music 294, Rap Music in Context
Spring 1999
School of Music, Ohio State University
G. M. Boone

What is musical about rap, what is expressive? How does rap do what it does, and why? In this course we will attempt to answer these questions by taking a close look at rap music in its content, its context, and its history. We will read extensively about it, and listen to examples of different styles and periods; we will write several papers about it, and go out to listen to it. Emphasis will be placed on student participation: this is a seminar, in which student initiative is necessary in learning about and making sense of rap, and every participant in the class will play an important role. For this reason, enrollment is limited (based on permission of the instructor). There are no other prerequisites—except for enthusiasm, an open mind, and a tolerance for technical discussions of musical detail.

The double numbering (294 / 694) reflects the double status of the course, as available for credit to music majors and non-majors, undergraduates and graduates. Undergraduate music majors should sign up for 694. Call numbers: for Music 294—17908-9. For Music 694—17909-4. Credit: three hours.

SCHEDULE (PROJECTED)

Week 1	March 29 April 1	Initial discussion Student “rap autobiographies”; first readings (Toop)
Week 2	April 5 April 8	discussion of readings: rap history (Toop) selection, discussion of student projects
Week 3	April 12 April 15	discussion of readings: rap culture and context (Rose) student project presentations: bibliography
Week 4	April 19 April 22	discussion of readings: rap culture and context (George) student project presentations: existing research
Week 5	April 26 April 29	discussion of readings: rap and musical analysis (assigned articles) student project presentations: existing research
Week 6	May 3 May 6	musical analysis: assigned readings and listenings
Week 7	May 10 May 13	musical analysis, continued
Week 8	May 17 May 20	final presentations and discussion
Week 9	May 24 May 27	final presentations and discussion
Week 10	May 31 June 3	— <i>holiday</i> final presentations and discussion

Final papers due on Monday, June 7, at 5 p.m.

Final Examination: Tuesday, June 8, 11:30 - 1:18, in regular seminar room.

REQUIRED READINGS

Toop, David. *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1992.

Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover, N. H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

George, Nelson. *Hip Hop America*. New York: Viking, 1998.

The first two (Toop, Rose) have been ordered and are available at the OSU Bookstore. The third (George) is on reserve in the Music/Dance Library.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

- Class participation (attendance, discussion)..... 25%
- Occasional written assignments (quizzes, short reports and papers).... 25%
- Major project (research, presentations, final paper) 25%
- Final examination (summarizing readings and research projects)..... 25%

OTHER INFORMATION

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