



**A HIP HOP**  
*Illegitimate Feminism*

**FEMINIST ZINE**



**MADISON GRIFFIN**  
**GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM AND**  
**ORGANIZATION & LAW AND ADVOCACY**  
**DECEMBER 3RD, 2025**

# **INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**THE LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IS A TWO-YEAR SELECTIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM THAT PREPARES RUTGERS UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN TO BE INFORMED, INNOVATIVE, AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERS.**

**LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS TO EXPAND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AND TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS.**

**THIS PROJECT GIVES SCHOLARS THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE GAINED ABOUT LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE WITH THE PRACTICAL AND EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE DEVELOPED ABOUT A PARTICULAR POLICY ISSUE OR PROBLEM THROUGH THE FIELD SITE PLACEMENT. IT ALSO FURTHER DEVELOPS LEADERSHIP SKILLS BY GIVING UNDERGRADUATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE LEADERSHIP THROUGH ACTION.**



**RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK**  
**Institute for Women's Leadership**



**MISSY ELLIOT PERFORMING AT THE BET HIP HOP AWARDS**

**PHOTO BY RICHARD PELHAM/GETTY IMAGES**



# **BLACK WOMEN & FEMINISM**

**HISTORICALLY THE NEEDS OF BLACK WOMEN HAVE BEEN  
IGNORED BY MAINSTREAM WESTERN FEMINIST MOVEMENTS**

**THEREFORE, BLACK WOMEN HAVE ESTABLISHED FEMINIST  
MOVEMENTS THAT CENTER THEIR NEEDS**

**BLACK FEMINIST LENSES SUCH AS HIP HOP FEMINISM, HOOD  
FEMINISM AND TRAP FEMINISM ARE OFTEN DEEMED  
ILLEGITIMATE WHEN DEPLOYED BY BLACK WOMEN**



MONIE LOVE AND QUEEN LATIFAH PERFORM  
LADIES FIRST IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY IN 1990.  
PHOTO: AL PEREIRA/GETTY IMAGES

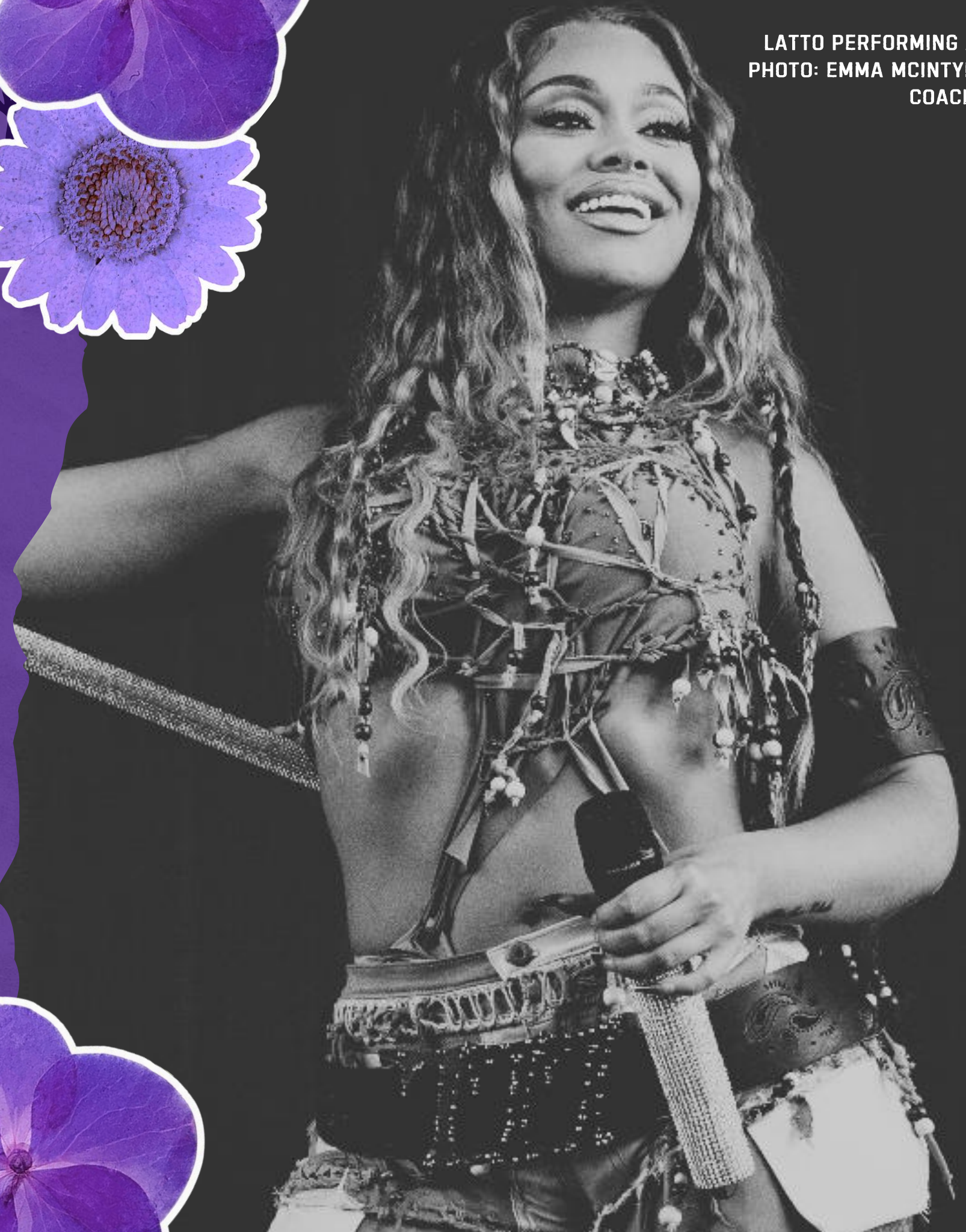


# WHY WOMEN IN HIP HOP?

WOMEN IN HIP HOP NAVIGATE A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT EXISTING IN A CULTURE THAT IS ROOTED IN BLACK AMERICAN IDENTITY, BUT THAT IS ALSO DEEPLY MISOGYNISTIC AND AT TIMES DANGEROUS FOR WOMEN.

THEREFORE THE FEMINISM AND FEMINIST ACTIONS THEY TAKE ARE COMPLEX AND OFTEN NOT DEEMED "RESPECTABLE" ENOUGH TO BE CONSIDERED FEMINIST. THIS MESSY AND NON ACADEMIC FEMINISM, IS A FEMINISM MANY BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS CAN RELATE TO BUT OFTEN DO NOT LABEL AS FEMINIST.

LATTO PERFORMING  
PHOTO: EMMA MCINTY  
COACH



# HIP HOP FEMINISM

COINED BY JOAN MORGAN IN HER BOOK, "WHEN CHICKENHEADS COME HOME TO ROOST: A HIP HOP FEMINIST BREAKS IT DOWN," THE TERM REFERS TO A FEMINISM THAT REFLECTS THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE LIVES OF BLACK WOMEN WHO ENJOY AND CRITIQUE HIP-HOP CULTURE





# WHAT IS THIS

# PROJECT?

ILLEGITIMATE FEMINISM. A HIP HOP FEMINIST ZINE IS A DIGITAL ZINE THAT EXPLORES BLACK FEMINIST THEMES WITHIN BLACK WOMEN'S RAP. THE ZINE HIGHLIGHTS THEMES OF SELF-DEFINITION, EMPOWERMENT & SEX POSITIVITY WITHIN THEIR WORK.

THE MISSION OF THIS PROJECT IS TO EDUCATE AUDIENCES ABOUT BLACK FEMINIST LENSES AND HOW THEY OPERATE IN BLACK WOMEN'S RAP TO SHOW BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS EXAMPLES OF FEMINISM THAT MANIFESTS IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH MEDIA AND PERSONAL LIVES.

ZINE LINK: [HTTPS://HEYZINE.COM/FLIP-BOOK/B768B119AA.HTML](https://heyzine.com/flip-book/B768B119AA.html)

MEGAN THEE STALLION PERFORMING IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA, DURING HOT GIRL SUMMER TOUR  
PHOTO: CHRIS DAY/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

# TIMELINE

**MAY - JUNE**

CREATION OF  
READING LIST FOR  
THESIS

**AUGUST**

RESEARCH ZINE  
CREATION &  
THESIS RESEARCH

**SEPTEMBER**

RESEARCH  
CONTINUATION AND  
LOGO DEVELOPMENT

**OCTOBER**

BEGIN CREATION  
OF ZINE AND  
ARTIST  
SPOTLIGHTS

**NOVEMBER**

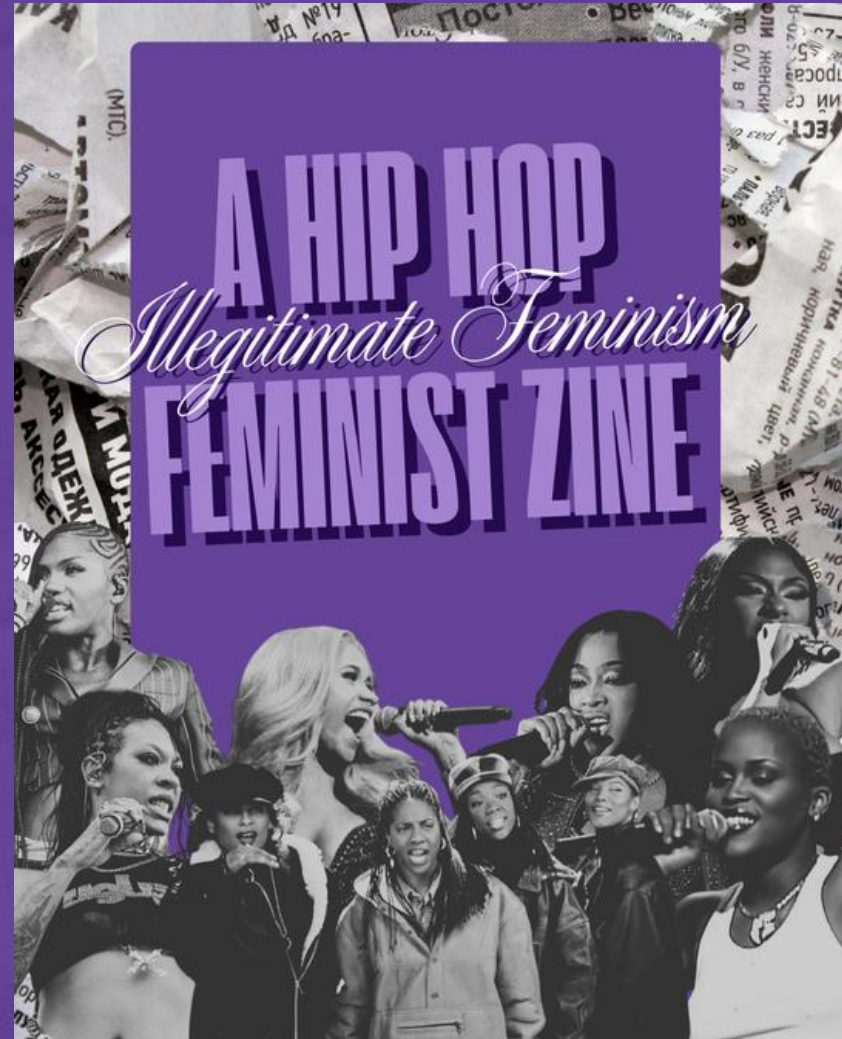
ZINE LAUNCH!  
EMAIL OUTREACH

**DECEMBER**

MORE ARTIST  
SPOTLIGHTS, CREATE  
SUBSTACK & THESIS  
CONTINUATION



# QUEEN LATIFAH



# A HIP HOP FEMINIST ZINE

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# MEGAN THEE STALLION

# INSTAGRAM

# U.N.I.T.Y.

## & SELF DEFINITION

U.N.I.T.Y. IS A SONG RELEASED IN 1993 WHERE QUEEN LATIFAH HIGHLIGHTS HER LOVE FOR THE BLACK COMMUNITY, BUT CHALLENGES HIP HOP CULTURE AND THE CONSTANT DISRESPECT AND ABUSE OF BLACK WOMEN

"INSTINCT LEADS ME TO ANOTHER FLOW, EVERY TIME I HEAR A BROTHER CALL A GIRL A B\*TCH OR A HO

TRYING TO MAKE A SISTER FEEL LOW YOU KNOW ALL OF THAT GOTTS TO GO" IN THE FIRST VERSE LATIFAH CALLS OUT ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR OF BLACK MEN TOWARDS BLACK WOMEN. SHE REFUSES TO ALLOW OR TOLLERATE THIS BEHAVIOR

"NOW EVERYBODY KNOWS THERE'S EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE (YEAH) NOW DON'T BE GETTING MAD, WHEN WE PLAYING, IT'S COOL"

IN THE NEXT LINE OF VERSE, LATIFAH REDEFINES AND RECLAIMS A TERM MEANT TO BE DEROGATORY TOWARDS HER, INTENTIONALLY SHIFTING THE POWER DYNAMIC.



# WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?

ILLEGITIMATE FEMINISM: A HIP HOP FEMINIST ZINE IS A PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL ZINE THAT EXPLORES HOW FEMINISM MANIFESTS IN THE WORK OF BLACK WOMEN IN HIP HOP.

THIS IS A CREATIVE PRESENTATION OF MY UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS WHICH WILL BE COMPLETE IN MAY 2026.



# ANXIETY

## BLACK WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

ANXIETY, RELEASED IN 2022 IN MEGAN THE STALLION'S SECOND STUDIO ALBUM TRAUMATIZE DETAILS HER EXPERIENCES WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION. LIKE MANY BLACK WOMEN, SHE FEELS LOST AND UNABLE TO ASK FOR HELP, IN PART DUE TO THE "STRONGBLACKWOMEN" ARCHTYPE AND THE CONSTANT DISREGARD OF BLACK WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH.

"I'M A BAD BITCH, AND I GOT BAD ANXIETY PEOPLE CALL ME RUDE 'CAUSE I AIN'T LETTIN' 'EM TRY ME SAYIN' I'M A HO 'CAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH MY BODY ISSUES, BUT NOBODY I COULD TALK TO ABOUT IT BLACK WOMEN ARE CONSTANTLY BEING RIDICULED IN MEDIA. THE PAIN OF BLACK WOMEN IS OFTEN DISMISSED DUE TO THE CONSTANT HYPER-SEXUALIZATION BUT ALSO MASCULINIZATION OF BLACK WOMEN. THIS CULTIVATES INTO A SPACE WHERE BLACK WOMEN ARE CONSTANTLY AT ODDS AND OFTEN FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE NO WHERE TO GO FOR HELP



# HOW IS THIS FEMINIST LEADERSHIP?

BLACK WOMEN IN RAP UTILIZE THE TOOLS AVAILABLE TO THEM TO CHALLENGE GENDERED AND RACIAL STEREOTYPES, EMPOWER OTHER WOMEN, AND CREATE MUSIC THAT FOSTERS SEX-POSITIVE SPACES, THEREBY ENACTING FEMINIST LEADERSHIP.

THEIR WORK CHALLENGES NOTIONS OF WESTERN FEMINISM BY CHALLENGING RESPECTABILITY POLITICS AND REJECTING THE WHITE GAZE AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE.



# LESSONS LEARNED



**TIME MANAGEMENT**



**DIGITAL  
DESIGN**



**DETERMINATION**

# THE FUTURE

FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS PROJECT, I WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE POSTING ARTIST SPOTLIGHTS ON THE ZINE'S INSTAGRAM, CREATE A SUBSTACK, AND PRODUCE A SECOND ZINE IN THE SPRING



RAPPER DOJA CAT PERFORMING AT COACHELLA 2024  
PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



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**MY ADVISOR: SHANTEE ROSADO**



**KARLA JACKSON-BREWER**



**SASHA TANER AND SAM AGTARAP**



**THE REST OF THE IWL TEAM**



**MY COHORT**



# THANK YOU



ILLEGITIMATE\_FEMINISM\_ZINE

FLO MILLI FROM THE BLOCK  
PERFORMANCE  
PHOTO: FLO MILLI/INSTAGRAM

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