

Conference analyzes gender, sexuality and hip-hop

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An intensive series of discussions about “hip-hop feminism” drew a group of scholars, activists, students and performers from across the country to the Tulane University uptown campus on Thursday and Friday (Dec. 5 and 6) for the [Gender, Sexuality and Hip-Hop Conference](#).



The Gender, Sexuality and Hip-Hop Conference was led by Tulane political science professor Melissa Harris Perry, who taught a course in Hip-Hop and Feminism this semester.

Held at the Lavin-Bernick Center, the conference featured presentations and performances that examined different aspects of the new branch of feminism that has grown out of contemporary hip-hop culture. The term “hip-hop feminism” was coined by author Joan Morgan, who gave the meeting's keynote speech at Dillard University.

[Melissa Harris-Perry](#), Tulane political science professor and director of the Anna Julia Cooper Project, led the conference, in part as a culmination of the Hip-Hop and Feminism course that she taught this semester. The event was organized by the AJC Project with support from the Tulane Department of Political Science and Dillard University.

The conference's focus was the intersection of gender, sexuality and hip-hop, and how this has affected feminist attitudes, racial stereotypes and other social issues.

Presenters utilized a broad range of ideas and questions to explore this intersection, from stereotypes to “gender-bending” to the effect of performers like Nicki Minaj on the evolution of hip-hop culture.

In one presentation, Jasmine Brito and Autumn Robinson of Breaking the Silence: Passing the Mic to Our Daughters Project used clips from a documentary that they are creating to highlight some of the “gaps” in hip-hop feminism.

“The 'ideal' female figure in hip-hop culture,” said Brito, “is portrayed as acquiescent to the needs of the male figure or rapper,” thus undermining the image of a confident, independent woman that hip-hop feminists strive to cultivate.

On its website, [the Anna Julia Cooper Project](#) is creating a database of conference materials. Harris-Perry said she will include a segment on the conference in her MSNBC talk show, which airs on Sunday (Dec. 15) at 9 a.m. CST.