

Radical aesthetics



PHI 273

CLASS OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR

Taylor R. Genovese, Ph.D.

(he/him/his)

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Office: Hudson Hall 408M

Office Hours: Mondays: 9:00am–10:30am

Wednesdays: 9:00am–10:30am

Thursdays: 9:30am–10:30am

Note on communication: I will make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. However, please note that I only check and respond to email between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

PHI 273 – Special Study Project – Radical Aesthetics

CRN #: 7529

3 credit hours / In-person

Instructional Hours: 2.5 per week

Minimum Expected Hours Out-of-Class: 5 per week

MEETING INFORMATION

Fall 2025

Wednesdays, 12:30pm–3:00pm

SUNY – Dutchess Community College

Hudson Hall 408M

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." –Bertolt Brecht

This survey course explores the intersections of artistic production and revolutionary politics across the 20th and 21st centuries using an international and multidisciplinary lens. Students will examine a wide range of media including film, literature, visual art, theater, poetry, performance art, digital media, and street art—with a focus on how these practices have emerged from, and contribute to, revolutionary movements.

We will study artistic movements from around the world, including revolutionary Latin America, the Middle East, China, and Africa, as well as dissident North American, European, and Russo-Soviet performance, activist media, and experimental interventions that challenge(d) dominant cultural paradigms. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural politics of socialist movements, national liberation struggles, sexual and gender liberation, and movements against racism and imperialism.

ASSESSMENT

1. Participation (50%) All students are expected to arrive to class on time having read assigned readings, absorbed the art ahead of our meeting, and attend the entirety of class sessions. Students must bring in a written précis to class that consists of a 1-5 sentence summary of the readings and/or art reflections being discussed that day as well as a section of the reading and/or section of the cultural artifact that they would like to interrogate collectively.
2. Paper or Project (50%) Students will write a 2,000–4,000 word position paper analyzing some aesthetic cultural artifact (TV shows, movies, artistic works, music, etc.) using a dialectical framework. Alternatively, students can choose to work on a multimodal project (combining writing with another form of communication, such as photography, drawing, painting, film, podcasting, etc.). If you are interested in a multimodal project, please see me so we can discuss specifics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Alexander Bogdanov, *Art and the Working Class* (Iskra Books, 2022)
- Alexander Bogdanov, *Red Star* (Indiana University Press, 1984)
- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Zone Books, 1995)
- Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Zero Books, 2009)
- Ruehl Muller, *Building a People's Art: Selected Works of Trường Chinh and Tố Hữu* (Iskra Books, 2024)
- Hao Ran, *Bright Clouds* (Foreign Languages Press, 2023)
- *The Palestinian Resistance: Historical Documents of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (Iskra Books, 2024)

As a reminder, all Iskra Books and Foreign Languages Press texts are available as free PDFs on their websites. All other texts not listed above will be provided as links in the Course Outline below. Along with these texts, students are responsible for finding methods (whether that is through streaming, borrowing, or rentals) of viewing the required films.

COURSE OUTLINE

Key

: Reading/Fiction

: Poetry


















: Play/Theatre




























: Film

























: Television Show











: Artwork








: Music

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings / Cultural Artifacts
w August 27	<p><u>The Russian Revolution</u></p> <p> Vladimir Lenin, "Directives on the Film Business."</p> <p> Adelheid Heftberger, "Propaganda in Motion: Dziga Vertov's and Aleksandr Medvedkin's Film Trains and Agit Steamers of the 1920s and 1930s."</p> <p> Clara Zetkin, "Only in Conjunction With the Proletarian Woman Will Socialism Be Victorious."</p> <p> Sergei Eisenstein, <i>Броненосец Потёмкин</i> (<i>Battleship Potemkin</i>) (1925)</p> <p> Kazimir Malevich (browse through his 360 works)</p> <p> Red Army Choir, "National Anthem of the USSR" (translations)</p>
w September 3	<p><u>The Soviet Avant-Garde</u></p> <p> Alexander Bogdanov, <i>Art and the Working Class</i></p> <p> Browse and read a few of Vladimir Mayakovsky's poems</p> <p> Dziga Vertov, <i>Человек с киноаппаратом</i> (<i>Man with a Movie Camera</i>) (1929)</p> <p> Sergei Eisenstein, <i>Стачка</i> (<i>Strike</i>) (1925)</p> <p> Aleksandr Rodchenko (browse through his 1,329 works)</p> <p> G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, "Whirlwinds of Danger" (translation)</p>
w September 10	<p><u>Soviet Futurist Imaginaries</u></p> <p> Alexander Bogdanov, <i>Red Star</i></p> <p> Youry Merkulov, Zenon Komissarenko, & Nikolai Khodataev, <i>Межпланетная революция</i> (<i>Interplanetary Revolution</i>) (1924) [7 minute short film]</p> <p> Andrei Tarkovsky, <i>Сталкер</i> (<i>Stalker</i>) (1979)</p> <p> El Lissitsky (browse through his 611 works)</p> <p> Yevgeny Krylatov, "Wondrous Future" (translation in CC)</p>

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings / Cultural Artifacts
w September 17	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Chinese Revolution</u></p> <p> Hao Ran, <i>Bright Clouds</i> (choose 2-3 short stories to read)</p> <p> Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art."</p> <p>(Optional)  Xi Jinping, "Speech at the Forum on Literature and Art."</p> <p> Lu Xun, "What is Revolutionary Literature?"</p> <p> Xie Jin, 红色娘子军 (<i>The Red Detachment of Women</i>) (1961)</p> <p> Weiya Chen, 建党伟业 (<i>Beginning of the Great Revival</i>) (2021)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> "The East is Red"</p>
w September 24	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Cuban Revolution</u></p> <p> Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "Socialism and Man in Cuba."</p> <p> Fidel Castro, "Words to the Intellectuals."</p> <p> Mikhail Kalatozov, <i>Soy Cuba (I Am Cuba)</i> (1964)</p> <p> Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, <i>Memorias del subdesarrollo (Memories of Underdevelopment)</i> (1968)</p> <p> Deni Ellis Béchar, "The Radical Street Art of Havana's Youth."</p> <p> Carlos Puebla, "Goodbye, commander" (translation)</p> <p> Silvio Rodríguez, "Rifle Against Rifle" (translation)</p>
w October 1	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Vietnamese National Liberation</u></p> <p>  Ruehl Muller, <i>Building a People's Art: Selected Works of Trường Chinh and Tố Hữu</i></p> <p> Ho Chi Minh, "Poems Written While In Prison."</p> <p> Nguyễn Hồng Sến, <i>Cánh đồng hoang (The Abandoned Field: Free Fire Zone)</i> (1979)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> "Liberation March"</p>
w October 8	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Indigenous Resistance of the Zapatistas</u></p> <p> Subcomandante Marcos, "The Fourth World War Has Begun."</p> <p>(Optional)  EZLN (<i>Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional / Zapatista Army of National Liberation</i>), "Declarations of the Lacandon Jungle."</p> <p> Elena Korykhalova & Oleg Myasoedov, <i>People Without Faces</i> (2015)</p> <p>  Music Video for Prolific The Rapper x A Tribe Called Red, "Black Snakes"</p> <p> Dane Strom, "The Transcendental Revolutionary Zapatista Murals of Oventic, Mexico."</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> "Anthem of the Zapatistas"</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> "It's Over!"</p>

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings / Cultural Artifacts
w October 15	<p><u>Mexican and Puerto Rican Sovereignty from/through the U.S.</u></p> <p> Selections from Luis Valdez's Actos in <i>Luis Valdez Early Works</i>: "Notes on Chicano Theater" (p. 6–10); "The Actos" (p. 11–13); "Las Dos Caras del Patroncito" (p. 17–27); "Quinta Temporada" (p. 28–39); "Vietnam Campesino" (p. 98–120). Book can be borrowed here for two weeks with a free archive.org account.</p> <p> The Ideology of the Young Lords Party</p> <p>  A taped performance of the Acto "Los Vendidos" can be watched alongside reading the play (p. 40–52) here.</p> <p> Megan Flattley, "The History of Mexico: Diego Rivera's Murals at the National Palace."</p> <p> Immortal Technique, "Young Lords"</p> <p> The Coup, "You Are Not A Riot (An RSVP from David Siquieros to Andy Warhol)"</p>
w October 22	<p><u>Irish Resistance Against British Colonialism</u></p> <p> James Connolly, "Socialism and Nationalism."</p> <p> Bobby Sands, "The Rhythm of Time." (listen to a recitation of it here)</p> <p> Ken Loach, <i>The Wind That Shakes the Barley</i> (2006)</p> <p> Rich Peppiatt, <i>Kneecap</i> (2024)</p> <p>(Optional)  <i>Say Nothing</i> (2024)</p> <p> "They tried to torture, oppress, and repress the women": Interview with Mairéad Farrell [8 minute TV segment]</p> <p> Virtual Belfast Mural Tour (browse through the murals on the map or A-Z list)</p> <p> The Wolfe Tones, "Come Out Ye Black & Tans"</p> <p> Eimhear Ni Ghlacain, "Mairéad Farrell"</p>
w October 29	<p><u>The Palestinian Struggle</u></p> <p> <i>The Palestinian Resistance: Historical Documents of the Palestine Liberation Organization</i></p> <p> Refaat Al-Areer, Basman Aldirawi, Samer Abu Hawash, Huda Fakhreddine, Fady Joudah, Ahlam Bsharat, and Ghassan Zaqtan, Poems for Palestine</p> <p>  Asem Al Jerjawi, "Art as survival: Gaza's creators transform pain into protest."</p> <p> OCCUPIED: Palestinian Artworks</p> <p> Masao Adachi and Kōji Wakamatsu, 赤軍-PFLP 世界戦争宣言 (<i>Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War</i>) (1971)</p> <p> Abby Martin, <i>Gaza Fights For Freedom</i> (2019)</p> <p>(Optional)  Rachel Szor, Hamdan Ballal, Yuval Abraham, and Basel Adra, <i>No Other Land</i> (2024)</p>

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings / Cultural Artifacts
^w November 5	<p><u>Pan-African Revolutions</u></p> <p> Thomas Sankara, "We Didn't Import Our Revolution."</p> <p> Kwame Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited."</p> <p> Patrice Lumumba, "May Our People Triumph."</p> <p>  Alexander Bortolot, "Artesãos da Nossa Pátria: Makonde Blackwood Sculptors, Cooperatives, and the Art of Socialist Revolution in Post-Colonial Mozambique."</p> <p> Gillo Pontecorvo, <i>The Battle of Algiers</i> (1966)</p> <p> Göran Olsson, <i>Concerning Violence</i> (2014)</p> <p>(Optional)  Jamil X.T. Qubeka, <i>Sew the Winter to My Skin</i> (2018)</p>
^w November 12	<p><u>The Black Panther Party in the U.S.</u></p> <p> Black Panther Party, "The Ten-Point Program."</p> <p> Fred Hampton, "Power Anywhere Where There's People."</p> <p> Kathleen Neal Cleaver, "Women, Power, and Revolution."</p> <p> Agnès Varda, <i>Black Panthers</i> (1968) [28 minute short]</p> <p> Shaka King, <i>Judas and the Black Messiah</i> (2021)</p> <p> Minister of Culture Emory Douglas (browse the MoMA and Berman Collection)</p> <p> The Advanced Workers with the Anti-Imperialist Singers, "You Was Dancin Need to be Marchin So You Can Dance Some More Later On"</p> <p> The Chi-Lites, "(For God's Sake) Give More Power To The People"</p> <p> Dead Prez, "Hell Yeah (Pimp the System)"</p>
^w November 19	<p><u>Physical and Ideological Incarceration</u></p> <p> Guy Debord, <i>Society of the Spectacle</i></p> <p> Bertolt Brecht, "Questions From a Worker Who Reads."</p> <p> Peter Watkins, <i>Punishment Park</i> (1971)</p> <p> Greg Kwedar, <i>Sing Sing</i> (2023)</p> <p> Browse the Justice Arts Coalition artwork archive from incarcerated artists</p> <p> Mumia Abu-Jamal, "Homeland & Hip Hop"</p> <p> System of a Down, "Prison Song"</p>
^w November 26	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings / Cultural Artifacts
w December 3	<p data-bbox="581 241 1279 275"><u>Nostalgia and (Resisting) Capitalist Realist Aesthetics</u></p> <p data-bbox="540 285 1318 319"> Mark Fisher, <i>Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?</i></p> <p data-bbox="654 331 1203 373"> Boots Riley, <i>Sorry to Bother You</i> (2018)</p> <p data-bbox="410 384 1446 464">(Optional)  <u>"'Revolution is the Solution': A Conversation on Art, Activism, and Organizing with Boots Riley"</u></p> <p data-bbox="427 474 1430 508">/  Kino, "Summer is ending" – <u>Omnistar East Edit</u> [6 minute music video]</p> <p data-bbox="735 520 1122 562"> The Coup, <u>"The Guillotine"</u></p> <p data-bbox="621 573 1235 615"> Immortal Technique, <u>"Rich Man's World (1%)"</u></p>
w December 10	<p data-bbox="849 636 1008 669"><u>Final Project</u></p> <p data-bbox="711 669 1146 703">Final Project due 12/12 @ 11:59pm</p>

Cover image: Gustav Klutsis, *Oppressed Peoples of the Whole World*, 1924