

**Contemporary Political Theory**  
**POS 310 (9735), Fall 2015**  
**PH 123, TuTh 2:45 – 4:05**

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**Office Hours**

TuTh., Humanities 16 (Political Science Contact Offices): 12:00 – 1pm.  
TuTh., Milne 218 (Political Science Dept.): 4:15 - 5:30 by appointment

**Contemporary Political Theory**  
**“Redistributing the Senses”**

The theme of this course is “Redistributing the Senses” or, provocatively, “Politics and Art from Friedrich Schiller to Flashmobs!” Let us say we are patiently waiting for a train in Penn Station, NYC, and suddenly a mob of people begins to assemble in the public space set aside for travelers and breaks into song and dance to the astonishment of all. Here is an art form that models the ways in which art not only can be political, but even offers one definition of the political – politics is what determines the distribution of our senses! And the politics and art of the flashmob was anticipated in late 18<sup>th</sup> century political theory as the French revolution drew to a violent close. The goal of this course will be to determine how art enables us to think seriously about politics in the modern world. Students enrolling in this course should consider the following links:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EYAUazLI9k>)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPZh4AnWyk>)

**Learning Objectives**

The goal of this course is to teach students how to carefully read and interpret texts, how to identify key concepts on which theoretical arguments are based, and how to use these arguments and concepts to develop critical analyses and understandings of modern democratic societies and their politics. Students will be taught to think about the complex matter of what counts as politics and how the definition of politics changes for political theory as modern democratic societies evolve. These objectives will contribute to teaching students how to formulate concepts and arguments of their own in their written work (examinations) and in oral presentation (class participation). Finally, students will be taught how to interpret the meaning of the dominant media circulating in modern democracies in so far as they may contribute to the political socialization and education of citizens in a modern democratic society.

## **Course Requirements**

There are two requirements for this course:

- 1).** A midterm and final examination, both of which will be take-home exams. Dates for the exams are given in the weekly schedule of assignments below. Each exam counts for 40% of final grades.
- 2).** Class participation: 20% of final grade. No student can receive the grade of 'A' in this class without a record of regular class participation.

**Attendance Policy:** students who have more than two unexcused absences during the course of the semester risk receiving an automatic failure for the course. Attendance will be taken each class.

## **Rules of Engagement**

Students are permitted to bring beverages to class, although no food of any sort is permitted. Cell phones are to be turned off upon entering class. Students who use computers for note taking are not permitted to use their computers for any other application during class time. Each violation of these rules will be rewarded with a deduction of 5 pts. from the final grade. Students must arrive to class on time. If anything competes with these obligations a student should take a different course with more flexible requirements, if such courses exist.

## **Required Texts**

(available from Mary Jane Books, corner of Western & Quail, or Dropbox)

### **Available at Mary Jane Books.**

Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*  
Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*

## **Readings Available from Dropbox**

**Patch this link -**

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qs19hvu6er6oqg6/AACIsBF0eKhUY3usO\\_anOZC-a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qs19hvu6er6oqg6/AACIsBF0eKhUY3usO_anOZC-a?dl=0)

1. Whitman, 1855 "Preface" to *Leaves of Grass*
2. Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*
3. Whitman, "Song of Myself"
3. Schoolman, "Democratic Vistas – the Path to Whitman's Poetry"
4. Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture"
5. Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"

6. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in an Era of Mass Production"
7. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*
8. Schoolman, "The Reconciliation Image in Art: Aesthetic Reason and Reflexivity, Twin Economies and Democratic Effects"
9. Schoolman, "The Reconciliation Image in Art: The Artwork in Motion, Democratic Time, Receptivity and Imitation, Aesthetic Analogs – Art & Film"
10. Schoolman, "Politics of the Reconciliation Image"
11. Deleuze, *Cinema I*

### **Weekly Assignments**

**August 27 (Th.):** Course Introduction

**Sept. 1 (Tu.):** Schiller, *Letters* 1-10 (pp. 23-60).

**Sept. 3 (Th.):** No class. APSA Conference.

**Sept. 8 (Tu.):** Schiller, *Letters* 11-15 (pp. 60-81).

**Sept. 10 (Th.):** Schiller, *Letters* 19-21 (pp. 91-102).

**Sept. 12 (Tu.):** Schiller, *Letters* 22-24 (pp. 102-119).

**Sept. 15 (Tu.):** Schiller, *Letters* 25-27 (pp. 119-140).

**Sept. 17 (Th.):** Whitman, 1855 "Preface" to *Leaves of Grass*

**Sept. 22 (Tu.):** **No Class. Yom Kippur**

**Sept. 24 (Th.):** Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*

**Sept. 29 (Tu.):** Whitman, "Song of Myself"

**Oct. 1 (Th.):** Schoolman, "Democratic Vistas – the Path to Whitman's Poetry"

**Oct. 6 (Tu.):** Ranciere, "The Distribution of the Sensible," pp. 12-19.

**Oct. 8 (Th.):** Ranciere, "Artistic Regimes," pp. 20-30.

**Oct. 13 (Tu.):** Ranciere, "Mechanical Arts," pp. 31-34, and "On Art and Work," pp. 42-45; "Politicized Art," pp. 60-66.

**Oct. 15 (Th.):** Ranciere, "The Lesson of Ranciere," pp. 69-79.

**Oct. 20 (Tu.):** Midterm

**Oct. 22 (Th.):** Horkheimer, “Art and Mass Culture”

**Oct. 27 (Tu.):** Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”

**Oct. 29 (Th.):** Benjamin, “The Work of Art in an Era of Mass Production”

**Nov. 3 (Tu.):** Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 1-23.

**Nov. 5 (Th.):** Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 23-40.

**Nov. 10 (Tu.):** Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 40-60.

**Nov. 12 (Th.):** Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 60-78.

**Nov. 17 (Tu.):** Schoolman, “The Reconciliation Image in Art: Aesthetic Reason and Reflexivity”

**Nov. 19 (Th.):** Schoolman, “The Reconciliation in Art: The Artwork in Motion, Democratic Time, Receptivity and Imitation, Aesthetic Analogs – Art & Film”

**Nov. 24 (Tu.):** Schoolman, “Politics of the Reconciliation Image”

**Nov. 26 (Th.): No Class. Thanksgiving**

**Dec. 1 (Tu.):** Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, chs. 1-2.

**Dec. 3 (Th.):** Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, chs. 3-4.

**Dec. 8 (Tu.): Last Class. Semester Summary.**