

Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture

Anthropology 36X

Spring 2008

THURS, 2—4PM

2 UNITS

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Scholars of language, for the most part, have slept on Hip Hop Culture and the innovative and inventive use of language in the Hip Hop Nation (HHN). This course focuses on Hip Hop Culture and the verbal virtuosity within the HHN. We will focus specifically on language use within the HHN, as language is perhaps the primary tool with which one can gain a thorough understanding of the culture. What is the relationship between language and identity in the HHN? Can we define a language variety known as Hip Hop Nation Language (HHNL)? How does language use within the HHN confirm or challenge our knowledge of Black Language, and how have other global languages and cultures been impacted by Hip Hop Culture and communication?

This course will also deal with complex questions of racial/ethnic identity, such as: How does HHNL disturb our notions of race and language? How have Hip Hoppers used language to navigate and negotiate Blackness, Whiteness, Latinidad and Otherness? Importantly, what can we learn about language, culture, and American society (us!) by examining the communicative modes and codes of this dynamic cultural community? While a background in anthropology is not required (though it may be helpful), a love for Hip Hop and a desire to learn about Hip Hop's culture and language are.