INTRODUCTION

In my spring 2016 Rhetoric and Writing course (English 103) I used music as a way to introduce the concepts of: 1) rhetorical situation and 2) rhetorical appeals. First, every song has an author(s), audience, topic, purpose, and context (its rhetorical situation) and authors make rhetorical choices regarding credibility, emotions, and logic to persuade their audience to take action (e.g., listen to his/her song, buy his/her album, etc.). Yet, songs are also a space where artists make serious cultural critiques. In class, I used examples like Tupac Shakur’s “Changes” and Mackelmore’s and Ryan Lewis’ “Same Love” to demonstrate that music is an avenue that culture, specifically American, expresses injustices and to encourage students to become more critical and aware of the explicit and implicit arguments found in the music American culture privileges.

During this unit, Beyoncé released her song “Formation” and its accompanying video, which embraces her Southern Black Female heritage. However, critics immediately addressed the video’s direct references to racial and authoritative tensions in recent U.S. events (Hurricane Katrina and Black Lives Matter) (Choi and Donnella). Beyoncé’s Super Bowl Half-Time performance sparked more controversy as all performers wore costumes echoing Black Panther uniforms while dancing in an X to paying tribute to Malcolm X (Choi and Donnella). Her song, its video, and her half-time performance pulled an abundance of cultural treads together, making specific arguments about American culture.

I was delighted that my students wanted to talk about Beyoncé song, video, and performance. A week later, the conversation continued as Saturday Night Live made a parody of the on-going debate surrounding Beyoncé’s song, “The Day Beyoncé Turned Black.” However, there were two voices that were noticeably absent from these conversations—my two Chinese students. I struggled to bring them into the conversation and quickly became concerned that my reliance on American culture for this unit, and inevitably, later units was unintentionally excluding them.

To address this lack of inclusivity in my fall 2016 Rhetoric and Writing courses, I will focus on two signs of Feminist teaching as described by Karlyn Crowley: 1) appreciate and encourage student voice and 2) prompt awareness of intersecting identities, oppressions, and realities as they appear in both the classroom and in class material. While, Crowley more directly uses these signs to address gender, race, and identity in her discussion, I feel these practices will also translate to being more inclusive of cultural identity or nationality as well.

RATIONALE

My inclusive pedagogy innovation is important for three reasons: 1) by appreciating and encouraging student voices I will be promoting a more learner-centered environment, specifically by using content (or songs) provided by students as the starting point for class discussions and 2) by prompting
awareness of intersecting identities, oppressions, and realities as they appear in the classroom and class material students can move beyond the awareness to actively critiquing the cultural arguments up for discussion in a safe space.

Asking students to bring in examples of songs that make arguments for the class to discuss will allow students to bring their interests into the class rather than me bringing my assumptions of their interests. This means I will listen first and allow students to respond the their songs and their classmates songs. As David Matsumoto suggests, “This means that teachers who are interested in these kind of student outcomes may need to create opportunities for students to have real-life emotions” (8). I feel this means students will have a more authentic, real-world experience analyzing these songs.

Addressing intersecting identities, oppressions, and realities as they appear in these songs students not only become aware of these tensions, but can being to actively critique them not just for my class but for themselves. Practicing this critique in the class with songs and issues students are genuinely interested in and responding to can be the jumping off point for them to continue to critique arguments they might have taken for granted in the past (songs, music videos, movies, television series, social media posts, etc.).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
SONG RHETORICAL ANALYSIS UNIT PLAN
At the end of this unit, students will submit a 1,000-1,250 word rhetorical analysis of their selected song. Students’ analyses will focus on the rhetorical situation of their selected songs, songs’ arguments, and appeals the artist(s) used to make songs’ argument successful.

The following is a castle-top representation of my Song Rhetorical Analysis Unit. Activities in green represent in-class work and activities in red represent out-of-class work. Also, this unit plan incorporates the digital text book Rhetoric, Composition, and Expression for a Digital Age (RCE) and The Writing Program produced handbook Ball Point (BP).

WEEK 1
Intro to Project/Examples
Listening/watching instructor examples
writing
discussing (small)

Reading/Watching:
RCE Lesson 2, chunk 1

Rhetorical Situation
Note taking
Analyzing student supplied examples
Discussing (large)

Brief Song Reflection due
Writing Reflecting
WEEK 2

Intro to Appeals
Note taking
Analyzing
Discussing (large)

Reading/Watching:
RCE Lesson 2, chunk 5

Ethos
Listening/watching
student supplied examples

Writing
Searching for

Outline due
Writing
Planning/Brainstorming

WEEK 3

Pathos
Listening/watching
student supplied examples

Writing
Searching for

Logos
Listening/watching
student supplied examples

Writing
Searching for

Draft due
Writing

WEEK 4

Peer Workshop
Reading (out loud)
Responding/Describing
Annotating

Reading: (BP)
"Revision"

Revision/Work Day
Writing
Revising

Writing & Revising

Project due
