

# Digital Culture Case Study

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## Assignment Details

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*How much time do you have left? Check the assignment calculator, linked [here](#).*

*How do I cite tweets? Find out [here](#).*

### What are we doing?

In this exercise, you will choose a digital artifact or an aspect of digital culture to analyze and interpret. You will use the theories and concepts we learn about in the course, as well as those you already know of and learn about via your own research, to detail the origins, use and significance of your chosen artifacts in the context of Black digital culture.

This paper will be developed through a series of in-class activities including concept-mapping, database research, retrieval of primary and secondary source materials, your own critical thinking, and peer-review of your writing. The final product will be a descriptive case study, a 6- to 8-page paper in which you explore and *describe* an artifact of Black digital culture through the examination of technological, linguistic, semiotic, and/or (techno)cultural factors that shape the creation, use, and dissemination of that artifact.

### What should our papers include?

Your digital artifact analysis should include:

- An introduction to the problem under study
- A brief synopsis of related theory and concepts
- An overarching research questions addressed in your analysis
- Any definitions of terminology or jargon necessary to understand the issues in the case
- A description of how this artifact came to be, the factors that influenced its development and use, why people use(d) it, and your insights on its significance in the larger context of Black digital culture
- Your suggestions for additional research on the topic
- A reference list/bibliography of at least 10 sources (five must be scholarly articles, book chapters, dissertations, theses, etc.); you may use only one article from the course materials

## How are we going to do this?

Glad you asked! We're going to work on this paper in parts, and each part builds on the next.

**Step 1:** *Begin thinking about your topic.* In class, you'll concept-map a few hashtags from our early readings, an exercise that will help you identify some topics of interest and find keywords for use in our database-research session to find secondary sources.

**Step 2:** *Library research session.* In class, Erin Pappas, the media specialist for our department, will lead us through an exercise to find peer-reviewed journal articles and popular-press works that you'll use to ask and answer questions about your artifact and the topic(s) it represents in online discourse within Black communities.

**Step 3:** *Writing as thinking.* Rather than waiting until the night before, we will use in-class and independent writing assignments to get you thinking about ways you can use lectures, readings, class discussions, and larger bodies of literature to explain the significance of your artifact.

**Step 4:** *"Shitty first drafts."* I'm giving you one week to write one. It's due at the beginning of class on March 6.

**Step 5:** *Peer evaluation.* In your small groups, answer the following questions about your classmate's papers:

- What did you learn about Black Twitter that you did not know before you read this paper?
- If you had to tweet a headline for this paper, what would it say? (140 characters only, please; we're going old-school Twitter!)
- What's one line in this paper that you could use in everyday conversation when you tell someone about this class or this topic?
- Where did you feel lost when you read this paper?

Each of these exercises is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills you need in order to complete this assignment. If you attend class, actively participate, and take notes about both what we're learning *and* how it applies to your selected topic and hashtags, you will have more than enough material to structure and write your paper.

**Step 6:** Submit your final paper!

## How should our papers be formatted?

Your papers should be typed, double-spaced, and use Times New Roman font. They should have a one-inch margin. Please do not include a title page or abstract. Only the actual text itself will be included in the page count (your reference list is not counted toward the page count). Please use APA Style.