Hip Hop Culture, History & Politics

Ask a new question and you will learn new things

- Michael Moore, Instructor

![Michael Moore](image)

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Spring 2009 Office Hours
Mondays 11:00 a.m.-noon
Wednesdays noon-1:00 p.m.
& by appointment

- Course links
  - “Did I Miss Anything?”
  - Course Calendar
  - Course Policies
  - Course Projects & Grades
  - Course Texts
  - iTunes @ MTU

- Hip Hop Resources
  - Hip Hop & IP
  - Hip Hop Academics?
  - Hip Hop America (USC video)
  - Hip Hop Bibliography
  - Hip Hop Research (PDF)
  - Hip Hop Studies
  - Hip Hop Culture (PBS)
  - KRS-ONE
  - Obama & Hip-Hop (NPR)
  - Obama & Hip-Hop (YouTube)
  - Rap & Hip Hop (Columbia)
  - Tupac Shakur Foundation

- MTU Resources
  - Campus Calendar
  - J.R. Van Pelt Library
  - MTU
  - MTU Lode
Welcome to Perspectives on Inquiry, Section R10

From the media we often hear about hip-hop culture and music in relation to violence, drugs, and gangs; in other literature, however, we read about values such as community, love, equality, loyalty, justice, and respect.

In this section of Perspectives on Inquiry, we explore those conflicting representations by discussing readings, films, and music and by asking a series of related questions that draw on a range of disciplines and forms of inquiry:

- What social and economic forces have given rise to hip-hop culture?
- How are hip-hop visuals, lyrics, and fashion absorbed into mainstream, suburban, and middle-class commerce and culture?
- Most representations of gangs and hip-hop culture focus on men, but what roles do women play?
- What did Tupac Shakur mean by “Thugs are convicts in God’s prison”? Or “Wars come and go, but my soldiers stay eternal”?
- What are the global and international dimensions of hip-hop?
- What are the connections between hip-hop, environmentalism, and sustainability initiatives?

As part of our study of hip-hop, we compare the assumptions, methodologies, and goals of contrasting intellectual disciplines that you will encounter in college and in life. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course, so you should plan to stay abreast of the course calendar and your regular weekly assignments.

You will write and present, both individually and in groups, approximately 40 pages during the course, and we read—closely and carefully—articles and book chapters every week. I’ll pick some and you’ll pick some.

It’s no secret around here that students who take early and regular advantage of Michigan Tech’s Writing Center not only do better in their classes, but also benefit from the interactions with the coaches and staff in the Center.

Hiphop, according to the artist KRS-ONE:

In its true essence, Hiphop cannot be (and should not be) interpreted or described fully in words. It is a feeling. An awareness.

1 Intellectually, it is an alternative behavior that enables one to transform subjects and objects in an attempt to describe and/or change the character and desires of ones being.

2 Hiphop is a unique inner-city awareness that enhances ones ability to self-create. It is a “sight.”

3 In the past Hiphop was spelled “hip-hop.” True Hiphoppas are advised to spell Hiphop with a capital “H,” as it is the name of our collective consciousness and our culture.

4 Hiphop, spelled “hip-hop,” means (hip) trendy, (hop) jump or dance. We are not just a “trendy dance” however, those that spell Hiphop like this (hip-hop) usually approaches Hiphop like a trendy dance or music.

5 In addition, Hiphop’s cultural unity is established by spelling Hiphop as one word, “Hiphop.” unless the term “Hiphop” is being displayed as art or in public advertisement.

6 Those that spell Hiphop, “hip-hop” are undermining Hiphop’s cultural unity and demeaning the importance of what Hiphop really is.

7 Know this. Hiphop spelled “Hiphop,” is not only the code for writers that participate in Hiphop’s preservation, generally it is a matter of respect!

Tupac's Tattoo

There are apocryphal stories around that the tattoo's letters — Thug Life — stand for "The Hate U Give Little Infants F***s Everybody."

How would you research such a thing?

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