project 1 slides
Literacy is the ability to read and write text
but what counts as “text”? For example . . .
so literacy is design and digital text too.
It’s also a skill.
—the skills needed to decipher symbols to adapt to the workplace and to cultural norms for behavior.

— the skill of adaptation to know what communication fits a situation and what communication does not (Deborah Brandt, “communicative competence” 2018)

— skills often dictated by access, power, and money (Lindquist and Seitz 2008)
Prompts to expand our definition of Literacies

> Literacy changes, often according to cultural priorities
  > Literacy as passing a test?
    > What is appropriate for literacy tests in schools, colleges and workplaces?
> How do new technologies show us that new literacies are ever emerging?
  > Which digital skills, for example, do you think are important for “college educated” people to know?
> What literacies are needed to address climate change?
  > Do nonhumans have literacies?
    > If so, should we pay attention to them more?
> Is learning body language a literacy?
  > Given body language and tonality make up 80% of our communication, should we discuss that literacy more?
fun reflection on literacy

> College literacy: which dorm has the best food? OR Fav’ chain food?
Avoid monologue conversations (each person taking the stage, one after another) by:

- linking what you say to what someone said before you
  - link and agree
    - I really liked Aaron’s point about ______. I’d add ______.
  - link and differentiate
    - I appreciate Aaron’s point ____ but wonder (too) if ________.
    - So far it seems we’ve been talking about _______. Could I shift the conversation to bring a point about _______?
- Summarize/clarify with metacommentary
  - In other words ________
  - My point is ________.
Listening/Making Conversations

- Does compromise have to be a dirty word?
- "Interview" people
  1. Don’t multitask. Be present. Be in the moment. People will sense your acceptance and anticipation.
  2. Don’t pontificate: (earlier point); temporary set aside your opinion; everyone you ever meet knows something that you don’t
  3. Ask open-ended question. What was that like? How did that feel?
  4. Go with the flow. Thoughts will need to be shelved for you to keep focus.
  5. When you don’t know, say so.
  6. Don’t equate your experience with others.
  7. Try not to repeat yourself.
  8. Stay out of the weeds; they care about what you are like and what you have in common
  9. Listen: “no man every listened his way out of a job.” Listen with the intent to understand rather than reply
  10. Be brief. Be interested in other people. Anticipate that each person has something amazing about them worth sharing. Be prepared to be amazed.
reflection prompts

1. What do the hands in the video of “All the Stars” represent?
2. What might it mean (in the video and in general) to say one has to go back in order to go forward?
“All the Stars” Discussion Prompts

- What might “stars” represent?
- Define “love” as used in the song. Why would its feeling haunt one?
- Who is Kendrick/the narrator/character in Black Panther confronting?
- Discuss: “I want the credit if I'm losing or I'm winning / On my momma that's the realest shit”
- ...the above line transitions to “Girl let’s talk about love” and is vocalized by a third voice (auto-tuned). What’s going on here?
- Discuss “I just cry for no reason, I just pray for no reason / I give thanks for the life, for the day, for the hours and another life breathin’ / I did it all 'cause it feel good / You’d leave it all if it feel bad / Better live your life, We’re running out of time”
- Discuss symbolism in the music video; how does Kendrick’s cultural and experiential background inform his “literacy”? Afrofuturism?
- In the video and song, how do Kendrick and his producers show an awareness of African-American, African, and Hollywood cultures?
- What knowledge practices are involved with music literacy?
Some possible questions to investigate the literacy of a music artist & song

- The artist:
  - What/who does the artist advocate for?
  - Where did they come from?
  - Who do they look up to? Mimic?
  - What audience are they trying to target?
  - Will what is written/performed be socially acceptable?
  - What inspired them?
  - Who in the music industry is the artist connected to (think of both producers and artists)? Why/how?
Some possible questions to investigate the literacy of a music artist & song

> The song
  > When/Where were the lyrics written?
  > What repeats, contrasts or stand out as odd?
  > Where is the song on the album? Does that matter to how we interpret it?
  > What theme(s) drive(s) the song? Show it.
  > Share the musicianship of the song, and how the music weaves with they lyrics
  > How does the song compare to others by the artist? To other songs written by other artists performing in the same genre?
  > What’s going on in the artist’s life as they are writing the song
  > What’s the cultural and historical context during the time that the song was written?
Questions to investigate
cultural literacy (a summary and qualification of Patricia Bizzell’s (1990) argument)

‣ To read, write and speak is dependent upon possession of a certain kind of language and knowing when and how to use it (Bizzell, 1990)

‣ the university has its own cultural literacy: it defines what counts as appropriate language and evidence to make a case in academic “discourse” (the speech and writing among certain groups).

‣ So, therefore is the college supposed to be a one-way delivery system from the teacher to the student of such language and skills in knowing how and when to use it?

‣ Do we more so realize and enact truth or discover it? Is it more of a cultural process—an experience realized by trying out ideas or is it more so a confrontation with a never-changing “foundational” knowledge?

‣ Is truth the product of race, gender, politics or does it stand above or beyond this?

‣ Whose literacy then counts?
  ‣ Should we teach the classics?
  ‣ Should we teach difference?
  ‣ Should we teach skepticism? (the “hip smirk”; Bizzell 1990).
Questions to investigate cultural literacy (a summary and qualification of Patricia Bizzell’s (1990) argument)

- Do we then shift the discussion from truth to process? Do we seek a rhetorical process that can generate “trustworthy knowledge” hitched to a given context?
  - Possibly consider “positionality” (Alcoff)
  - Possibly consider “critical literacy” (Graff, 1995)—combo of content and skills
  - Possibly consider a “relational” or narrative literacy—realizing innate biologically based relationships, and how certain [cultural] ways of knowing promote or denigrate certain kinds of relationships (Powell, 2014)
The practical

- Ask the questions given in the prompts on your musician and their song
- Think about their positionality
- Think about how the song displays “skills” and the means to get knowledge, power, and “truth.”
- Think about the relationships (human, nonhuman) the song realizes, disavows, and promotes.
Dissect Podcast

- Look for a central theme of album. Example: Wickedness vs. Weakness dichotomy in the album Damm
  - Weakness leads to life through selflessness, forgiveness and peace
  - Wickedness leads to death through selfishness, vengeance and violence
- Three layers of analysis (speculations)
  - analysis of parallels to historical/mythological characters
  - analysis of the artist’s own life and circumstances
  - analysis of societal factors
Dissect Podcast

- Consider the role the musician might be playing? (prophet, etc.)?
- Consider describing the music itself
- Consider motifs or labels for certain kinds of genres (Example: “braggadocio” rap)
- Consider citing a book or article for counter opinions (Jay-Z’s book Decoded, 2011)
- Consider defining key terms using outside sources (DNA)
- Consider whether the lyrics refer to any historical or context-based references
- Consider themes across the artist’s work
- Consider looking up interviews with your artist about the work, even the song
- Again use GRAB analysis of the lyrics, music and video; keep analysis tight to what is actually present or not in these
Prompts to help extend analysis toward argument

1. Exercise: Rework claims or interpretations. Use this series of prompts to extend your analysis:

EXAMPLE: “Childish Gambino fulfilled his career and ended it with ‘This is America.’”

1. After you made/make a claim, ask “why, how so?” (emphasize importance)
   “He got his point across dramatically and didn’t want the attention brought to himself.”

2. Then ask again, like an obnoxious child ask, “why, how so?”
   “An artist should bring attention to their art; the cause is bigger. . .”

3. Optional: flip the opinion/qualify it by using the prompt or the logic of “but then again. . .”
   “But then again an artist must also depend upon their ego; there is an operatic sense of people wanting to borrow from their celebrity status.”
Recap and Extension of Literacy Definitions

- the ability to read and write words in digital or print forms
- language not just of words but also of drawing, digital audio, video, vocal tonality, and embodied communication.
- the ability to apply skills and practices to address a situation (often a task)
  - understanding what communication is appropriate in a given situation
  - mapping the relationships between people and nonhumans involved in a situation
- the study of what are the most effective ways to learn a skill.