

Lesson Plan: Hip-Hop in the Classroom: Teaching Climate Change through Rap

As a **High School** or **Undergraduate** teacher in the **Humanities**, the **Social Sciences**, **Earth Sciences**, or **Environmental Sciences**, you can use this lesson plan to teach your students about climate change and global warming through Hip-Hop.

This lesson plan provides an introduction to Hip-Hop education and the importance of the use of popular and contemporary resources such as rap music to engage with the youth in the classroom. It focuses on the album 'The Rap Guide To Climate Chaos' by rapper and science communicator Baba Brinkman. This lesson plan provides a template on the use of contemporary and popular rap music on the science and politics of climate change so that your students can better engage with the climate crisis.

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to teach Climate Science and Climate Change in your **Humanities**, **Social Sciences**, **Earth Sciences**, or **Environmental Sciences** classrooms. Teachers in the Humanities and the Social Sciences can use this lesson plan to teach topics such as Race Studies, Cultural Studies, Social Theory as per their syllabi while teachers in the Earth Sciences and Environmental Sciences can use the lesson plan to teach Climate Change to their students using a novel pedagogical approach.

Use this lesson plan to help your students find answers to:

- What is climate change? What are the causes of global warming?
- What are the impacts of climate change?
- What is the role of fossil fuel burning in the warming of the planet?
- How do the current energy policies contribute to an increase in the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere?
- Discuss global warming and the politics underlying the problem.
- Is individual agency enough to combat climate change?
- What political reforms can incorporate individual responses to climate change in conjunction with large scale reforms?
- What is Green Capitalism? What is Cap and Trade? How would you compare it with climate taxes?

About the Lesson Plan

Grade Level: High School, Undergraduate

Discipline: Humanities, Social Sciences, Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences

Topic(s) in Discipline: Climate Change, Global Warming, Hip-Hop, Hip-Hop Education, Rap

Climate Topic: Introduction to Climate Change; Policies, Politics, and Environmental Governance; Energy, Economics, and Climate Change

Location: Global

Access: Online

Language(s): English

Approximate Time Required: 60-100 min

1 Contents

1. Reading (15 min) and Video lecture (20 min)

A reading titled 'The World IS Yours: A Brief History of Hip-Hop Education' by Martha Diaz, Education Chair- Universal Hip-Hop Museum and Founder – Hip-Hop Education Center as an introduction to Hip-Hop education.

This can be accessed at:

https://www.academia.edu/1088920/The_World_IS_Yours_A_Brief_History_of_Hip_Hop_Education

(Requires sign up for free access)

A video lecture of a panel discussion hosted by the Columbia University School of Professional Studies Community Scholars Lecture and Panel Discussion: 'Hip-Hop Education Propelling and Preserving the Movement' that provides an overview of Hip-Hop education and its importance.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKTqblvPrrY>

2. OPTIONAL: Reading (15 min) OR Video Micro-Lectures (5-15 min)

A reading from the NASA Global Climate Change website that includes contains information about what is the scientific evidence for climate change, causes and impacts of climate change.

This can be accessed at:

<https://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

OR

A set of 7 of short video micro-lectures (2-5 minutes in length) on climate change and global warming developed by the National Research Council, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

This can be accessed at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?annotation_id=annotation_709415&feature=iv&list=PL38EB9C0BC54A9EE2&src_vid=qEPVyrSWfQE

3. Audio (5 to 60 min)

Music album titled 'The Rap Guide To Climate Chaos' by rapper Baba Brinkman that contains 24 tracks (1 to 6 minutes in length)

This can be accessed at:

<https://music.bababrinkman.com/album/the-rap-guide-to-climate-chaos>

NOTE: May require purchase

OR for free access at 'Talks at Google'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1ZH6R3ldb4&t=759s>

4. Reading (5 min)

A review of the album by Scientific American titled 'Rapper's Lyrics about Climate Change Are Smart'.

This can be accessed at:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/rappers-lyrics-about-climate-change-are-smart/>

5. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- What is climate change? What are the causes of global warming?
- What are the impacts of climate change?
- What is the role of fossil fuel burning in the warming of the planet?
- How do the current energy policies contribute to an increase in the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere?
- Discuss global warming and the politics underlying the problem.
- Is individual agency enough to combat climate change?
- What political reforms can incorporate individual responses to climate change in conjunction with large scale reforms?
- What is Green Capitalism? What is Cap and Trade? How would you compare it with climate taxes?

2 Step-by-step User Guide

Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

1. Introduction to Hip-Hop Education

As an educator you may wish to read 'The World IS Yours: A Brief History of Hip-Hop Education' by Martha Diaz, Education Chair Universal Hip-Hop Museum and Founder – Hip-Hop Education Center as an introduction to Hip-Hop education.

This resource can be accessed at:

https://www.academia.edu/1088920/The_World_IS_Yours_A_Brief_History_of_Hip_Hop_Education

(Note: Requires sign up for free access)

Further, you may wish to watch a panel discussion hosted by the Columbia University School of Professional Studies Community Scholars Lecture and Panel Discussion: Hip-Hop Education Propelling and Preserving the Movement that provides an overview of Hip-Hop education and its importance.

This resource can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKTqblvPrrY>

Both these resources serve as excellent introductory resources towards how popular and contemporary material such as Hip-Hop and Rap music can be used as an effective pedagogical tool in the classroom. Rap music is an especially effective form of communicating and connecting with the youth. It is an extremely powerful tool that can make students understand the current climate crisis and an effective way to introduce the science of Earth's climate, global warming, and its impacts.

2. OPTIONAL: Introduction to Climate Change

Optional: You may wish to introduce the basics of climate change and global warming to your students using the following resources. These resources may be especially useful for students of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Introduce to your students what is climate change and global warming using a reading from the NASA Global Climate Change website. This resource contains information about what is the scientific evidence for climate change, causes and impacts of climate change.

This resource can be accessed at:

<https://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

You may choose to provide your students with further information about global climate change using a set of video micro-lectures, 'Climate Change: Lines of Evidence'. This set of 7 of short video micro-lectures (2-5 minutes in length) have been developed by the National Research Council, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

They include:

- What is Climate? Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 1

- Is Earth Warming? Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 2
- Greenhouse Gases. Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 3
- Increased Emissions. Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 4
- How Much Warming? Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 5
- Solar Influence. Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 6
- Natural Cycles. Climate Change, Lines of Evidence Chapter 7

This video playlist can be accessed at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?annotation_id=annotation_709415&feature=iv&list=PL38EB9C0BC54A9EE2&src_vid=qEPVyrSWfQE

3. Audio; The Rap Guide To Climate Chaos by Baba Brinkman

Instruct your students to listen to the album 'The Rap Guide To Climate Chaos' by Baba Brinkman prior to coming to the classroom if you are using the 'Flipped Classroom' style of pedagogy. Alternatively, you may select and play particular tracks from the album during the lecture.

This album contains 24 tracks that explain the science and politics of climate change. The album can be found at <https://music.bababrinkman.com/album/the-rap-guide-to-climate-chaos>

Note that the album is available for purchase at the link above.

The tracks are available for free viewing on YouTube as part of Baba Brinkman's performance for 'Talks At Google'. This free resource can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1ZH6R3ldb4&t=759s>

Tracks

1. Options 04:35
2. I.P.C.C. 03:59
3. Keep It Positive 01:23
4. Greenhouse (feat. Aaron Nazrul) 04:39

5. Party Don't Stop 01:05
6. Run the Joules 03:01
7. Mo Carbon Mo Problems 01:21
8. What's Beef (feat. Bill Nye) 05:27
9. Battle Lines 01:39
10. Lost in the Numbers 05:05
11. Bright Side 01:36
12. Fossil Fuel Ballers (feat. Aaron Nazrul) 04:45
13. Exxon Knew 01:23
14. Laudato Si 04:41
15. Yank the Plug 01:29
16. Make It Hot 05:57
17. Regulators 01:59
18. Carbon Bubble (feat. Mariella) 05:00
19. Stranded Assets 01:41
20. Ride Electric (feat. Fand) 04:34
21. This or That 01:23
22. Freedom Ain't Free 04:04
23. Stand Up 01:34
24. Makin' Waves (feat. Gaia's Eye) 05:54

Introduce the album to your class and discuss the following.

Overview: Baba Brinkman's Rap Guide to Climate Chaos is a hip-hop album that aims to educate people on issues of climate change by staying true to the tradition of knowledge through rhymes in the genre. The album features 24 tracks that address climate change. In songs such as 'IPCC', he addresses the findings of the committee and even internal disagreements on projections. On songs such as 'Greenhouse', he takes the listener through a sonic journey of development including the greenhouse effect, predicted rise in global temperatures from Svante's study and puts them alongside the findings of the IPCC and its accuracy. He critiques his own consumption and the paradox of being unable to individually contribute to reducing the impact of climate change without large scale policy reforms. Brinkman speaks extensively about cap and trade vs climate taxes, and the ecological debt that richer countries owe the marginalized. The album also focuses on Exxon's failures and lies and how what they have done is committed a criminal offence.

Direct your students to note how Brinkman addresses problems of capitalism and proposes economic solutions including what can be categorized as green capitalism. Ask them to make note of his references to economic policies, individual hypocrisies, ecological debt, geophysics, and political policies along with how theological institutions can address climate change.

4. Reading and Discussion

Have your students read the review 'Rapper's Lyrics about Climate Change Are Smart' by Scientific American.

This resource can be accessed at: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/rappers-lyrics-about-climate-change-are-smart/>

Now conduct a classroom discussion and encourage your students to demonstrate their understanding of the science of climate change and climate change politics and policies by identifying lyrics from tracks that address particular issues. Some topics you can direct the discussion around include:

1. Is individual agency enough to combat climate change?
2. What political reforms can incorporate individual responses to climate change in conjunction with large scale reforms?
3. What is Green Capitalism?
4. What is Cap and Trade? How would you compare it with climate taxes?
5. What is the greenhouse effect and what are the IPCC advisories on combating it?

5. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- What is climate change? What are the causes of global warming?
- What are the impacts of climate change?
- What is the role of fossil fuel burning in the warming of the planet?
- How do the current energy policies contribute to an increase in the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere?
- Discuss global warming and the politics underlying the problem.
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3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- learn about climate change and global warming
- understand the scientific causes of global warming
- discuss climate politics including the roles of major energy companies in causing global warming
- describe the main climate change policies

4 Additional Resources

If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

1. Reading; '#HipHopEd: The Compilation on Hip-hop Education (Revolutionizing Urban Education)'

#HipHopEd: The Compilation on Hip-hop Education (Revolutionizing Urban Education), 2018 by Emdin Christopher (Author), Edmund Adjapong.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.amazon.com/HipHopEd-Compilation-Education-Revolutionizing-Communities/dp/9004371850/>

2. Video; 'Hip Hop in the Classroom by Christopher Britton'

Hip Hop in the Classroom by Christopher Britton.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXnXPtDeDdc>

5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided. We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

1. Reading; 'The World IS Yours: A Brief History of Hip-Hop Education'

By [Martha Diaz](#), Education Chair- Universal Hip-Hop Museum and Founder – Hip-Hop Education Center.

2. Video; 'Hip-Hop Education: Propelling and Preserving the Movement'

By the [School of Professional Studies](#) at Columbia University.

3. Webpage; 'The Causes of Climate Change'

[NASA Global Climate Change website](#).

4. Video micro-lectures; 'Climate Change: Lines of Evidence'

Developed by the National Research Council, [The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#).

5. Audio; 'The Rap Guide To Climate Chaos'

By [Baba Brinkman](#).

6. Video; 'Rap Guide to Climate Chaos'

By [Baba Brinkman](#) on [Talks at Google](#).

7. Reading; 'Rapper's Lyrics about Climate Change Are Smart'

By [Mark Fischetti](#) for Scientific American.

8. Additional Resources

[Emdin Christopher](#) (Author), Edmund Adjapong (Editor), [Amazon.com](#).

[Christopher Britton](#), on TEDxDavenport, [TEDxTalks](#).