PS 301 – Art and the State

Spring 2015
CRN - 36822
Monday/Wednesday – 8:30-9:50am
Willamette 110

Instructor: Joshua Plencner
Office:
Hours:
Email:

GTF: TBD
Office:
Hours:
Email:

**Course Description:**
This course is devoted to close readings and discussions of written works in political theory, aesthetics, art history, and cultural studies as they concern the political relationship between art and the state. Students will also closely and critically analyze a variety of historically important artworks, independently research and analyze alternative or historically neglected artworks, investigate prominent political controversies concerning the production, circulation, and/or reception of art, as well as create their own artistic interventions into the political world. In doing so, students will consider such fundamental questions as: What is art to the state? How (and when) is art political? How (and when) is politics artistic? Does art fashion a lens onto the political struggles of the day, or is art a means of political struggle? What can art do to/for/against/without/in spite of the state?

**Course Objectives:**
Students will:
- develop a general understanding of the intertwined relationship between art and politics as outlined by historical thinkers and practiced by artists,
- learn how to analyze and interpret art from a theoretically-informed political perspective,
- and effectively employ principles of political art studies to analyze specific historical moments, art movements, artists, and works of art.

**Course Readings:**
All readings assigned will be made available through the course Blackboard site. Assigned readings will primarily consist of PDF copies of articles, book chapters, and other scholarly materials, but will also include links to journalism, images, videos, and other online ephemera. Students are responsible for completing all assigned readings/viewings prior to each class meeting.
Course Assignments:
During the term students can expect a variety of assignments and modes of assessment:
- In-class writings (daily): 10%
- Pop quizzes (6): 10%
- Mid-term exam: 25%
- Group presentation: 20%
- Take-home final
  OR
- Creative final project: 35%

Assessment Standards:
Grades will be assigned according to the following standard, without exception—
A+ = 100-98
A  = 97-94
A- = 93-90
B+ = 89-87
B  = 86-83
B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-77
C  = 76-73
C- = 72-70
D+ = 69-67
D  = 66-63
D- = 62-60
F  = 59 and below

Expectations:
Students will read (and look at/watch) everything assigned—before class—each day. This is not an edict. It’s an assumption of commitment to the class and ability to pass it. The histories, concepts, and theories used in this course are sophisticated, non-traditional to the discipline of political science, and will challenge you. If you do not prepare ahead of time by reading and taking notes, you will become lost in the material quickly. Ask questions. Participate appropriately in discussion. Add to each other’s understanding by sharing challenges as well as insights.

Additionally, in this course you will be viewing, reading, discussing, and writing about explicit material and concepts, including race, gender, sexuality, war, religion, bodies, violence, etc. If you are uncomfortable engaging intellectually with any of these topics in a safe, respectful, and thoughtful manner, this is not the course for you. Any student who fails to meet this expectation—that is, fails to respect the material or the integrity of their peers—will be asked to drop immediately.

Technology in the Classroom:
Students are encouraged to use whatever laptop, tablet, smartphone or other device they deem necessary to participate effectively in the course. We live in a technologically mediated world, and it will often be the case that using technology helps us toward our collective ends in the
classroom. However, please do not use this opportunity to distract yourself or your peers—the instructor and the GTFs will do their best to maintain a productive classroom and will use their discretion in dealing with individual student technology use accordingly. If you’d rather spend your time looking at stuff not relevant to the course, we’d rather you did it elsewhere.

**Academic Honesty:**
The University of Oregon regards plagiarism as an offense of academic misconduct, and any such offense committed in this course, plagiarism or otherwise, will be dealt with accordingly. If you are caught plagiarizing, cheating, or submitting work not produced solely for this course, you will at minimum fail the assignment, and your case will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for review. When in doubt, cite. If you have further questions about how to avoid plagiarism or the proper use of citations, see: [http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/)

**Accessibility Note:**
In the interest of creating an inclusive learning environment, issues related to accessibility will be reasonably accommodated. Please notify me if there are any aspects of this course that result in documented disability-related barriers to your full and active participation. Alternatively, you can contact the university’s Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or at uoaec@uoregon.edu, who will direct me as to how best to accommodate you.

**Student Safety Note:**
Conflict can manifest itself variously and subtly in an academic environment. If you feel that you have been subjected to or have witnessed bias, unfairness, intimidation, harassment, or other improper treatment, you have several resources available to you that can help redress your grievance. For issues arising between student peers, you may choose to contact me as your first line of help. If for whatever reason you are uncomfortable doing so, or for issues that carry with them significant power differentials, including concerns arising between students and GTFs as well as between students and the Instructor, the main administrative remedy available to you is discussing the situation with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Priscilla Southwell, who can be contacted at: psouth@uoregon.edu; or 541-346-4866; or in her office, PLC 940. In addition to this, other resources available to you include:

- UO Bias Response Team: 541-346-1139 or [http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm](http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm)
- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity: 541-346-3123 or [http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/](http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/)
- UO Police Department (Non-Emergency): 541-346-2919 or [http://police.uoregon.edu/contact-us](http://police.uoregon.edu/contact-us)
TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Doing Things with History and Politics and Art or Whatever
Week 2: Whither the Image?
Week 3: Picturing Theory
Week 4: Power and Technologies of Art
Week 5: Crisis of the State
Week 6: Object Lessons – Moderns
Week 7: Object Lessons – Monuments
Week 8: Object Lessons – Museums
Week 9: Push Button/Self-Destruct Democracy
Week 10: All Hands for the Revolution!