

**ENGL 3347 - 002**

**“The Life and Times of S. Carter”**

**Spring 2016**

**Class Meetings:** MWF, 110 Preston Hall (PH), 1:00 – 1:50 PM

Instructor: Dr. Kenton Rambsy **Office Number:** 413 Carlisle

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**Office Hours:**

Mon, Wed, Fri 10: 10:50 AM

And, by appointment

**Course Description:** “The Life and Times of S. Carter” places Jay Z’s self-described “four classic albums”—*Reasonable Doubt* (1996), *The Blueprint* (2001), *The Black Album* (2003), and *Vol. 2* (1998)— in a broad African American literary continuum of autobiographical works. In this course, we will use text-mining software to quantify linguistic and thematic trends between Jay Z’s albums and classic literary texts by writers such as Frederick Douglass, Richard Wright, Malcolm X, and Ralph Ellison. We will compile metadata on Jay Z in order to produce thematic data visualizations, literary timelines, and a list of key terms, pinpointing intellectual and cultural components of rap music.

**The main objectives will involve developing:**

* a variety of research methods to study and explore topics related to African American literature
* an awareness of the overlap in themes in African American literature and rap music
* an awareness of technology and digital humanities
* cultivating an awareness of academic and pop culture rhetoric in order to produce quality online annotations
* use writing and reading for inquiry, thinking, learning, and communicating

Helpful Resources

Jay Z Rap Genius

* Jay Z Lyrics <http://genius.com/artists/Jay-z>

Matt Daniels (Metadata, Data Visualization, and Hip Hop, Samples)

* The Etymology of Short in Hip Hop (<http://poly-graph.co/shorty.html>)
* The Largest Vocabulary in Hip Hop (<http://poly-graph.co/vocabulary.html>)
* Outkast in Charts (<http://poly-graph.co/outkast.html>)

Voyant and Text-Mining

* What is Text Mining-
  + <http://documents.software.dell.com/Statistics/Textbook/Text-Mining#incorporating>
* Voyant Youtube Overview-
  + <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDCADF35691404F54>
* Lexical Density-
  + <http://www.analyzemywriting.com/lexical_density.html>
* Text-mining overview
  + <http://www.sajim.co.za/index.php/SAJIM/article/viewFile/353/344>

**Grade Break Down**

*Required Assignments:*

**40% — Daily Grade**

**20% — Writing Assignments (#1 Due Date — Feb. 19 & #2 Due Date — Mar. 4)**

**10% — Group Project Metadata Collection Project (Due Date — March 11)**

*Optional Assignments:*

**10% — Custom Dataset Due Date – April 15)**

**10% — Data Visualizations & Custom Dataset (Due Date – April 15)**

**10% — Jay Z Style Biography (Due Date — April 29)**

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**Total 100%**

**Extra Credit Opportunities**

**Instagram Discussion Group:** *You have the option of earning 25 additional daily grade points participating in an Instagram discussion group. An image and comment will be posted to the @krambsy Instagram account with the hashtag #BlackStudiesOnIG. You have exactly 2 weeks from the day the image is posted to leave a comment or respond to a user. The comment should be at least 25 words, but no more than 50 words. Also, you should use at least 1 word from the “class keywords” list.*

**Twitter Project:** *You have the opportunity to earn 10 additional points to your daily grade with an online Twitter project. You can create a reservoir by tweeting articles related to Jay Z’s music and/or life that are helpful to understand concepts in the course. You should use the Hashtag #TheJayZClass and create a sentence explaining the articles relevance.* You can make up to a maximum of 200 extra points total on this assignment.

**Paragraph Revisions:** *You have an opportunity to earn 50 additional daily grade points by revising one of your writing assignments. For this opportunity, you should revise each sentence of the paragraph and create a 1- 2 sentence annotation (of no more than 60 words) describing the reasons you made the individual changes.*

**Course Assignment Explanations**

**1) 40% — Daily Grade**

You will be evaluated daily on class attendance, class participation, and in-class writing assignments. If you miss class, you are unable to make up daily grade assignments even with excused absences.

**2) 20% — Writing Assignments**

*Writing Assignment #1—Due Date Feb. 19*

For this assignment, you will write 3 separate paragraphs between 5- 7 sentences (between 225 – 300 words). Each paragraph should connect a particular aspect of Jay Z’s music to an overarching theme of African American literature. You may connect Jay Z’s work to a author/group of authors, themes, time periods, or specific works related to African American literature.

You should choose between 3 of the 4 paragraph types to place Jay Z squarely within an African American literary tradition. Successful assignments will use descriptive words, action verbs, incorporate literary terminology into the assignment, and adhere to proper English grammatical conventions.

*Paragraph Types:*

* + Narration Paragraph—Tell a story. Go chronologically, from start to finish.
  + Description Paragraph—Provide specific details about the structure, theme, and orientation of the composition providing descriptive words. Organize spatially, in order of appearance, or by topic. (See an example.)
  + Process Paragraph—Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third.
  + Classification Paragraph—Separate into groups or explain the various parts of a topic.

*Writing Assignment #2—Due Date: March 4*

For this assignment, you will write 3 separate paragraphs between 5- 7 sentences (between 225 – 300 words). Each paragraph will characterize the information in a predesigned class data visualization. The paragraph should logically and coherently relate to the data visualization by illustratinga particular stylistic feature or thematic component of Jay Z’s music.

You should create 3 paragraphs that graphically and literary represent a specific component of Jay Z’s music. Successful assignments will place the data visualization in proper context, use descriptive words, action verbs, incorporate literary terminology into the assignment, and adhere to proper English grammatical conventions.

**3) 10% — Group Project Metadata Collection Project**

*This project is a two part collaborative assignment.*

*Part 1 Due Date: March 11*

*In the first part of the assignment, your group will complete a metadata collection project on one of Jay Z’s 4 classic album. The information should be collected using Voyant text-mining software and entered into a prefixed Excel spreadsheet. The metadata project will be evaluated on completion and accuracy.*

*Part 2 Due Date: Specific Date Assigned to each group*

*In the second part of the assignment, your group will lead a class discussion on one of Jay Z’s four classic albums. In order to receive full credit, you must be in class the day of the presentation and contribute at least 3 comments and/or questions to the discussion.*

*A successful group-lead discussion will use quantitative data to support claims, incorporate “class keywords” in dialogue, and propose possible answers to the following questions:*

1. What is the significance of the title?
2. What major themes drive the story/stories?
3. What notable racial and cultural traditions, gender and sexuality characteristics, and or socioeconomic factors were at play throughout the work?
4. What is motivating action(s) of the story’s protagonist?
5. How is protagonist and/or storyteller characterized?
6. What are some of the most profound passages?
7. Describe the structure of the work

**4) 10% —Original Dataset and 2 Visualizations**

Due Date Apr. 15

For this project, you have the option to collaborate on the creation of an original dataset and two data visualizations. You will use at least 10 Jay Z songs to construct a 10 field minimum dataset. You should use the dataset to create a visualization using either Tableau Public, Google Fusion Tables, or Voyant to create data visualizations.

Accompanying the dataset, you should write a 5 sentence paragraph (between 250 – 300 words) explaining the methodology of your information collection process and potential value of your dataset for interpreting the lyrical, thematic, and/or historical value of Jay Z’s music.

For the two visualization you create, you should submit a 5 sentence paragraph (between 250 – 300 words), for each visualization, explaining how the image relates to an aspect of Jay Z’s music. Successful assignments will place the data visualization in proper context, use descriptive words, action verbs, incorporate literary terminology into the assignment, and adhere to proper English grammatical conventions.

**5) 10% — Jay Z Style Project**

(Due Apr. 29)

*For this assignment, you have the option to collaborate on an 700 – 1000 word article focusing on a specific aspect of Jay Z’s music.*

*The format of the project should mirror an online article. As a result, paragraphs may be restructured in order to make the project more visually appealing. For instance, newspaper articles have short paragraphs, often one to three sentences. The sentences are usually simpler, declarative sentences, as well--although not always.*

*In this assignment, you should explain a specific component of Jay Z’s linguistic style, address a particular recurring theme, connect his work to the larger field of African American literature, and incorporate 3 data visualizations.*

*In addition, quantitative data should be used to back up the claims made in the overall project. There should be a clearly identifiable problem and evidence be presented logically and coherently in order to off*

*Successful project will be evaluated on the ability to*

* *adhere to all assignment guidelines*
* *present and maintain coherent argument throughout the article*
* *incorporate and properly contextualize 3 data visualization*
* *use credible and relevant sources to back up claims*
* *use proper language and grammatical conventions*
* *incorporate a paragraph connecting Jay Z to a specific component of African American literature*
* *refer to/discuss at least 5 Jay Z songs in article*
* *have a minimum of 700 words but not exceeding 1,000 words*

**Spring 2016 Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

W (Jan. 20): Class Introduction

F (Jan. 22): Wikipedia: [African American Literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_literature) and [Rapping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapping)

**Week 2: Software Training**

M (Jan. 25): December 4th (The Black Album) and [Jay Z CNN- Decoded Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSSaQyJ13Bo&list=PL6VfUwncYUh0Bjjr1YCbjNvVUsjFKFudF&index=8) (Nov. 2010)

W (Jan. 27): How To Use Google for Research (Library 315A)

F (Jan. 29): Metadata Session (Library 315A)

**Week 3: Who is Jay Z?**

M (Feb. 1): Overview of Tableau Public (Library 315A)

W (Feb. 3): Voyant Software Training and Never Change (The Blueprint)

F *(Feb. 5):* Voyant Software Training Continued

**Week 4: Social Philosophy**

M (Feb. 8): Regrets (Reasonable Doubt)/Can I Live (Reasonable Doubt)

W (Feb. 10): Dead Presidents II (Reasonable Doubt)

F *(Feb. 12):* [Reasonable Doubt Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPvpp54xc8s) (1997)

**Week 5: Boasting**

M (Feb. 15): Public Service Announcement (Black Album)

W (Feb. 17): What More Can I Say (Black Album)

**F *(Feb. 19—Assignment #1 Due)*:** [Bill Maher’s ‘Real Time’ with Jay Z](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEkVCcdUJw8)

**Week 6: Cultural Hero**

M (Feb. 22): Takeover (Blueprint)

W (Feb. 24): Renegade (Blueprint)

F *(Feb. 26): Group Meeting*

**Week 7: Wordplay**

M (Feb. 29): 22 Two’s (Reasonable Doubt)/Friend or Foe (Reasonable Doubt)

W (Mar. 2): Girls, Girls, Girls, (Blueprint)

**F *(Mar. 4—Assignment #2 Due)*:** [Howard Stern Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2gHTglfvxU) (November 2010) (10:00- 24:50

**Week 8: Facing Adversity**

M (Mar. 7): Hard Knock Life (Vol. 2)

W (Mar. 9): Dirt Off Your Shoulder (Black Album)

**F *(Mar. 11— Metadata Collection Project Due):***[Breakfast Club Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqAFi_uiquA) (July 2013)

**Week 9: Spring Break March 14 – March 18**

**Week 10: TBA**

M (Mar. 21):

W (Mar. 23):

F (Mar. 25):

**Week 11: TBA**

M (Mar. 28):

W (Mar. 30):

F *(Apr. 1):*

**Week 12: Reasonable Doubt**

M (Apr. 4): Album Overview

W (Apr. 6): Specific Characteristics of Album

F (Apr. 8): Top 5 songs on *Reasonable Doubt*

**Week 13: Vol. 2**

M (Apr. 11): Album Overview

W (Apr. 13): Specific Characteristics

F *(Apr. 15):* Top 5 songs on *Vol. 2*

**Week 14: The Blueprint**

M (Apr. 18): Album Overview

W (Apr. 20): Technical Features of Album

F (Apr. 22): Top 5 songs on *The Blueprint*

**Week 15: The Black Album**

M (Apr. 25): Album Overview

W (Apr. 27): Specific Characteristics

F (Apr. 29): Top 5 songs on *The Black Album*

**Week 16: Semester wrap-up**

M (May 2): Top 5 Part 1

W (May 4): Top 5 Part 2

**Classroom Policies**

**Civility Statement:** I enjoy student ideas and welcome them! Comments, questions, and opinions about the topics covered in class are encouraged, but please be mindful to express yourself using respectful and appropriate language. We would like to maintain a constructive learning environment. Therefore, no one is permitted to make offensive, intimidating, or malicious comments or behave in a disruptive manner. Additionally, the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices will not be tolerated. Thank you in advance for adhering to the policy.

**Attendance Policy:** Because this course is a discussion course and the work we do in the class is designed to help you understand the reading and improve your writing, you must attend class.

To be excused, you must present sufficient documentation. Approved forms of documentation include medical excuses, police records, and documentation of funeral attendance. Of course, you are excused from class for religious holidays. If you are a member of a group that travels on behalf of the University (intramural teams are non-applicable), you must provide a letter from your coach or director along with a schedule of the classes you will miss due to travel.

**Late Work:** In the event that you are absent, you are STILL RESPONSIBLE for turning in all work by the dates listed on the syllabus. Unless we have made other plans together, in advance of the absence or missed assignment, I will not accept late work, so I encourage you to make arrangements with a classmate to submit any assignments if you will be absent.

**University Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations: UT** Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).** Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*. For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR)**: Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In ***Quick Hits*** sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information