**Macaulay Honors College**

**Seminar 4 – Shaping the Future of New York City**

**Music as Ethnography Response**

**Instructor: Andrew Wolf**

**Due Before Class March 9th**

In light of the Beer (2014) reading I ask you to write a response to one of four music videos and their given question prompts. Your will be split into groups in class. Your group can either pick a song or follow on of the songs bellow. Beer notes that music can provide an ethnographer insider perspective into a community. What insights do you gain from your music video and how do you think you could use it in a boarder ethnographic study. For your given song approach the song as an ethnographer: take notes, apply coding, and analyze your biases. For this assignment write a short response reflecting on the song, the sociological insider insights you gain from this song, and how you could design a project around this song. Do not just limit yourself to listening and watching the video. Search the internet for lyrics and interviews that further revel the artist’s meanings.

**The reflection (1-2 pages) should include the flowing:**

1. **Discussion of the song’s meaning and sociological insider insights gained?**
   1. Question prompts:
      1. What does the song mean?
      2. What does the artist say the song means?
      3. What communities they are representing and/or speaking about?
      4. Do you trust their narrative? Are their limits to what they say or their ability to speak for this community? Is there a clear community?
      5. What key insider insights are gained?
2. **Describe a larger ethnographic project that this song could fit into based on the research question that is paired with your song.**
   1. Question prompts:
      1. Who would you study? What would be your research site?
      2. What would be your research questions?
      3. How would you explore the insider insights from your cultural artifact?
      4. How would you design your study?

**Music as Ethnography Songs**

All these songs are easily found on youtube and Spotify for free.

1. **Solange – “Don’t Touch My Hair”** from A Seat at the Table (2016)
   1. Research question: What does “Don’t Touch My Hair” tell us race in America and its psychological impact on African Americans? Also what does it tell us about the Black Lives Matter Movement?
2. **Jay-Z – “The Story of O.J.”** from 4:44 (2017)
   1. Research question: What does “The Story of O.J.” tell us about race relation in America and specifically between Blacks and Jews in Brooklyn? This song has been accused of anti-Semitism but Jay-Z responded he is commenting on the anti-Semitism in the community he is from. Explore this debate and decide how do you feel about these claims?
3. **Drake – “In My Feelings”** from Scorpion (2018)
   1. Research question: What does “In My Feelings” say about the construction of masculinity in Hip-Hop and American culture? How is or isn’t Drake subverting dominant paradigms.
4. **Courtney Barnett – “Nameless, Faceless”** from Tell Me How You Really Feel (2018)
   1. Research question: What does “Nameless, Faceless” say about the construction of gender and what does it tell us about the #MeToo movement?