

# Hip Hop for Global Literacy | Teaching the Arab Spring

Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies Outreach Program

## →Background Information

- **Recommended Reading:** Gelvin, James. (2012). *The Arab Uprisings, What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- **Country-by-Country:** This website explains ‘What Happened’ and ‘Where are We Now?’ for each of the countries that experienced unrest during the Arab Uprisings, from relatively minor protests to major revolutions. (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Oman, and Kuwait). <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-12482291>
- **Arab Uprisings, Resource by the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University:** Great and comprehensive resource that includes background information, a media and news section, and teaching materials about the Arab Uprisings. There are also further documents on Hip Hop and the Arab Uprisings. <http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/themes/arab-uprisings/>

## →Music and the Arab Spring

- **The Rap Songs of the Arab Spring, NPR:** This NPR story from 2011 features YouTube videos of artists who responded to—and provoked—the protests in countries like Egypt and Tunisia. Some of these songs played a direct role in popular uprisings, while others helped galvanize international support. <http://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2011/06/09/137067390/the-rap-songs-of-the-arab-spring>
- **Revolutionary Arab Rap:** “This blog aims to explore what Arabic hip hop can tell us about the current Arab uprisings and the changing relationship between Arab citizens and their governments.” The author of the blog has posted the Arabic lyrics and English translation for about 90 songs and counting in the “Index” section of the site. <http://revolutionaryarabrap.blogspot.com/p/subtitled-videos.html>
- **Interviews with Arab Rappers:** In a three-part series, Charles Tripp, Professor of Middle East Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of East London conducts interviews with artists Libyan rapper Ibn Thabit, Iraqi rapper The Narcicyst, and Egyptian rapper El Deeb, on politics and revolution. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/freeform-tags/tahrir-square-meme-event-series-at-university-of-east-london>
- **The Rap Anthem of the Mideast Revolution:** Interview with Tunisian artist, El Général. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2049456,00.html>
- **‘I Protest through Songs and Poetry!’:** Interview with Egyptian artist, Mohammed El Deeb. <http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/prj/ffs/the/a96/en8626678.htm>
- **Hip-hop is a soundtrack to the North African revolt:** Article that discusses hip hop in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria. <http://freemuse.org/archives/4999>

## → Global Hip Hop Resources

- **Egypt's Revolutionary Music, And 7 Other Revolutions That Turned To Song:** A Huffington Post article that relates the songs of the Arab Uprisings to the use of music in other historical revolutions. Throughout history, music and poetry has been a way to give voice to the people. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/25/egypt-revolution-january-25\\_n\\_1229332.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/25/egypt-revolution-january-25_n_1229332.html)

- **International Underground: Hip Hop as Global Rebel Music:** This article connects the hip hop artists of the Arab Spring to the foundations of hip hop, as well as hip hop in America today. <http://genius.com/posts/618-International-underground-hip-hop-as-global-rebel-music>
- **Next Level Program:** An international musical exchange and diplomacy initiative funded by the U.S. Department of State and run by UNC-Chapel Hill. This collaborative international exchange program engages underserved communities in six countries around the world and uses artistic collaboration and social engagement to enhance people-to-people diplomacy, especially among young audiences. <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/next-level>
- **Hip Hop throughout the Global African Diaspora:** This website, created by Duke University provides information on the Genesis of hip hop, the commercialization, as well as the globalization of hip hop, with a focus on the global African Diaspora. <http://sites.duke.edu/hiphop/commercialization-of-hip-hop/>
- **Film: Shake the Dust:** “From executive producer and rapper Nasir “Nas” Jones and journalist-turned-filmmaker Adam Sjöberg, Shake the Dust chronicles the influence of breakdancing, exploring how it strikes a resonant chord in the slums, favelas and ghettos of the world and far beyond (Cambodia, Uganda, Yemen, Colombia). Showcasing some of the most jaw-dropping breakdancing moves ever committed to film, Shake the Dust is an inspiring tribute to the uplifting power of music and movement.” <http://www.shakethedust.org/>
- **Film: Slingshot Hip Hop:** This film Slingshot Hip Hop braids together the stories of young Palestinians living in Gaza, the West Bank and inside Israel as they discover Hip Hop and employ it as a tool to surmount divisions imposed by occupation and poverty. Directed by [Jackie Reem Salloum](#), and produced by Rumzi Araj and [Waleed Zaiter](#). <http://www.slingshothiphop.com/posts/>

## → Arab American Artists

- **Compilation of Artists:** There are numerous Arab American hip hop artists on the music scene today; some may be household names while others are less widely known. <http://arabsinamerica.unc.edu/arts-music/hip-hop/>
- **RapGenius.com:** This website helps decode lyrics from artists around the world. <http://rap.genius.com/>
- **Omar Offendum:** A Syrian-American artist, Offendum incorporates his heritage into his songs by singing about current events in Syria, as well as politics in America. <http://offendum.blogspot.com/>
- **The Narcycist:** As an Iraqi-Canadian, the Narcycist discusses the struggles he faces living with juxtaposing cultures and a hybrid Arab-North American identity. <https://www.facebook.com/Narcycyst>
- **Native Deen:** Native Deen is a musical group from the Washington, D.C. area that specializes in Islamic Hip hop. They seek to inspire young people to keep their Islamic faith amidst the pressures and temptations of daily life. Native Deen uses only percussion instruments and synthetic sounds during their performances, in line with one of the opinions on the use of musical instruments in Islam. <http://nativedeen.com/>
- **Miss Undastood:** Miss Undastood began writing lyrics and rapping as a young girl to express herself within the confines of a strict school system. She is proud to be a strong female presence in a music genre often dominated by male musicians. [http://www.muslimhiphop.com/Hip-Hop/Miss\\_Undastood](http://www.muslimhiphop.com/Hip-Hop/Miss_Undastood)