

**ART AND ACTIVISM**  
ARTH 260 – FALL 2018

Professor Abigail McEwen  
M/W 9:00-9:50 AM  
Art/Sociology Building, Room 2203  
mcewen@umd.edu

Office Hours:  
W 10:00-12:00 and by appointment  
Art/Sociology Building, Room 4206

Teaching Assistants  
Art/Sociology Building, Room 4223

Patricia Ortega-Miranda (portegam@umd.edu)  
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Office Hours: M / 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

Section 101: F / 9:00-9:50  
Section 102: M / 10:00-10:50  
Section 103: W / 10:00-10:50  
Section 104: M / 11:00-11:50

Ashleigh Coren  
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**Course Description**

Can art effect social change? How may we use the history of radical and avant-garde art to inform present-day movements and models of artistic and creative activism? This course explores the modern and contemporary history of political art and arts activism on local, national, and global scales. From the art of the Russian and Mexican Revolutions to that of the Vietnam War, Feminism, AIDS, and the Arab Spring, we consider questions of creativity and social efficacy. The course questions the nature and radicality of different media—including mural painting, TV, sound, performance, and the Internet—as well as the role of institutions and the public. Texts draw from primary sources (manifestos and artist statements; websites) in addition to foundational readings in the discipline of art history and aesthetic and cultural theory. Class meetings combine lectures with small- and large-group discussion and debate. There are no pre-requisites for this course.

This course includes a semester-long team project, drawn from materials housed at [Special Collections in Hornbake Library](#). Teams will be assigned in section at the start of the semester. Within each team, students will complete a contract that indicates how the team will work to achieve the project and team goals. Some of the work for the project will be assessed for a team grade and some for an individual grade.

*In this I-Series course, students will encounter many of the ideas that make Art History an exciting discipline. The I of I-Series also suggests that students are the agents of their own education. I-series courses are active learning courses: students learn by doing.*

This course is part of Carillon Communities for Art and Activism.

### **Carillon Mission**

Carillon Communities creates an inspiring and supportive living and learning environment for first year students. Carillon promotes an environment where students develop a sense of belonging and trust to support their academic success and innovative thought. In Carillon, students consider their own interests and knowledge, and become more active agents in their own education.

### **Course Goals (CG)**

1. To demonstrate understanding about the history of political art and artistic and creative activism and the ways in which artists have advanced social interests through a variety of media
2. To relate theory and scholarship on artistic and creative activism and to understand how meaning is created through art
3. To critique artistic and creative activism on local, national, and global scales
4. To build personal, group, and social responsibility through the design and completion of an original act of artistic or creative activism in teams

### **Learning Outcomes (LO)**

A student who successfully completes this course for Humanities credit will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity and facility with the fundamental terminology and concepts of art history
2. Demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in art history
3. Demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works in the humanities
4. Demonstrate understanding of the creative process and techniques used by practitioners in a specific field of the visual, literary, or performing arts

On completion of an I-Series course, student will be able to:

5. Identify the major questions and issues in political art and artistic and creative activism
6. Describe the sources the experts on the topic would use to explore these issues and questions
7. Demonstrate an understanding of basic terms, concepts, and approaches that experts employ in dealing with these issues
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in the course

9. Communicate major ideas and issues raised by the course through effective written and/or oral presentations
10. Articulate how this course has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the University and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest

**Assigned Texts**

Reed, T.V. *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. ISBN: 978-0-8166-3771-3.

All other readings and films are available on electronic course reserves (ELMS). See the Bibliography (below).

**Course Grading**

- 30% Team Project
- 30% Two Tests
- 20% Response Papers (10)
- 20% Participation and Discussion

See undergraduate catalogue for description of grades, e.g., A+, A, A-, etc.:

<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1534>

100 – 97: A+	89 – 87: B+	79 – 77: C+	69 – 67: D+	59 and below: F
96 – 93: A	86 – 83: B	76 – 73: C	66 – 63: D	
92 – 90: A-	82 – 80: B-	72 – 70: C-	62 – 60: D-	

**Tests**

Two non-cumulative and open-notebook tests assess the understanding of ideas and information introduced during class lectures and in the assigned readings. Tests take the form of short-answer questions and essays. More details will be provided in class and section. (CG1, CG2, LO1, LO2, LO5, LO6, LO7, LO8)

*Midterm: October 10*

*Final Exam: December 15*

**Team Project**

Students will work with an assigned team to design and carry out an original form of artistic or creative activism. Topics must draw from materials held in [Hornbake Library’s Special Collections](#). These collections include materials from the Civil Rights Movement in Maryland, Labor History (including the AFL-CIO Archive), Election Memorabilia, and University Archives. Ashleigh Coren, Special Collections Librarian for Teaching and Learning, is available for consultations; in some cases, she may refer teams to specialists at the Library for additional guidance. Students will have an opportunity to meet and consult with Ashleigh during section meetings.

Teams will select an issue and an appropriate medium for their project. These projects may take the form of, for example: film, painting, manifesto, digital or online intervention, exhibition, or screenplay. The topic and medium must be approved by the team's TA. Project grades are based on submitted minutes from planning meetings; the project proposal; the field report, based on in-person observation of an act of creative or artistic activism; the team's semester-long collaboration and allocation of work, determined by self- and peer review; the quality of the final project; and the presentation to the class during the last week of the semester. (CG2, CG3, CG4, LO4, LO8, LO9, LO10)

In order for the project to succeed, it is expected that each student will contribute fully to the work of the team. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their team's process and progress throughout the semester in section. At the conclusion of the team project, students will have the opportunity to evaluate their peers. If peer review indicates that certain team members have not contributed according to the expected level to the team project (and this performance is confirmed by the TA), those students will receive a percentage of the team grade that reflects their level of participation. Students will have the opportunity to work on their projects in section and receive feedback throughout the semester; projects may be revised as needed and in consultation with the TA.

*Teams will be assigned by September 12. The Project Proposal is due on October 1. The Field Report is due on October 15. The Team Presentations are scheduled on December 3, 5, and 10 (in class). The final Team Project, including self- and peer evaluations, is due on December 10.*

The Team Project is graded as follows:

Project Proposal:	15 points
Meeting Minutes:	10 points
Field Report:	10 points
Team Presentation:	15 points
Final Project:	50 points

## **Response Papers**

Students will write ten one-page (300-400 word) papers over the course of the semester (weeks indicated on the Course Schedule), to be submitted through ELMS. All papers (for all sections) are due on Wednesday morning by 9:00. These short papers should reflect upon an aspect of the week's readings; they need not be comprehensive but should present a critique of the text or a question raised therein (and refer to specific passages as appropriate). Note that there are twelve response papers indicated on the syllabus; students need only submit ten papers (skip any two papers, excluding Paper 11, which is required). (CG1, CG3, LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5, LO6, LO7, LO8)

Analysis Papers are scored on a scale of 0 to 3 points:

0	No submission
1	Minimal attempt, indicating carelessness or lack of effort
2	Adequate attempt, indicating engagement with the reading
3	Strong analysis, indicating sophisticated understanding of the reading

20-30 points:	100%
10-19 points:	75%
0-9 points:	0%

### **Class and Section Participation and Discussion**

Active participation is essential to the success of the course. Students are encouraged to ask questions during the lecture and to participate in discussions of class readings and assignments in section. Come prepared to contribute to class by carefully reading the texts (or screening the film) assigned for that day.

Weekly recitation sections are an integral part of the course and provide an opportunity to discuss the assigned readings and artworks shown during lecture in greater depth. Students are expected to have read the assigned texts for the week in advance of their section. Multiple unexcused absences and recurring lateness will negatively affect the course participation grade. (CG1, CG2, CG3, LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5, LO7, LO8, LO9, LO10)

Participation in section is scored weekly on a scale of 0 to 3:

- 0 Absent (unexcused)
- 1 Present; little or no engagement in discussion
- 2 Present; prepared and able to contribute to discussion
- 3 Present; well prepared and a leader in discussion

Average score of 2.5 or higher:	100%
Average score of 2.0 to 2.4:	95%
Average score of 1.5 to 1.9:	85%
Average score of 1 to 1.4:	75%
Average score of 0.5 to 0.9:	65%
Average score below 0.5:	55%

Students must register for a (free) [clicker account](#), through ELMS. (Please consult your TA if you are new to clickers and need help setting up your account.) There will be regular in-class polls to check for understanding and to gauge opinions. *Regular participation in these polls will positively influence the Participation and Section grade.*

### **Communication**

Faculty and TAs use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

### **Emergency Protocol**

In the event of official university schedule adjustments (e.g., closings or delays due to inclement weather or campus emergency), Professor McEwen will address any modifications to the syllabus and lecture schedule at the first class meeting following the canceled class(es)

and, if possible, through e-mail. However, expect that a test scheduled or paper due on the day of a canceled class will be automatically moved forward to the first class meeting following the cancellation.

### **Course Evaluations**

Please evaluate the course both in the department's paper format and online: [www.courseevalum.umd.edu/](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu/). Both evaluations are very helpful to faculty and to future students alike.

### **Course Procedures and Policies**

NB: A full list of course-related policies and relevant links to resources may be found at: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Attendance and Absences: Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Events that justify an excused absence include: religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence. The documentation must be provided in writing to the instructor by the means specified in this syllabus.

The full university attendance/absence policy can be found here: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Academic integrity: The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).*

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council:  
<http://www.shc.umd.edu>

Students who engage in academic dishonesty in this course will receive no points for the assignment in question and will be immediately reported to the Honor Council and Office of Judicial Programs for further action. There will be no warnings. Remember, cheating, plagiarism or other types of fabrication are never worth it.” Definitions for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, etc. can be found at:  
<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Disability Support: The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The University of Maryland provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations shall be made in a timely manner and on an individualized and flexible basis.

Discrimination against individuals on the grounds of disability is prohibited. The University also strictly prohibits retaliation against persons arising in connection with the assertion of rights under this Policy.

Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) facilitates reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at at [301.314.7682](tel:301.314.7682), or [adsfrontdesk@umd.edu](mailto:adsfrontdesk@umd.edu). More information is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

**After receiving an Accommodations Letter from ADS, as a student you are expected to meet with each course instructor, in person,** to provide them with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain their signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructors will discuss a plan for how the accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester for the course. Specific details regarding the implementation of certain ADS approved accommodations agreed upon between you as the student and the individual course instructor must be documented on an Acknowledgment of Student Request Addendum, signed by the instructor, and submitted to ADS. You as the student are responsible for submitting the signed original forms to ADS and retaining a copy of the signed Acknowledgment of Student Request for your records.

Copyright notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct: **The Sexual Misconduct Policy** prohibits a broad range of behaviors including, but not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and dating and domestic violence. The Sexual

Misconduct Policy also prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in an investigation under the Policy.

**The Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (OCRSM) responds to all complaints of sexual misconduct.** To [file a complaint](#) go to OCRSM and under Reporting, complete the online sexual misconduct complaint form. For more information please contact OCRSM by phone at [301-405-1142](tel:301-405-1142), or email at [titleixcoordinator@umd.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@umd.edu)

## University Policy

[VI-1.60\(A\) University of Maryland Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures Summary of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

## Resources

[Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct](#) For information about the University's compliance with Title IX as well as other federal and state civil rights laws and regulations.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Use *Anonymous Ask* for a safe, anonymous space to ask about the Code of Academic Integrity, the Code of Student Conduct, or any conduct-related questions through the Office's.

[Resident Life, Office of Rights & Responsibilities](#)

**Confidential Resources** A confidential resource keeps whatever information you share private. The resource provider will not share your information with others. CARE to Stop Violence, 24 hour call/text: 301-741-3442 Campus Chaplains, 301-405-8450 or 301-314-9866 University Counseling Center, 301-314-7651 University Mental Health Services 301-314-8106.

**Diversity:** The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

*For information on elms, counseling, health, learning workshops, tutoring, writing help, student rights in undergrad courses, questions about graduation or add/drop/withdraw, please see <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>.*

## Course Schedule

- August 27: Introduction and Overview
- August 29: Theorizing Art  
Reading: Popova, "What is Art?"  
Dewey, "Art as Experience"  
Williams, "Culture"
- September 3: No Class (Labor Day)
- September 5: Russian Revolution  
Response Paper  
Reading: Stepanova, "A General Theory of Constructivism"  
Komfut, "Programme Declaration"  
Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (excerpt)
- September 10: Russian Revolution  
Reading: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical  
Reproduction"
- September 12: Mexican Muralism  
Response Paper  
Reading: "Manifesto of the Union of Mexican Workers..."  
Anreus, "Los Tres Grandes: Ideologies and Styles"
- September 17: Mexican Muralism  
Reading: Orozco, "The Syndicate of Painters and Sculptors"  
Rivera, "The Revolution in Painting"
- September 19: Dada and Surrealism  
Response Paper  
Reading: Caws, *Surrealism* (excerpt)  
Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" (excerpt)
- September 20-23: *The Triumph of Isabella* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
September 20: 2:30-4:00 and 7:30-9:00  
September 23: 1:30-3:00  
\*\* Free tickets may be reserved at the Clarice box office in person, by  
email ([tickets-theclarice@umd.edu](mailto:tickets-theclarice@umd.edu)), or by phone (301-405-2787)
- September 24: The Situationist International  
Reading: Debord et al, "Theses on the Paris Commune"  
Martin, J.V. et al, "Response to a Questionnaire from  
the Center for Socio-Experimental Art"  
Debord, "Society of the Spectacle" (excerpt)

- September 26: Mexico '68 and Tucumán Arde  
Response Paper (option: review *The Triumph of Isabella*)  
 Reading: “Tucumán Arde”  
 Introduction, *Beautiful Trouble*
- October 1: The Vietnam War  
 Reading: “Manifesto for the Guerrilla Art Action Group”
- October 3: The Vietnam War  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (excerpt)
- October 8: Institutional Critique  
 Reading: Black Mask, “Statement,” “Art and Revolution,” “We Propose a Cultural Exchange”  
 Meireles, “Insertions into Ideological Circuits, 1970-75”
- October 10: **Midterm Exam**
- October 15: Civil Rights  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 1
- October 17: Civil Rights  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 2
- October 22: Feminism  
 Reading: Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”  
 “Redstockings Manifesto”  
 Guerrilla Girls (<https://www.guerrillagirls.com/>)  
 Reed, Chapter 3
- October 24: Chicano Posters and Murals  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 4
- October 29: The American Indian Movement  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 5
- October 31: Guerrilla TV and Sound  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Ouellette, “Will the Revolution be Televised...”  
 Reed, Chapter 6

- November 5: AIDS  
 Reading: Gran Fury, “A Presentation”  
 Reed, Chapter 7  
 Screening: *United in Anger: A History of ACT UP* (ELMS)
- November 6: U.S. Election Day**
- November 7: Environmental Activism  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 8
- November 9-16: *Citizen* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
 \*\* Tickets are free for UMD students  
<https://theclarice.umd.edu/events/2018/citizen>
- November 12: Internet Activism  
 Reading: Emerson, “An Introduction to Activism on the Internet”  
 Reed, Chapter 9
- November 14: Occupy Wall Street, The Arab Spring  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Ulysses, “Hip Hop Revolution”  
 Boucher, “Artists Occupy Wall Street”  
 Garcia and Lovink, “The ABC of Tactical Media”
- November 19: No Class  
Response Paper (required; please see the prompt on ELMS)  
 Screening: *Bringing Down a Dictator* (ELMS, 56 minutes)
- November 21: No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!
- November 26: Black Lives Matter  
 Reading: Black Lives Matter, “Platform”  
 Fogg, “The Most Powerful Art from the  
 #BlackLivesMatter Movement, Three Years In”
- November 28: Confederate Monuments  
Response Paper  
 Reading: Upton, “Confederate Monuments and Civic Values...”  
[On Monument Avenue](#)
- December 3, 5, 10: Team Presentations  
 Reading: Reed, Chapter 10
- December 15: **Final Exam (8:00-10:00)**

## Bibliography

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- Komfut. "Programme Declaration." In *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, edited by Will Bradley and Charles Esche, 68. London: Tate, 2007.
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