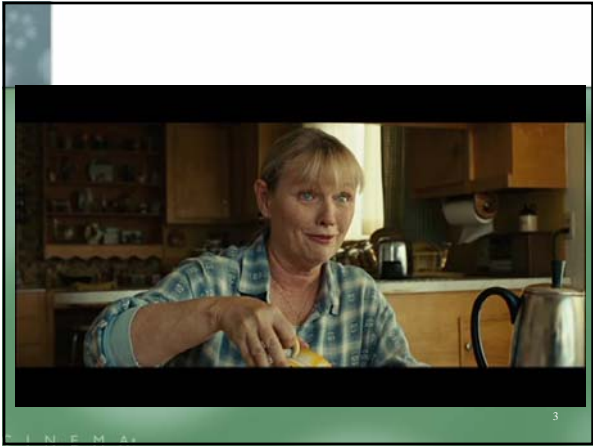
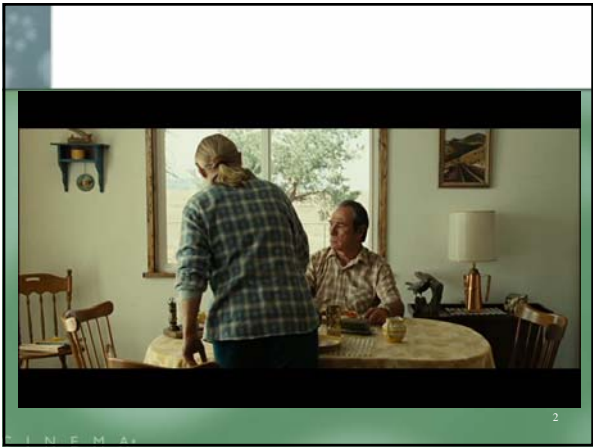




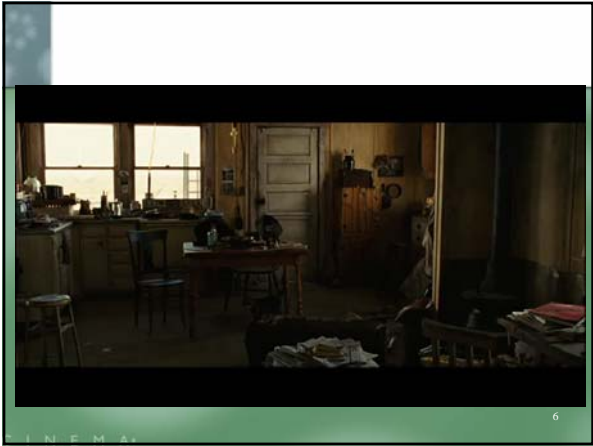
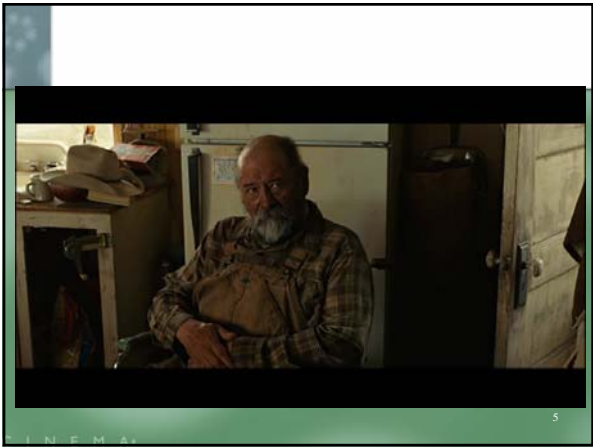
**Jesuz. Hip Hop. Film.  
Tha Gospel.**

*Cultivating the Gospel  
within Film & Hip Hop to  
Engage The Growing  
Population of 'Nones'*

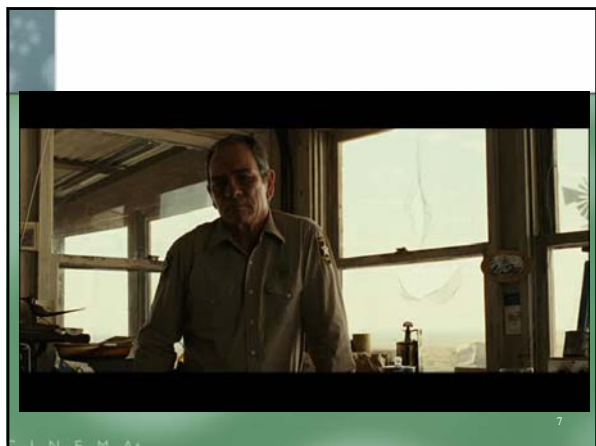
Daniel White Hodge PhD



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### No Country For Old Men

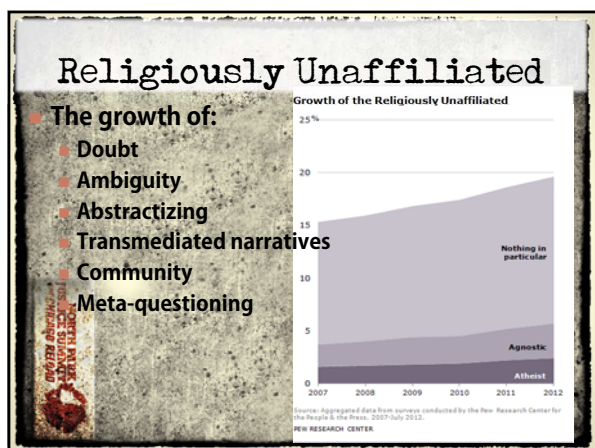
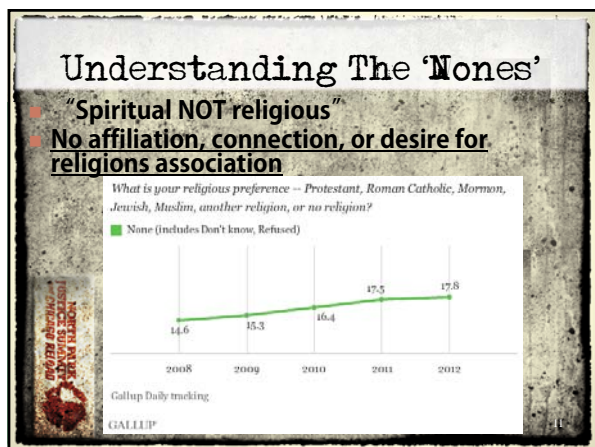
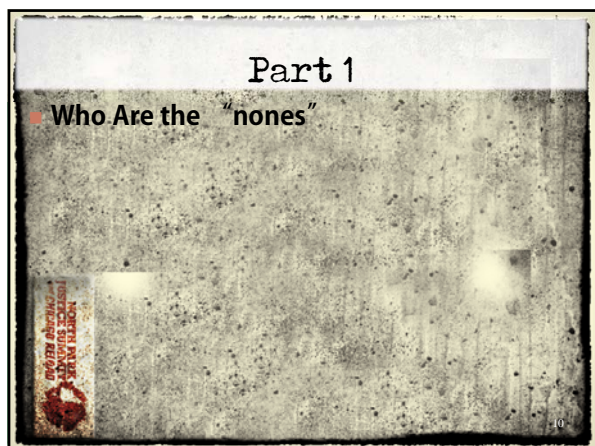
- Abstractized concepts (death, life, purpose of life, meaning)
- Period film
- Little to no soundtrack
- Violence, money, greed, power, morals, & ethics
- Bad guy wins
- Doubt, ambiguity, & uncertainty

### Concepts

- Reversing the Hermetical flow
  - Popular culture to interpret Biblical & theological concepts
- Theomusicology
  - Profane
  - Secular
  - Sacred



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### Societal Shifting

1. Mosaics are informed
2. Redefining what "Church" is
3. Change is immanent
4. Religion is losing its Modernity value
5. Spirituality & openness to Jesus is HIGH

**Are You Looking For a Religion that Would be Right for You?**  
Among those who identify their religion as "nothing in particular," % who say they are ...

Source: Pew Research Center survey, June 28-July 9, 2012, Q72. Based on those who say their religion is "nothing in particular."  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Part 2

■ Film Theoretical Concepts

### ENGAGING A CULTURE...

We are attempting to move forward into culture and begin to see Jesus in everything, even the PROFANE!  
there are several stances the church has taken over the years:

- avoidance: christ vs. culture; culture is bad, so leave it alone
- caution: christ & culture in paradox; be careful, the "world" might influence you.
- dialogue: christ transforms culture; let's talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- appropriation: christ of culture; jesus is in every part of culture, and we can see him in the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- divine encounter: christ above culture; jesus is above and in culture, still, he dominates and governs this world, both the sacred & profane.

\*adapted from craig denweiler © 2009 Richard W. Hodge, "Christ & Culture" 1969

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### Useless Beauty: Finding God @ the movies


- Films overall provide:
  1. A voice for people
  2. Community
  3. Meaning
  4. Abstract art
  5. Spirituality
  6. Post Modern Contextualization
  7. Fantasy
  8. Love
  9. Tension on big life issues
  10. A spatial context for questions & dialogue



### FILM STUDY & CRITIQUE

*(Taken from Robert L. Johnston 2000 Real Spirituality: Theology & Film in Dialogue)*

- Basic understanding of film theory
  - Color
  - Props
  - Music
  - Themes
  - Characters
  - Reoccurring themes
  - Language used



### The Messianic Figure In Film

- The Messianic arch-figure:
  - A Christ like character
  - Still human and fallen
  - Can evoke truth & light within their character while still embracing grace & love
  - Typically the character that does not take on a great deal of focus

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### What Is This?

- Urban/ Post Soul Films" :
  - The search for meaning
  - The search for Jesus
  - The struggles for justice
  - The search for significance
  - The sociological aspects of life urban perspective
  - The psychological aspects of life from an urban perspective



### What Should We Look For?

- View films 4-5 initially, then 2-3 for notes, 2-3 more times for visual & thematic effects
- Complex matter
- Be cautious of 1-2-3 modalities & messages
- Cautious of "blockbusters"
- Research director, writers, producers to start
- Debrief in community



### Types of films...

- Bottom Shelf (For meaning & substance)
  - Happy Feet
  - Anything Pixar
  - Second Hand Lions
  - Amazing Grace
- Mid Level (Narrative & Character Developed)
  - Narnia Series
  - Star Wars Trilogy
  - What's Cooking?
  - Malibu's Most Wanted
- Advanced & Abstract
  - American Beauty
  - The Matrix Trilogy
  - The Lord Of The Rings Trilogy
  - North Country
  - Spanglish
  - No Country for Old Men
  - Babel
  - The Believer



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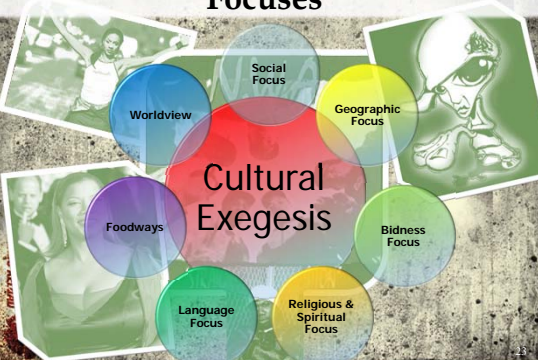
### Elements of hip hop spirituality

- Hip Hop explores a basic theology of life:
  - Pain
  - Love
  - Loss of hope
  - Hope
  - Joy
  - Nihilism
- Contextualizing deity
- The edification of the oppressed & despised





### Exegeting Culture: The 7 Cultural Focuses



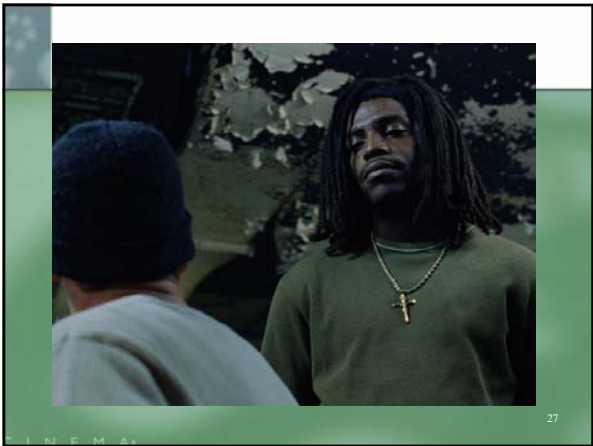
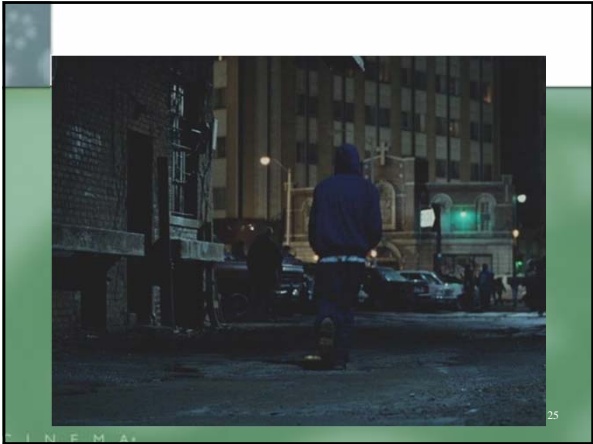
Case Studies on Film

## PART II

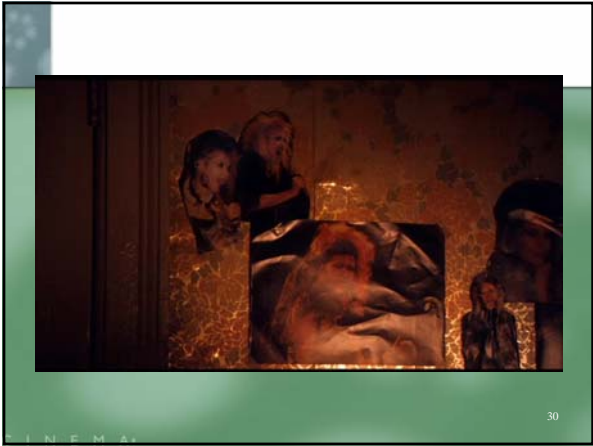


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### Menace II Society in Perspective

- Grandparents raising their kids kids; generational double duty
- Generational issues:
  - Lack of legacy in the family name
  - Shadow economic traditions
  - Father & mother both involved in rough activities
  - Cycle of poverty both economical and sociological
  - Soul & post soul conflicts
- Displacement & the lack of connection to mainstream society
- Young Black males becoming villanized
- The lack of:
  - Hope
  - Vision
  - Opportunity
  - Access
  - Access to family legacy
  - Premature death at the hands of another Black male
- God still present, even in the profane in Caine & Old Dogg's life; still wanting to be with them



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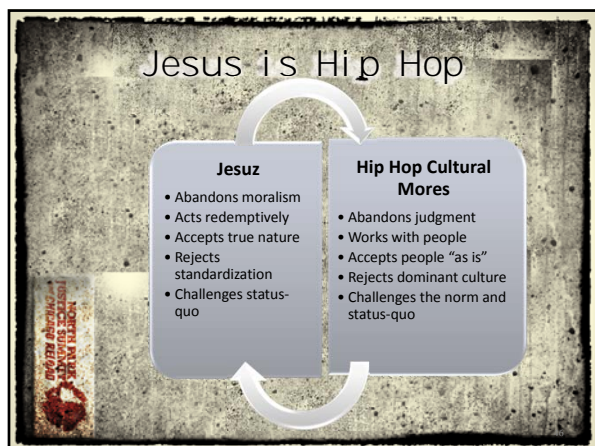




### Jesuz is Hip Hop

- Jesuz & Hip Hop's connections:
  - Baby mamma drama (Mary & the issue of virginity)
  - City officials hated him (Government & policy designed against him)
  - Religious officials seen Him as a threat (Sadducees & Pharisees)
  - Was beat down by the law (Brought to trial as an "innocent" man)
  - Was born in a 'hood (The manger & the outskirts of the city)
  - One of his boyz did him in & one denied him 3 times
  - Hung out on the margins

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### Reversing the Hermeneutical Flow: Jesuz & Hip Hop

- John 6
  - Jesuz & community
  - Jesuz with knuckle heads
  - Jesuz performing
- Strong Language
  - Eat flesh
  - Drink blood
  - Believe in "Him"
  - Controversy
- Many withdrew
  - Anger
  - Frustration
  - Disappointment
  - *Pre-imagined belief systems*
  - *A hostile "Good News" among ill-informed minds & hearts*

### SO MANY TEARS

I shall not fear no man but God  
 Though I walk through the valley of death  
 I shed so many tears (if I should die before I wake)  
 Please God walk with me (grab a nigga and take me to Heaven)

VERSE 1: (Exhortation of Lament & Misery)  
 Back in elementary, I thrived on misery  
 Left me alone I grew up amongst a dyin' breed  
 Inside my mind couldn't find a place to rest  
 until I got that Thug Life tatted on my chest  
 Tell me can you feel me? I'm not livin in the past, you wanna last  
 Be tha first to blast, remember Kato  
 No longer with us he's deceased  
 Call on the sirens, seen him murdered in the streets  
 Now rest in peace  
 Is there heaven for a G? Remember me  
 So many homies in the cemetery, shed so many tears

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SO MANY TEARS

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Chorus:

*Ahh, I suffered through the years, and shed so many tears..*

*Lord, I lost so many peers, and shed so many tears*

SO MANY TEARS

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VERSE 2: (Struggles within Life and Society)

Now that I'm strugglin in this business, by any means  
Label me greedy gettin green, but seldom seen  
And fuck the world cause I'm cursed, I'm havin visions  
of leavin here in a hearse, God can you feel me?  
Take me away from all the pressure, and all the pain  
Show me some happiness again, I'm goin blind  
I spend my time in this cell, ain't livin well  
I know my destiny is Hell, where did I fail?  
My life is in denial, and when I die,  
baptized in eternal fire I'll shed so many tears

SO MANY TEARS

ሕይወቴ

Chorus:

*Ahh, I suffered through the years, and shed so many tears..*

*Lord, I lost so many peers, and shed so many tears*

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SO MANY TEARS

aywa

VERSE 3: (Confusion & Doubt)

Now I'm lost and I'm weary, so many tears  
I'm suicidal, so don't stand near me  
My every move is a calculated step, to bring me closer  
to embrace an early death, now there's nothin left  
There was no mercy on the streets, I couldn't rest  
I'm barely standin, bout to go to pieces, screamin peace  
And though my soul was deleted, I couldn't see it  
I had my mind full of demons tryin to break free  
They planted seeds and they hatched, sparkin the flame  
inside my brain like a match, such a dirty game  
No memories, just a misery  
Paintin a picture of my enemies killin me, in my sleep  
Will I survive til the mo'nin, to see the sun  
Please Lord forgive me for my sins, cause here I come...

SO MANY TEARS

aywa

Chorus:

Ahh, I suffered through the years, and shed so many tears..  
Lord, I lost so many peers, and shed so many tears

SO MANY TEARS

aywa

VERSE 4: (A Call for Help & Salvation Amidst the Crap of Life)

Lord knows I.. tried, been a witness to homicide  
Seen drivebys takin lives, little kids die  
Wonder why as I walk by  
Broken-hearted as I glance at the chalk line, gettin high  
This ain't the life for me, I wanna change  
But ain't no future right for me, I'm stuck in the game  
I'm trapped inside a maze  
See this Tanqueray influenced me to gettin crazy  
Disillusioned lately, I've been really wantin babies  
so I could see a part of me that wasn't always shady  
Don't trust my lady, cause she's a product of this poison  
I'm hearin noises, think she fuckin all my boys, can't take no more  
I'm fallin to the floor; beggin for the Lord to let me in  
to Heaven's door -- shed so many tears  
(Dear God, please let me in)

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**SO MANY TEARS**

Lament

*Lord, I've lost so many years, and shed so many tears..*

*I lost so many peers, and shed so many tears*

*Lord, I suffered through the years, and shed so many tears..*

*God, I lost so many peers, and shed so many tears*



Application

**PART III**

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### Applying It ...

- Take a couple of students out to see a film that they want to see. But, do your "homework" before hand. Look at:
  - The director
  - Producer
  - Actors
  - Screen writer
  - Production studio
  - The films trailer
- How do all these influence the film?
- How did the film come about? What's its history?
- What is the "story" in the film?
- Where is Christ within the film?
- Where are the theological parallels within the film?
- How does the film reflect everyday life and meaning?
- What is it in the film that you can take away from it?

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### Applying It ...

- Take a couple of students out to see a film that they want to see. But, do your "homework" before hand. Look at:
  - From this point you now have a framework in which to engage and have a dialogue about the "Gospel" with students.
  - As you watch the film, notice your students reactions to certain points in the film.
  - Take some mental notes, and as you exit the film, begin to debrief the film.
  - Take em out to eat (if you can), and let them talk about what they saw, heard, and felt about the film.
  - What are the connections theologically?
  - Look for new opportunities to inject Christ.

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### Applying It ...

- Watching film:
  - Look for messages that are themed throughout the film.
  - What is the director trying to get across?
  - Where might Jesus show up?
- Apply what you have learned today:
  - Look for props, light, color, themes, meaning, words, language, etc.
  - What do you think some of the film's / episode's meanings are?

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