



English 2260G: National and Global Perspectives on Cultural Studies

Lecture: Wednesday 6:00-9:00; AHB-2B02

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is protest? An expression of outrage, or frustration, or resistance against intolerance and oppression. The deaths of Michael Brown of Ferguson, Mo., Eric Garner of Staten Island, N.Y., and Tamir Rice of Cleveland, Ohio not only sparked national outrage which culminated in street protests, but also prompted transnational solidarity movements. We witnessed Palestinians tweeting tear gas advice to protestors in Ferguson. We saw protestors in Mexico linking their own state's police brutality to systemic racism in the United States. Wherever it emerges, resistance confronts forms of oppression, whether it be authoritarian and dictatorial regimes, state-sanctioned violence, rape culture, or neoliberalism, with a cry and a clamour. In a speech given in 1964 Malcolm X insisted that "It's got to be the ballot or the bullet." But resistance and articulations for change are more often expressed in subtler forms that remain as evocative as public demonstrations.

In this class, focusing on civil and human rights struggles, we will examine several cultural forms of protest expressed in written manifestos, electronic media, music, and film. To do so we will explore various sites of resistance beginning with the Civil Rights Movement, moving to indigenous resistance movements across the globe, and ending with the poetic intervention of the prisoners of Guantanamo Bay.

Learning Objectives

Identify and assess how various political groups use cultural sources, such as music, photography, film, and literature to effect social change.

Identify, evaluate, and discuss cultural approaches to political resistance.

Critique artistic and creative activism on local, national and global scale, assessing contemporary social movements.

Think analytically about protest movements and resistance on a local, national, and global scale.

Develop adept close readings into persuasive arguments.

Learning Outcomes

Analyze the historical, social, and political trends of protest from the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the Indigenous resistance movements in Mexico, India, and Canada, and the Arab Spring in the Middle East.

Create a protest piece using creative forms of media.

Write a research paper that has an effective thesis, a logical argument supported by adequate evidence, and well-integrated research materials and references.

Develop further their oral communication skills by leading class discussion.

Required Texts

Mahmoud Darwish, *In the Presence of Absence*

Marc Falkoff (Ed.), *Poems from Guantanamo: the Detainees Speak*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Zapatista Encuentro: Documents from the 1996 Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism

Critical essays and selections will be made available through a Course Reader available from the UWO Bookstore.

Films

The Square directed by Jehane Noujaim

Battle of Algiers directed by Gillo Pontecorvo

Selma directed by Ava DuVernay

ASSIGNMENT AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Participation/attendance, 10%

Creative Activism Assignment, 20%

2 In-class Discussions (approx. 20 minutes), 10%

Prospectus, Bibliography (500 words), 5%

Essay workshop, 5%.

Term paper 7-10 pages long (2000-2500), 20%

Final exam, 30%

Students must pass both term work and the final examination (in courses with final examinations) in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term mark) automatically fail the course.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Activism Project (20% of final grade)

This assignment gives you the opportunity to subvert oppressive edifices by creating your own protest piece. Once you have chosen a topic, issue, or human rights concern that you feel strongly about, you will develop an artistic activist piece around it. You may use any medium to develop your protest piece, be it film, digital media, music, literature, and so on. Ultimately, your project should aim to promote social justice and equity. You may either work alone or with a partner. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to exercise a form of critical and creative engagement with the ideas and texts that we have examined and explored in the course. In addition to the artistic piece you've created, you will give an informal presentation on your original work in class. The presentation will be between 10 and 15 minutes. Finally, please submit a one to two page write-up.

In this short paper, you will provide a rationale for your project and connect it to your activist identity. If you have decided to work with a partner, please submit a one to two page write-up individually written by each student in the group.

Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography (5% of final grade)

In preparation for your final research paper you will compile a prospectus (a preliminary statement for your paper) and an annotated bibliography. Your prospectus should be approximately 300 words and your annotated bibliography approximately 400-500 words.

Your prospectus will contain the following:

1. A guiding question about any text/film from our syllabus.
2. A preliminary thesis statement. Your thesis is a debatable claim, one that is not self-evident, about the work(s) you wish to analyze.
3. A brief outline of the evidence that will support your argument.

Annotated Bibliography

Using correct MLA bibliographical citations of the sources, follow each source with a one-paragraph summary of the critic's main argument and detail how you wish to incorporate this source into your essay. Include a few direct quotations from each critic with pages cited. "Tertiary" sources, such as encyclopedias and textbooks may not be used as one of your secondary critical sources for the annotated bibliography, but may be used to supplement your research in your final paper.

Peer Workshop (5% of final grade)

The purpose of the in-class workshop is to receive and provide constructive feedback on the research essays. You are expected to come to class with a draft of your paper. You will be assigned a partner, and I will provide you and your partner with a worksheet to fill out. You must include the worksheet with your final essay to receive the grade.

Discussion Leadership (10% of final grade)

You will sign up twice to lead discussion on the assigned readings during the course of the semester. Your first discussion should take place before reading week. As a discussion leader, you will prepare three to five questions related to the readings on which you will lead discussion. The questions should challenge the class to deepen their understanding of the issue the author is discussing, to clarify and complete their understanding of the author's central argument, to critically assess the adequacy of that argument, or to compare the author's position with that of another author we will have read. Typically, there will be two discussion leaders scheduled for each class. In addition to presenting your questions, you will submit your questions along with your tentative answers to me at the end of class.

Research Paper (20% of final grade)

Your research paper is a 7-10 page or 2000-2500 word essay. This assignment will involve significant work with two texts (includes film, art, music, etc.) from our syllabus, along with secondary critical sources (at least three). You may choose texts that we have not covered in class. In this paper you will construct a convincing argument, correctly use MLA-style parenthetical citations, critically engage with the secondary criticism, and include a Works Cited.

Final Exam (30% of your final grade)

The exam will be cumulative and will consist of a combination of identifications, passage analysis, and a comparative essay. It will be written during the exam period.

READING SCHEDULE

You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class and to bring hard copies of the readings to class! Also, please keep in mind that this is a tentative reading schedule.

		Readings	Assignments
Week 1 Jan. 6	What is protest?	Welcome! John Berger “The Nature of Mass Demonstrations” (R)* Raymond Williams, “Culture” (R)	
Week 2 Jan. 13	Song and non-Violent Resistance (Civil Rights Movement)	<i>Selma</i> directed by Ava DuVernay (in-class screening) T.V. Reed, “Singing Civil Rights: The Freedom Song Tradition.” (R) Theodor W. Adorno, “Commodities, Co-Optation, and Cultural Jamming” (R) Nina Simone, “Mississippi Goddamn” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVQjGGJVSXc	
Week 3 Jan. 20	Armed Resistance (Black Panthers)	“Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party” (R) T.V. Reed, “Scenarios for Revolution: The Drama of the Black Panthers” (R) Excerpt from Huey Newton’s <i>Revolutionary Suicide</i> (R)	
Week 4 Jan. 27	Epistolary Resistance (Black Lives Matter)	Ta-Nehisi Coates, <i>Between the World and Me</i> George Yancy and Cornel West, “Cornel West: The Fire of a New Generation”: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/19/cornel-west-the-fire-of-a-new-generation/ You can access the Black Lives Matter’s platform here: http://blacklivesmatter.com/	
Week 5 Feb. 3	Speaking on behalf of the Other (The Subaltern: Maoist vs. Operation Green Hunt)	Gayatri Spivak “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (R) Arundhati Roy, “Walking With The Comrades” (R) Ganpathi, “Open Reply to Independent Citizens’ Initiative” (R) A Guide to Writing Essays	
Week 6 Feb. 10	Behind the Mask (Zapatistas)	<i>Zapatista Encuentro</i> Jeff Conant, “Of Masks, Mirrors, and Metamorphoses” (R)	
Feb. 15 – Feb. 19		Reading Week	
Week 7 Feb. 24	Critical & Creative Activism	In class presentations	Protest Assignment

Week 8 Mar. 2	Art & Political Aesthetics (#Idle No More)	Glen Coulthard, “#IdleNoMore in Historical Context” (R) “The Manifesto” (You can access it here: http://decolonization.wordpress.com/2012/12/24/idlenomore-in-historical-context/) Jacques Rancière, from <i>The Politics of Aesthetics</i> (R) Art work by Idle No More activists can be viewed here: http://www.idlenomore.ca/artists	
Week 9 Mar. 9	Filmic Resistance (Algerian Independence)	<i>Battle of Algiers</i> directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (in-class screening) Franz Fanon, from <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (R)	
Week 10 Mar. 16	Poetic Resistance (PLO & Shatila)	Mahmoud Darwish, <i>In the Presence of Absence</i> Audre Lorde, “Poetry is not a Luxury” (R)	Annotated Bibliography
Week 11 Mar. 23	Digital Revolution (Arab Spring)	<i>The Square</i> directed by Jehane Noujaim (in-class screening) Hanan Sabea, “I Dreamed of Being a People’: Egypt’s Revolution, the People and Critical Imagination” (R) Heather Brooke, from <i>The Revolution will be Digitised</i> (R) Simon Cottle “Media and the Arab Uprisings” (R)	
Week 12 Mar. 30	Hidden Transcript	James C. Scott, “The Arts of Political Disguise” (R) Marc Falkoff, <i>Poems from Guantanamo Bay</i>	Peer Workshop
Week 13 Apr. 6	Hidden Transcript continued	* Review	Final Paper

*(R=Course Reader)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Attendance: To maintain a productive and positive environment, you are expected to attend every class and to arrive on time. You are allowed to miss up to one class for any reason without penalty. After your first missed class, unexcused absences will reduce your final attendance and participation grade by 0.5% for every missed class. Attendance will constitute 5% and participation 5% of your final grade.

Participation includes active participation in class discussions and activities. Merely attending class does not constitute participation. However, aside from contributions to class discussion, scheduled meetings outside of class on class material; formal and informal chats about the material; and placing images or questions on OWL will be taken into consideration in evaluating your participation grade. Discriminatory, rude, and disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated in the classroom and will jeopardize your participation grade.

Reading: A communal learning environment depends on your attentive reading and engaging discussions. As such, you are expected to complete readings on time, and to be prepared to discuss the texts in class.

Critical reading practice: I look forward to hearing your thoughts and reflections on the assigned material. To foster critical reading habits you should: engage in a conversation with the text, ask questions, mark important passages, and write a summary of the content.

While reading, answer the following questions:

- What kinds of arguments does the text put forth?
- What evidence does the text provide for its positions?
- Is the text persuasive in its claims?

Electronic devices: Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted in class. I will grant special allowance for laptops if necessary (they can only be used for note-taking and for finding information relevant to our class discussion), but please talk to me first.

Email: If you have any questions or concerns about the course, feel free to email me. You can expect to receive a reply to your email within 24-48 hours.

Late assignments: Assignments are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments will be deducted by 2% per day, weekends included, to a maximum of 14 days (28%). Assignments not handed in during class should be submitted through the essay drop-box outside the English Department's General Office. Essays may not be emailed as attachments. You are required to submit your assignments both electronically through SAKAI to Turnit.com and as paper copies in class.

Grading: While grades are non-negotiable, I'm happy to discuss your grades and to provide further feedback after the assignments have been handed back. Your work will be graded for its originality and clarity of argument, rhetorical persuasiveness, ability to provide sufficient evidence for claims, syntax, grammar, and adherence to MLA format. More information on the department of English's grading criteria can be found at <http://uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/courses/pdf/UndergradGradingCriteria.pdf>

Formatting: You are required to follow MLA guidelines for all assignments. Essays must be typed, double spaced, with 1-inch margins. On your first page should appear your name, the course code, the instructor's name, date submitted, and word count.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES & RESOURCES

Mental Health: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options on how to obtain help.

Plagiarism: "Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf "

"All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Academic Accommodation: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Writing Support Centre: The Writing Support Centre offers writing support for students, including meetings with a writing counsellor <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>

Figure 1. Photo credit: AP Images. "Student in Gas Mask Smells Magnolia." *Early Air Pollution Photos 1922-1972: Early Air Pollution Images*. 22 April 1970. Web. 5 Sept. 2015.