

ART/IDIS 292, ARTISTS AS ACTIVISTS Spring 2008

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*office hours:* Tues 11:00am to 1:00pm; Weds 2:00 to 4:00pm; or by appointment

*The format of the course is seminar, image-lectures, and guided discussion.*

Assessment is primarily through writing. Five assignments will total approximately 20 pages of writing, including papers, short essays, creative fiction or non-fiction. Research papers must include a bibliography and citations.

DESCRIPTION: "Artists as Activists" examines how the work of artists, writers and graphic designers can raise ethical questions and advocate social change. A wide range of visual and material culture will be presented, including propaganda, posters, advertising, the graphic novel, film, and theater. Content will include propaganda, patriotism, and resistance during World War II and the Holocaust; the Vietnam War; the Gulf War; the war in Iraq; the antiwar and ecology movements in 1960s; the Pro-Democracy movement; AIDS activism; and current issues of human rights. Graphic design and artwork will include work from Central and Eastern Europe, USSR/Russia, China, Latin America, Japan, and the USA. Students will view both documentary and feature films, including the film version of Tony Kushner's epic play, *Angels in America*.

As a class we will consider at the relationships between art, images, mass media, propaganda, and individual and collective acts of conscience. All of the artwork used in this course are considered using a combination of ethical/philosophical models, along with a forma/aesthetic analysis. Discussion will include the historical, social, and political context of the artwork, its method of production and distribution, and the privileges/risks inherent in producing "political art."

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

UNDERSTAND relationships between art, propaganda, and protest primarily in 20th-century and contemporary art.

EXPLORE how art can reveal the complexity of moral decision-making and actions.

ANALYZE art, its subject matter, and the context of its production and distribution in terms of aesthetics and ethics.

EVALUATE the impact of visual art on social, civic, and individual responsibility.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance. Absences affect your engagement, and the quality and content of your work; absences affect your grade. Attendance at special events and lectures listed on the syllabus is especially important. *See additional notes about Art Department Attendance Policy on page 3.*

Call the Art Office (x1680, before 4:30 pm) if you are going to miss class. (Please do not come to class if you are sick! Keep your communicable disease to yourself!) Or e-mail me ahead of time at dutlinger@moravian.edu.

2. Textbooks for class: *Design of Dissent*, Milton Glaser and Mirko Ilic; New York, 2005 and *Stop the Next War Now: Effective Responses to Violence and Terrorism*, Medea Benjamin and Jodie Evans, editors; Makawao, 2005.

4. Satisfactory, on-time completion of all assignments on the syllabus.
5. Reading the assigned materials, and talking and thinking about the subject matter of this class both during and outside of class. This class requires your active engagement. (If you appear to be asleep when I am talking or presenting material, I might ask you to leave.)

Please do not bring your breakfast, lunch or dinner to eat unless we are all going to be eating. Your phone must be off or on silent. No text-messaging in class.

6. Satisfactory, on-time completion of all assignments on the syllabus.

#### ASSESSMENT

1. Attendance.
2. Completing work on time, in a professional manner, fitting the parameters of the assignment. See schedule on pages 5–6 for descriptions of assignments and the percentage each one earns.

*Grades on your papers will be determined by how well you:*

CHOOSE a significant and relevant purpose

STATE your purpose (Your task as a thinker and writer is to figure something out, ask and answer a question, or solve some problem.)

IDENTIFY key concepts and explain them clearly

USE evidence (examples) to draw consistent conclusions

IDENTIFY your assumptions (“What am I taking for granted? What are my prejudices; how have my attitudes been previously influenced and by what?”)

UNDERSTAND the difference between “believing” and “thinking/showing.”

THINK AND WRITE CLEARLY AND WELL

*Your writing will be evaluated in terms of:*

ACCURACY

PRECISION

RELEVANCE

DEPTH

BREADTH

LOGIC

SIGNIFICANCE

FAIRNESS

If writing is especially difficult for you, get in touch with the Writing Center—their Student Tutors are excellent. They will help you learn how to write better, and to enjoy writing.

Get a copy of *The Bedford Manual* and use it often.

Read *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser.

Read more of just about anything.

ASSESSMENT, *continued*

3. Participating in class, contributing to class, being engaged with the material.

*Class participation: 5% OF GRADE*

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THE ART DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCE POLICY:

*Unexcused absences:*

After the first unexcused absence, final grade will be dropped by one full letter.

After the third unexcused absence, student will receive a failing final grade.

Documentation is required for sports. Your coach should e-mail a note to me confirming matches, meets, departure time for away games, or anything that would require your absence from class. Practice is not an excused absence.

Job interviews or doctor's/dentist's appointments are not to be scheduled during class. (These qualify as unexcused absences.)

*Missing portions of class count as unexcused absences.*

*examples:*

- More than 15 minutes late for class
- Failure to bring supplies or assignment to class
- Failure to return from break
- Leaving class half an hour or more early
- Being late more than three times. Late is defined as ten to fifteen minutes after class begins.

*If you are late or absent, it is your responsibility (not the professor's) to find out what you missed and to catch up in a timely manner.*

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REGARDING LEARNING DISABILITIES: *"If you believe you need accommodations in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion."* (from the Moravian College Handbook)

REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY: *Please see the Moravian College policy in the Student Handbook.*

WHAT GRADES STAND FOR:

A: *exceptional; thorough and outstanding achievement; work reflects thorough research, revision, and an engaged, critical process.*

B: *Good, above-average work, but it needs refinement or revision. Often lacks cohesive structure or needs more attention to detail. Little or no investigation of primary research.*

C: *Adequate but undistinguished. Lacks in focus, commitment, critical thinking, content, or skills.*

D: *Does not satisfy requirements of assignment. Inadequate amount of time and thought invested in project or paper. Work is often rushed, contrived or clichéd, and usually lacks formal or contextual analysis.*

F: *Failed in all aspects to satisfy requirements of assignment; work was never turned in; plagiarism is evident. No credit.*

I: *Incomplete. Students must have medical excuse to qualify for an Incomplete.*

## 2008 SCHEDULE Artists as Activists

16 January

Introduction to course: expectations  
Thinking, talking, and writing about art

*Assignment for next class:*

*Read handouts:*

1. "The Struggle for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in the United States 1900–1991"
2. "Contextual Analysis"
3. "Formal Analysis"

23 January *Meet for class in HUB lounge*

Formal and contextual analysis of photographs in exhibition,  
"Facing Race: 21st Century Americans"

*In-class assignment:* Each of you will have 20 minutes to look at the photographs; you will then present to the class an analysis of one of the photographs based on what you learned from the readings. (5–10 mins per student)

*Assignment for next class:*

Write a 2-page formal and contextual analysis of one of Stephen Shames' photographs in HUB exhibition. 10% OF GRADE

31 January *special event: Focus the Nation: Climatology*

Meet for class in the HUB lounge; Students from the Biology Department will be giving presentations in the Hall of Science lounge area. Interactive webcast at 8pm in Dana Lecture Hall. Be sure to bring your cell phone so you can vote!

5 February *special event: Tuesday evening; 7:00 Prosser Auditorium*

Presentation by photographer Stephen Shames; *required* (because of there being two consecutive nights that require your participation, we will not have class on February 13th.)

Let me know if you need me to give you a note for your professor to ask permission to be absent if you have class on Tuesday nights.

6 February *special event: film: Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* and presentation by filmmaker, Dr. Shakti Butler Class will meet in Prosser at 6:30pm. Please don't be late!

*assignment:* Write a 3-page reaction paper on Shames' and Butler's presentations;  
DUE ON WEDS, FEB 20; 15% OF GRADE

13 February *no class (There is an additional assignment for next class, February 20.)*

The 3-page reaction paper on the Shames and Butler presentations

*and:*

Find two artists (19th century–contemporary) whose work deals with the subject of race. Write a concise statement describing why you chose them & where you found the work. Include at least three images of their work. (If the work is in color, print it in color.) 5% OF GRADE

February 20 *Propaganda Art, Art against War*

read in *Stop the Next War Now*: foreword, preface, introduction and chapter 1

choose five images from *Design of Dissent*. Think about which one you want to write about, and find out everything you can about the designer or artist and the context of its production.

February 27 *image-lecture: Art against War*

assignment: write a 5-page paper integrating what you have read in the past two weeks with two of the posters from *Design of Dissent*. Be sure to use formal and contextual analysis when you write. DUE MARCH 12TH (THE WEEK AFTER SPRING BREAK) 25% OF GRADE

March 5 *Spring Break*

March 12: *Angels in America*, Parts 1 & 2 by Tony Kushner

special event, play: *The Laramie Project*

March 13 Thursday & March 14 Friday 8:00pm  
March 15 Saturday 2:00 & 8:00pm; March 16 Sunday 2:00pm  
ARENA THEATER; HUB PAVILION

5% EXTRA CREDIT  
IF YOU ATTEND  
Bring your ticket stub  
to class on March 19

15% EXTRA CREDIT  
if you attend & write a three-  
page review or reaction paper.  
You can substitute this project  
for your take-home final!

March 19: *Angels in America* Parts 3 & 4 by Tony Kushner

March 26: *Image-lecture: AIDS activism*

Think about your paper topic; do some research.

During the last hour of class we can discuss possible topics. Have some ideas ready.

April 2: *paper topic due* (PAPER IS DUE ON APRIL 9)

At the beginning of class, turn in to me your title and a concise description (2–3 paragraphs or an outline of points you want to make and how you think you will achieve them.

You may choose to do creative writing instead of writing a research paper, but your topic has to be AIDS-related or your subject focus on “intolerance of difference.” You must include a bibliography; include in bibliography at least five titles of articles or books.

special event:

April 4, Friday: *Art Department field trip to New York City*

Attendance on one field trip per semester is required for students in all art classes.

Your student account has already been billed (\$45) for the field trip.

Contact [jciganick@moravian.edu](mailto:jciganick@moravian.edu) (x1680) if you are not able to attend the NYC trip.

If getting away on Fridays is impossible for you, you can choose to go on the Saturday field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to see the Frida Kahlo exhibition. (att: Feminists and the men-who-support-them: the Kahlo show is one you'll want to see!)

If you cancel going to New York trip after April 1st (no fooling) you will not get a refund.

No exceptions. No refunds are given until after April 7th.

also on April 4, Friday:

*Deadline for Hate-Free America essay contest* (1st prize: \$150; 2nd prize: \$100; 3rd prize: \$75)

1st prize winner will read their essay at the Rally for Hate-Free America at MoCo on April 17th

*essay topic:* You are running for President of the United States. Your promise is to create a “hate-free America.” How will you do this?

*submission guidelines:* MSWord; double-spaced, Times Roman, not to exceed three pages. Electronic file must be received before 4:00pm on Friday April 4th. Send your submission electronically to sab01@moravian.edu. Have someone proof this for you before you submit it!

April 9 Holocaust Art; Art after the Holocaust; *image-lecture*

5-PAGE PAPER DUE (formal and contextual analysis) on *Angles in America* or a story on “intolerance of difference.” 25% OF GRADE

April 16 Holocaust Art; Art after the Holocaust: *Image-lecture*

<p><i>special event:</i> April 17 Thursday Rally for Hate-Free America 6:00–8:00pm HUB PAVILION</p>
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*5% extra credit  
if you attend*

*Take-home final will be given to you at the last class on Wednesday, April 23;*  
DUE ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 30TH; 15% OF GRADE

FINAL GRADES ARE DUE ON MAY 5; GRADUATION IS MAY 10TH.