ART AND ACTIVISM
ARTH 260 – FALL 2018

Professor Abigail McEwen
M/W 9:00-9:50 AM
Art/Sociology Building, Room 3211
mcewen@umd.edu

Office Hours:
M/W 11:00-12:00 and by appointment
Art/Sociology Building, Room 4206

Teaching Assistants
Art/Sociology Building, Room 4223

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

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.

This course includes a semester-long team project. 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.

Section 104 of this course forms the academic component of the Carillon Community: Art and Activism. The Carillon Community Mission is to create 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:

1. Identify the major questions and issues in political art and artistic and creative activism
2. Describe the sources the experts on the topic would use to explore these issues and questions
3. Demonstrate an understanding of basic terms, concepts, and approaches that experts employ in dealing with these issues
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in the course
5. Communicate major ideas and issues raised by the course through effective written and/or oral presentations
6. 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


All other readings and films are available on electronic reserve (ELMS). See the Bibliography (below).
Course Grading

30% Two Tests
30% Team Project
20% Analysis 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

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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 15
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. Teams will select an issue and an appropriate medium for their project; these projects may take the form of, for example, a film, a painting, a manifesto, a digital or online intervention, or a 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 5. The Project Proposal is due on September 24. The Field Report is due on October 8. The Team Presentations are scheduled on December 3 and 5 (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%
- Meeting Minutes: 10%
- Field Report: 10%
- Team Presentation: 15%
- Final Project: 50%

**Analysis Papers**

Students will write ten one-page papers over the course of the semester (weeks indicated on the Course Schedule), to be submitted through ELMS the evening before the student’s section meeting. These short papers should synthesize 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). (CG1, CG3, LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5, LO6, LO7, LO8)

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

- 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

Average score of 2 or higher: 100%
Average score between 1 and 2: 75%
Average score below 1: 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, LO6, 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%

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/. 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, or 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, or email at 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: Tolstoy, “What is Art?” (excerpt)
Dewey, “Art as Experience”
Williams, “Culture”

September 3: No Class (Labor Day)

September 5: Russian Revolution
Analysis Paper
Reading: Stepanova, “A General Theory of Constructivism”
Komfut, “Programme Declaration”
Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (excerpt)
Section: Team Assignments

September 10: Russian Revolution
Reading: Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

September 12: Mexican Muralism
Analysis 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
Analysis Paper
Reading: Caws, *Surrealism* (excerpt)

September 24: Dada and Surrealism
Reading: Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism” (excerpt)

September 26: In-Class Workshop: How to Do Activism
Analysis Paper
Section: Team Project Proposal
Reading: Introduction, *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution*
October 1: The Situationist International
Reading: Debord et al, “Theses on the Paris Commune” “Response to a Questionnaire from the Center for Socio-Experimental Art” Debord, “Society of the Spectacle” (excerpt)

October 3: Mexico ’68 and Tucumán Arde
Analysis Paper
Reading: “Tucumán Arde” Camnitzer, “Tucumán Arde: Politics in Art”

October 8: The Vietnam War
Section: Field Report
Reading: “Manifesto for the Guerrilla Art Action Group” Bryan-Wilson, Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era (excerpt)

October 10: Institutional Critique
Analysis Paper

October 15: Midterm Exam

October 17: Civil Rights
Reading: Reed, Chapters 1 and 2

October 22: Feminism

October 24: Chicano Posters and Murals
Analysis Paper
Reading: Noriega, ¿Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California (excerpt) Reed, Chapter 4

October 29: The American Indian Movement
Reading: Reed, Chapter 5

October 31: Guerrilla TV and Sound
Analysis 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 7: Environmental Activism
Analysis Paper
Reading: Reed, Chapter 8

November 12: Bringing Down a Dictator (in-class screening; 56 minutes)

November 14: Internet Activism
Reading: Emerson, “An Introduction to Activism on the Internet” 
Reed, Chapter 9

November 19: No Class

November 21: No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!

November 26: Occupy Wall Street, The Arab Spring
Reading: Ulysses, “Hip Hop Revolution” 
Boucher, “Artists Occupy Wall Street” 
Garcia and Lovink, “The ABC of Tactical Media”

November 28: Black Lives Matter, Confederate Monuments
Analysis Paper
Reading: Black Lives Matter, “Platform”
Fogg, “The Most Powerful Art from the #BlackLivesMatter Movement, Three Years In”
Upton, “Confederate Monuments and Civic Values…”
On Monument Avenue

December 3: Team Presentations

December 5: Team Presentations

December 10: Conclusions

December 15: Final Exam (8:00-10:00)
Bibliography


Black Lives Matter. “Platform.” [https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/](https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/)


Guerrilla Girls. [https://www.guerrillagirls.com/](https://www.guerrillagirls.com/)


