

## ART/IDIS 212, artists as activists

Spring 2011 weds 6:30-9:00 pphac 330

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*office hours:* Weds 11:30am to 12:30pm; 4:00 to 5:00pm; or by appointment

*The format for this course is seminar, image-lectures, and guided discussion.*

**description:** “Artists as Activists” examines how work by artists, writers and graphic designers raises 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 war in Iraq; the anti-war and ecology movements in 1960s; the Pro-Democracy movement; AIDS activism; and current issues of human rights. Graphic design and artwork will include selections from Central and Eastern Europe, USSR/Russia, China, Latin America, Japan, and the USA. Students will view both documentary and feature films, with a special focus this semester on films from Iran.

We will consider relationships between art, images, mass media, propaganda, and individual/collective acts of conscience. Students will evaluate artwork in this course are using a combination of ethical/philosophical frameworks, and formal and contextual 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 the moral decisions, as seen through visual arts, on social, civic, and individual responsibility.

**assessment:**

*Grades* are determined primarily through my evaluation of your writing and research. Assignments will include papers, short essays, reviews, and creative writing.

*Your papers are graded according to how well you:*

1. choose a significant and relevant purpose

2. state or define your purpose  
(Your task as a thinker and writer is to ask and answer a question, or describe and solve a problem.)
3. identify key concepts and explain them clearly
4. use evidence (examples) to draw consistent conclusions
5. identify your assumptions (“What am I taking for granted? What are my prejudices; how have my attitudes been previously influenced and by what?”)
6. know the difference between “believing/feeling” and “thinking/showing”
7. think, speak, and write clearly and well

*Your writing is evaluated in terms of:*

accuracy; precision; relevance; depth; breadth;  
logic; flow; significance; fairness; sincerity; voice

How to make writing more fun, and produce better quality? Make an appointment at the Writing Center when you have completed your first draft. Allow time to have your draft reviewed by one of the Writing Center Student Tutors. Make time to revise your paper before you turn it in. *Good writing evolves from revisions.* If you want to earn an “A,” revisions must become part of your regular writing process. Do not expect to write a good paper if you write it the night before it’s due.

Recommended writing tools: *The Bedford Manual*. Use it every time you write.  
read *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser. *Read more of just about anything.*

requirements:

1. Textbook for class: *Interpreting Art: Reflecting, Wondering, and Responding* by Terry Barrett, New York, 2003.
2. Satisfactory, on-time completion of all assignments.
3. Reading the assigned materials, talking, and thinking about the subject matter of this class both during and outside of class. This class requires active, engaged, consistent involvement—reading, thinking, contributing to discussions.

*Engagement/participation: 10% of grade*

4. weekly journals:

Each week you are required to write two pages on your ideas on and feelings about the material read, and film or artworks seen. Questions to ask yourself: What is the moral issue or conflict? How does context—historical, political, cultural, religious, personal—affect the decisions made and their consequences? Can you imagine yourself in a similar position? What surprised you or moved you? *Turn in your weekly journal at the beginning of each class. Number them, write date on top, with your name; list the readings and film or subject matter of the image lecture/presentations. Give a title your essay. MSWord, with no spelling errors!*  
**50% of grade** (for all of the “reaction papers”).

4. Attendance. You can’t participate if you aren’t in class. 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 important notes about Art Department Attendance Policy follow:*

Call the Art Office (x 1680) 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.

**Art Department Attendance Policy:**

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

**After the third unexcused absence, you fail the class.**

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

Do not schedule interviews or doctor's/dentist's appointments during class time. (These qualify as unexcused absences.)

*Missing portions of class count as an unexcused absence.*

*Other misdemeanors that can count like unexcused absences:*

Repeated failure to bring assignment to class; being late more than three times. "Late" is late. Really, truly, rudely late is 10–15 minutes after class begins.

*If you are late or absent, it is your responsibility (not mine) to find out what you missed from a classmate & catch up asap.*

*All films viewed will be available at Reeves Library on reserve.*

*If you miss seeing something, you have to see it and turn in your reaction paper at the next class.*

**In-class etiquette**

Please do not bring your dinner to eat during class. *Don't eat while your professor is talking, it's rude.* But you can eat whatever you want when we are watching a film, unless it is "loud" or super stinky food. Check with the person beside you and ask first if they mind if you eat.

**Your phone must be off.** Off. That means no no nnnnoh text-messaging, Facebook, etc during class. (It's beyond rude.) If I see you texting, I will confiscate your phone. You can pick it up later at the Dan's Office.

**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."* moravian college handbook

**regarding academic honesty:**

*Search your soul. If you need clarification, see the Moravian College policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is cheating; plagiarism is stealing.*

**Wikipedia is not a scholarly resource.** Just because we may look at Wikipedia, doesn't make it a primary source.

Important note from the Dean re: *"...but I didn't mean to plagiarize":*

*"Although the ease of cutting and pasting, especially from the internet,*

has changed how students read and write papers, academia has not yet changed its expectations for researching and writing papers. *Ideas and words generated by someone else must be properly cited.*

Several Moravian students recently have been charged with plagiarism for providing a citation without quotation marks, while quoting entire sentences and even paragraphs. Many students mistakenly believe that by putting a citation in the middle or at the end of the paragraph, they are somehow exonerated with regard to academic dishonesty. *Not!* Even without employing a direct quote, citation of an idea which is paraphrased is still required. The best way to fix the problem is to use citation and fresh [i.e., your] language in citing an idea. [In other words,] *paraphrase.*

*If you use more than three words of someone else's in a row, add quotation marks on both sides, and cite your source.*

(Good paraphrasing takes time and practice.)”

—Dr. Carol Traupman-Carr, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

getting the grade:

**A:** Exceptional work; 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. “B” work often lacks cohesive structure or needs more attention to detail; it usually shows little or no investigation of primary research.

**C:** Adequate but undistinguished; lacks in focus, commitment, critical thinking, substantial content, and rhetorical 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, or work was never turned in; plagiarism may be evident. No credit. If plagiarism is suspected, it will be investigated and reported to Academic Affairs.

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

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## 2011 schedule Artists as Activists

### 19 january

Introduction to course: my expectations and yours.  
Thinking, talking, and writing about art.  
Looking at films: *B is for Bomb* & *Prisoner of Paradise*

### Assignment:

Read syllabus. Read Chapter 8, “Principles for Interpreting Art,”  
pp 197–228 in Barrett, *Interpreting Art*  
Read first letter (handout) by Todd Gitlin from *Letters to a Young Activist*.

### 26 january

Class held in UBC Room at 6:45pm.  
Image-lecture: *Holocaust Artists as Activists* (open to public).

### january 27 thursday; extra credit

Lecture by Dr. James Cone, activist-scholar  
*Crisis in the Human Family & the Earth—Is There a Link?*  
7:00pm Prosser

### february 2

Documentary film: *From Bitter Earth* or *Degenerate Art*; in-class discussion.

### february 8 monday; extra credit

Opening of Immigration Exhibition at hub; 4-6pm

### february 9

Documentary films: *Scandalize My Name: African American actors and the McCarthy period*  
and *Paul Robeson & Richard Wright: Black American Activists-artists* (Both are one hour.)  
Discussion will follow. Readings: “formal and contextual analysis” (handouts).

### february 16

Documentary films: *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train* and  
*Toward the Margin of Life*. Discussion will follow.

### Essay: 3.5–4 pages, due in two weeks, on March 2; 20% of grade:

At our next class, you will choose an artist from a list that I will provide. Or find one on your own, but check with me about it first. [Print or xerox example of the work by the photographer you want to write on and show them to me after class.]

*Find/choose three examples of artwork by your artist. Research your artist—find out about their life & work.* The images you choose can be related by subject, but they do not need to be similar in style or format. You are encouraged but not required to choose an artists should be from a non-Western culture. (“Western culture” usually includes USA, England, Europe [including Eastern Europe], Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Latin America.)

*Applying what you have read, write a contextual and formal analysis of the three artworks/ images.* You must include the images in your paper, with captions (artist's name, title of work, medium, size and date).

I can show you how to do this in MSWord. *pls remind me to do this if you don't know how... ;)*  
You must footnote all citations.

*If you hope to get an "A" on your paper—make an appointment at the writing center during Feb 9–17. Take your first draft of your essay and get advice from a tutor on how to improve it.*

23 february

Image-lecture, "UnVeiled: New Art from Iran and the Middle East".

24 feb; thurs

**extra credit:** poetry slam; hub pavilion, 8pm

2 march **Visiting Artist-Activist: Mirko Ilic** [www.mirkoilic.com](http://www.mirkoilic.com)

7–13 march spring break

16 march Film: *Two Women*; discussion will follow.  
Read handouts on photography and film.

22 march; tues

**extra credit:** christine chan; chinese women's theater  
prosser, 7pm

23 march Film: *Fireworks Wednesday*; discussion will follow.  
Read handouts on photography and film.

30 march Film: *Through the Olive Trees* or *A Taste of Cherry*; discussion will follow.  
Handout: "Looking at War" by Susan Sontag.

6 april: Documentary film: *War Photographer*; discussion will follow.

*Assignment:*

1. Read *Looking at War* by Susan Sontag, pp 82–98, the new yorker, Dec 9, 2002 (handout)
2. Read handout on war photography.

*Assignment: Write essay, 3.5–5 pages. Due on Friday, April 15th, by noon; drop off at Art Dept, South Campus. lobby level, around corner from Payne Gallery & Foy Concert Hall. (If you e-mail me your paper and ask me to print it out, twenty (20) points will be taken off of your paper's grade.) 20% of grade*

**What is your essay about?** think about Sontag's and Barrett's ideas. write an essay on a photographer whose subject matter is war. (There are many books are on reserve at Reeves for you to use. [Print or xerox example of the work by the photographer you want to write on and show them to me at least ten days before the paper is due.]

You must scan from the book(s) the images that you are discussing, and place them on the page where you are analyzing them. **You must include formal and contextual analysis of the images in your paper. Include all images in your paper, with captions/citations. You must refer explicitly to the assigned readings from the last three weeks in your paper.**

**If you want an “A” on your paper, make an appointment at Writing Center for April 2–12.  
Take your first draft and work with a tutor to improve it.**

6 april: Film: *No One Knows About Persian Cats*; discussion follows.

13 april: Film: *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song*; discussion follows.

**Essay on photographer due on Friday, April 15th, by noon.**

**Early Birds are welcome to turn the paper in at class on Weds, April 13th.**

20 april: Film: *Women Without Men*; discussion follows.

27 april: Film: *Waltz with Bashir* or *Persepolis*; discussion follows.