

Hip-Hop, Politics, and Protest

Final Podcast Assignment Fall 2021

Overview

This semester we have been engaging with how hip-hop music as an art-form and cultural expression is inherently political. This final assignment weaves these dimensions of the course together: you will yourself make a podcast about Hip-Hop and Politics that synthesizes themes from the course.

Podcasts are increasingly a way that people—and especially people 35 and under—engage politics and culture, so this project also connects our study this semester to the broader political world. As such, this will be an open and public project: we will turn the class’s podcasts into a simple website and a podcast stream (groups can choose to opt-out of publicly posting their podcasts, with no negative consequences).

Objectives for this assignment:

- Synthesize course material and ideas, podcasting, and informed personal political thinking
- Explore multiple forms and modes of engaging Hip-Hop and political thought
- Learn and use audio recording and editing skills that may be useful beyond the classroom

Topic

You will make a podcast exploring the impact of Hip-Hop on the state of contemporary protest politics. As will learn throughout the semester, Hip-Hop encompasses “private”/intimate spheres, cultural life and cultural production, economic relations. In planning your podcast, you should refer to thinkers/artists we have engaged with during the semester. There are many different ways to organize, conceptualize, and plan podcasts, and I encourage you to think imaginatively about the ways you might bring in different forms of media, might address different political, social, economic, and cultural issues, who you might bring as a guest on your podcast from your social, academic, and other circles, and how you might creatively engage with the podcast form. This will be a group assignment with individual components. There will be intermediary steps along the way to creating your podcast.

Directions and Requirements

Length: 30-35 minutes

Content:

- Talk to and include clips from people within and outside of the Skidmore College community (students, staff, faculty) who are not in this class contributing to the topic in some form
- You may also seek out other potential contributors via email/social media, etc.
- Make sure to have multiple options for interviewees, so you do not stall your progress.
 - You may focus your podcast entirely around a discussion with a selected group of friends, colleagues, staff, faculty, etc., with you coming up with guiding questions and directing the conversation. If you choose to do this, be sure to provide context at the beginning of your podcast about who these people are, why they are part of the podcast, why it is important for

your listener to hear what they have to say, etc.), and use time at the end of your podcast to reflect on important ideas and lessons from the conversation.

- Use at least one clip of at least 30 seconds of audio media from a popular song, other podcast, spoken word performance, poetry reading, etc. (let me know if you have questions)
- Include at least three different sound effects and/or music clips
 - See <https://tinyurl.com/audio-sources> for sources of free, licensed sound and music
 - Also refer to our course playlist
- Refer to at least six different readings from the class, from at least three different topics of the class
- You should write out a script for your podcast, although you are not required to turn it in.

Episode description: When you submit your assignment, you must include an “episode description” – a write-up of about 100-125 words explaining the content and drawing in your potential listener. This will be included in the Podcasts feed

- Below your episode description, you must provide links to the source of all your audio (sound/music, spoken media, etc.)
- Each person should have an approximately equal amount of speaking time
- Each person will use a template (provided by the professor) to track their specific contributions to making the podcast.

Key dates and in-progress assignments

For each assignment not turned in on time, the grade for your podcast will decrease by 10 points. Any of these can be turned in early. Also, individuals who do not contribute to a specific component of the assignment will not receive points.

- October 8, 11:59pm (10 Points): Let me know by email what your group podcast topic will be.
- October 22, 11:59pm (30 Points): Submit topic overview (150-200 words) on the Spring. Discuss what the podcast will cover, how it will cover that topic, and why this is an important conversation to have. Also submit a basic outline for your podcast on the Spring. This should include people you may interview, preliminary ideas about the structure, song ideas, etc.
- November 12, 11:59pm (60 Points): Submit a detailed planning document (draft of a full or partial script, detailed outline, etc.) to the Spring.
- December 10, 11:59pm (100 Points): Podcast is due. Please submit:
 - Audio file of podcast in .mp3, .mp4, .wav, or .aac format (follow instructions on the Spring to submit to class dropbox)
 - Episode description + audio sources (document to the Spring) – one per group
 - Written Reflection Assignment (more details to come)

Technology

- You will either check out a USB microphone from Media Services or use the Documentary Lab in the library for a majority of your audio. Further details will be provided.
- You will receive a tutorial in audio recording, production, and editing in class.
- You should plan to use either Audacity (PC or Mac) or GarageBand (Mac) or Adobe Audition (should be on many library computers) for editing and producing your audio.