Signifying Religion:

FINAL PROJECT

The killings of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and others left the public dumbstruck. When mainstream media outlets allowed the moments of silence to pass, echoes of protest could finally be heard. The protests were not just outcries of #BlackLivesMatter, but also the call for a “more perfect union.” What is clear is that the color line persists in this country and it is being signified to great effect.

Elizabethtown College started the Spring ’15 semester with an examination of this discourse. Faculty leveraged their academic acumen to discuss how it works. Students and staff joined the conversation in classes, in extra-curricular forums, and on social media. Leaders in this critical intervention became associated with the hashtag #EtownEngage.

As we discussed during the teach-in, America is a hip hop nation, a world where we make meaning in obscure ways. We signify. So to truly ascertain the dynamics at play, we must be ready to “hit a straight lick with a crooked stick.”

In a 6-7 page (1500-1750 word) essay, you will use tell us (1) “*how #BlackLivesMatter* @EtownCollege” by using (2) critical tools and (3) historical insights from this class. You will also produce a poster-sized signifying chart to illustrate your findings.

(1) #BlackLivesMatter @EtownCollege

As primary sources, you will have access to the following data:

* a transcript of all of the anonymous student responses to the #EtownEngage event
* a commentary on the aforementioned transcript by the transcriber
* The official #EtownEngage Storify [https://storify.com/EtownCollege/teach-in]

You are not expected to read all of this data, but you are expected to draw upon this heavily to advance your thesis.

(2) Critical Tools

Your thesis should adopt a critical approach (e.g. Majeed, ch 2 in Myhre) and use
signifying theory to chart out your argument in a cogent and illustrative manner.

(3) Historical Insights

Your argument should benefit from engagement with the following sources:

* Charles H. Long’s “Perspectives on the Study of Afro-American Religion”
* Two case studies from the semester (Post-Myhre).

Due Date:

Your paper will be due on Canvas on Thursday, 5/7/15 at 7:30am.

On that Thursday at 8:45AM, you will come to class with a poster-sized signifying chart that illustrates your findings. Guests from the Elizabethtown College community will come by and engage you about your findings. **You have not submitted your exam until you upload your paper & attend the event. A missing piece will constitute a 0.**