

CRIT 599: CONTEMPORARY ART AND ITS PUBLICS

Tuesdays 10-1

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This seminar explores the discourse of people gathered, ostensibly because of something shared.

Just what, exactly, is shared and by whom will be critical questions as we work our way through the semester. What is a public and how is it formed? What are its potentialities for anti-racist and queer politics? And how do art, visual culture, and film lay bare the stakes of these questions?

This course is divided into three sections, the first seeks to understand and historicize a range of keywords: public, crowd, mass, nation, community, counterpublic, commons, undercommons, and collective—all in relationship to contemporary art and visual culture. We'll then move on to think about how affect is attached to, and circulated amongst, racialized and sexual counter/publics. Finally, we'll consider the "art world" as its own particular kind of public—and focus on how and when the contemporary art world becomes *visible* vis-à-vis a broader national consciousness.

Perhaps it is no surprise that renderings of the public are often placed in dyadic relationship to visual-ideological representations of the individual (for example: artist/audience), participating in re-inscriptions of Humanist thought surrounding creative artistic production. As an acknowledgment of this, and also as a refutation, this course puts contemporary artists' projects as well as examples from visual culture (the history of television & film, design, advertising) into dialogue with our key terms, insisting that rather than being simply illustrative, contemporary art and visual culture can be used to think-with, read-with, and be-with critical theory—and vice versa. Our final class will be a culmination and a focusing of our efforts from throughout the semester, and is an in-depth case-study of one particular "public" artwork and its aftermath, Kara Walker's *A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant* (2014).

Required Texts / Reading

1. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
2. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004).
3. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2002).
4. Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
5. Jennifer Tybrczy, *Sex Museums* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
6. Samuel Delaney, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 1999).
7. Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).

Each week you will have a variety of assigned/required texts. Expect to have upwards of 100+ pages of reading per week. I have also included recommended reading, which I have *no expectation* that you do. Seriously. Rather, think of these recommended readings functioning like something of a correlative and sometimes counter-archive for the course—with readings that support or challenge those I've designated as required. In this way, I hope that this syllabus is something you will return to, that it will help supplement reading lists for other courses you take, for your own work, for the

work of your peers.

Assignment/Grade Breakdown

20-Minute Paper and Supporting Documents: 30%

Reading Responses / Reports: 50%

Attendance + Participation: 20%

20-Minute Paper and Supporting Documents: 30%

In lieu of a final 20pp research paper, you will produce a 20-minute conference presentation, with the goal of submitting it to an outside conference sometime during the semester (although *CAA*'s deadlines will have passed, there are many regional and national conferences that will do fine). Unlike most seminars, there will not be one day where these presentations will be given, rather they will be worked into the syllabus as an organic part of the schedule.

You will be assessed on the quality of your research and its presentation. More details about this assignment will be given in the first class. A schedule will be made by the third class.

Reading Responses / Reports: 50%

You will produce a reading response of 3-5 pages every other week of seminar. These responses are due by Sunday 11:59pm to my email (andycampy@gmail.com)—all standard paper-writing rules apply (double-spaced, cited, numbered pages, etc.). Although the assignment seems basic, your responses need not be. Use this as an opportunity to understand a part of what you've read (you won't be able to address all of the readings) in relationship to your own work, or to a topic you're interested in. These responses work best when you think of them as scholastically rigorous check-ins—replete with citations. You will be asked to summarize your response at the beginning of class—perhaps to even read part of it aloud to jumpstart the day's discussion. To do this you may bring with you supporting images if you wish, just be sure to arrive early to transfer them to Professor Campbell's laptop.

One of these responses will be in the form of an outline of one of the full-texts of this course. Throughout the semester we'll be reading excerpts of certain works, when it is your date to outline, you'll first read the entire text and outline it, paying careful attention to the sections that were not read by the rest of the class. On this day you will present the outline to the class before class begins. These outlines are due to me at the same time that all other responses are due (Sunday 11:59) – I'll print out the outlines to bring to class.

You will complete a total of five responses (including the one outline)—each worth 10% of your total grade.

Everyone will complete a trial-run response for the first full week of class – on the readings related to the keyword “Public.”

Attendance / Participation: 20%

Attendance and participation are active processes, not only requiring your presence, but also your good faith engagement with course material. You are expected to *read*, *respond*, and *reflect* your own stakes in course material. To do this you must: bring the readings with you to class in either paper or digital form, complete course work on time, and make yourself known in the room. Because we meet so few times, each session carries significant weight. Barring illness or a significant family event, after the first unexcused absence your final grade will be lowered by a full letter. Should you miss class because of an illness or unexpected emergency, it is your responsibility to inform me prior to class (if possible) and to obtain class notes from one of your peers.

COURSE CONDUCT: I expect everyone to participate, and to respect each other's time and space. Discussions will become heated (I hope) but should never cross the line in terms of personal attack. You can disagree with someone – totally, completely, polemically – without seeking to make someone else feel stupid or defeated. If you feel this is becoming a problem for you or someone else, please do not hesitate to seek me out and discuss it. I do my very best to ensure a critically nurturing environment for everyone, but I can't read your mind, so please help me if you think it is required.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: While laptops are acceptable to use in class, their use should be strictly limited to the task at hand (i.e. no social media, unless asked for by the professor). Should you be found in violation of this, you will be asked refrain from using your laptop. Cell phones should be turned off (not silent, not vibrate: OFF), and this goes for any other electronic device that might make noise or otherwise interrupt class sessions.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND CONDUCT: If you are found to have violated any rules regarding academic honesty, you will be subject to academic and disciplinary penalties. If you are unsure how this applies to your work, please ask.

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources

SUPPORT SYSTEMS: A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

This syllabus and all lectures related to this course are protected by copyright law, registered in the year 2016, as the original expression of the professor, Andy Campbell. This and related materials may not be reproduced without his express written consent. Students are prohibited from selling (or being paid for taking) notes during this course to (or by) any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor. Notes from this class may not be posted on the internet or world-wide web. You are encouraged to share hard copies of your notes with your classmates, provided you do not charge for this service. The professor reserves the right to deviate from the schedule and change the

syllabus.

Course of Study

8.23 The Library Is Open (i.e. Reading is what?! ...Fundamental!)

Readings:

Rita Felski, "After Suspicion," *Profession* (2009): 28-35.

Franz Kafka, "Fellowship," trans. Tania and James Stern, in *The Complete Stories* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1983).

Recommended:

Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

PART I

8.30

Keyword: PUBLIC

Readings:

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991) [excerpts: Sections: I, II, & V].

Chris Gilbert and Olafur Eliasson, "Olafur Eliasson" *BOMB* 88 (Summer 2004): 22-29.

Frazer Ward, "The Haunted Museum: Institutional Critique and Publicity" *October* 73 (Summer 1995): 71-89.

Recommended:

Craig Calhoun, "Introduction," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

Nancy Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24.4: 7-30.

Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

9.6

Keyword: CROWD

In class: Watch: Arthur Zmijewski, *Them* (2007)

Readings:

Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" [most especially "The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child"] in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964). 1-42.

Gustave Le Bon, "General Characteristics of Crowds—Psychological Law of Their Mental Unity" and "The Sentiments and Morality of Crowds" in *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1896): 13-35.

Sigmund Freud, "The Herd Instinct" and "The Group and the Primal Horde" in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. James Strachey (New York, NY: Boni and Liveright, 1922).

Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988): 50-90.

Recommended:

- Hayden White, "Crowd Experiences" in *Crowds* [eds. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiew] (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- Christine Poggi, "Mass, Pack, and Mob: Art in the Age of the Crowd" in *Crowds* [eds. Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiew] (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- Alys Eve Weinbaum, "Ways of Not Seeing: (En)gendered Optics in Benjamin, Baudelaire, and Freud" in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* [eds. David Eng and David Kazanjian] (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).
- TJ Clark, "Introduction" and "The View from Notre Dame" in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

9.13

Keyword: MASSES

- Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1993): 94-136.
- Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, [trans. Richard Nice] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): [excerpts]
- Jose Ortega y Gasset, "The Coming Masses" in *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993): 11-18.

Recommended:

- Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject" in Craig Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992): XX-XX.
- Herbert Marcuse, *Negations* [trans. Jeremy Shapiro] (London: MayFly Books, 2009): 65-98. [especially "The Affirmative Character of Culture"]
- Susan Buck-Morss, "Dreamworld of Mass Culture" From *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989): 253-287.

9.20

Keyword: NATION

In class: Watch: Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Forgetting Vietnam* (2015)

Readings:

- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004).
- Saloni Mathur, "Charles and Ray Eames in India" *Art Journal* 70.1 (Spring 2011): 34-53.
- Cady Noland, "Towards a Metalanguage of E V I L" (1989) in *Witness to Her Art* [eds. Rhea Anastas with Michael Brenson] (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006): 126-45.

Recommended:

- Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 1994).
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* [revised edition] (New York, NY: Verso, 2006).

9.27

Keyword: COMMUNITY

Readings:

- Miranda Joseph, "The Perfect Moment: Gays, Christians and the National Endowment for the Arts" *Against the Romance of Community* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 119-145.

- Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Inoperative Community" in *The Inoperative Community* [trans. Peter Conner] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) [excerpts]: 1-42.
- Judith Baca, "Our People are the Internal Exiles" in *Cultures in Contention* [eds. Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier] (Seattle, WA: Real Comet Press, 1985): 62-75.
- Cherise Smith, "Nikki S Lee's Projects and the Repackaging of a Politics of Identity" in *Enacting Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011): 189-232.

Recommended:

- Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Station Hill Press, 1988).
- Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
- John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- Thomas Claviez [ed.], *The Common Growl: Toward a Poetics of Precarious Community* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2016).
- David Levi Strauss, "Coming to the Point at Three Rivers: Art/Public/Community, What do Artist's Want" in *Between Dog & Wolf* (Autonomedia Press, 1998): 121-140.
- Suzanne Lacy, *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics, 1974-2007* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010) [excerpts]

10.4

Keyword: COMMONS / UNDERCOMMONS / MULTITUDE

Readings:

- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "The Multitude of the Poor" in *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2009): 39-55.
- Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013) [excerpts].
- Claire Fontaine, "Our Common Critical Condition" *e-flux* 73 (May 2016).
[<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/our-common-critical-condition/>]
- Anthony Huberman, "Claire Fontaine" *BOMB* 105 (Fall 2008).
[<http://bombmagazine.org/article/3177/claire-fontaine>]

Recommended:

- Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" *Science* 162 (13 December 1968):1243-48.
- William Forster Lloyd, *Two Lectures on the Checks to Population* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1833), reprinted (in part) in *Population, Evolution, and Birth Control* (ed. Garrett Hardin) (San Francisco, CA: Freeman, 1964).
- Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Hal Foster, "Critical Condition: On criticism then and now," *Artforum* (September 2012).

10.11 [class held in ONE Archives]

Keyword: COLLECTIVE

- Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos, "Other Forms of Conviviality: the best and least of which is our daily care and the host of which is our collaborative work" *Women & Performance* 23.1 (2013).
- Paula A. Treichler, "Collectivity in Trouble: Writing on HIV/AIDS by Susan Sontag and Sarah Schulman" *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 57.2 (2012): 245-270.
- Judith Butler, "The Question of Social Transformation," in *Undoing Gender* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004).

PART II

10.18

Keyword: COUNTERPUBLIC

Readings:

Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2002) [excerpts].

Marc E. Elovitz and P.J. Edwards "The D.O.H. Papers: Regulating Public Sex in New York City" in *Policing Public Sex* [ed. Dangerous Bedfellows] (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1996).

Samuel Delaney, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 1999) [excerpts].

Recommended:

Andrea Wood, "'Straight' Women, Queer Texts: Boy-Love Manga and the Rise of a Global Counterpublic," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34.1/2 (Summer 2006): 394-414.

10.25

Keyword: AFFECT

Readings:

Dora Apel, "Lynching Photographs and Public Shaming," in Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle Smith, *Lynching Photographs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Elizabeth Alexander, "Can you be BLACK and look at this: Reading the Rodney King Videos," *Public Culture* 7 (1994): 77-94.

Wayne Koestenbaum, *Humiliation* (Picador, 2011) [excerpts].

Jennifer Doyle, "Three Case Studies in Difficulty and The Problem of Affect" in *Hold it Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013): 28-68.

Recommended:

David Serlin, *Imagining Illness: Public Health and Visual Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

Lauren Berlant, "'68, or Something," *Critical Inquiry* 21.1 (Autumn 1994): 124-55.

11.1

Keyword: DEPRESSION

Readings:

Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

Recommended:

José Esteban Muñoz, "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position," *Signs* 31.3 (Spring 2006): 675-88.

Andy Campbell, "Ecdysis and Parhessia: A Vocabulary for Living the Fucked Life," [forthcoming]

A LATE INTERMISSION: VOTING DAY

11.8

Keyword: DEMOCRACY / THE PEOPLE

Readings: [totally subject to change based on what's happening]

Chantal Mouffe, "Art and Democracy: Art as an Agonistic Intervention in Public Space" *Open* 14 (2008): 6-15.

Claire Bishop, "Introduction" and "Conclusion" in *Artificial Hells* (London: Verso, 2012).

Jean-Luc Nancy, "On the Meanings of Democracy" *Theoria* 111 (December 2006): 1-5.

Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Politics" *Atlas of Transformation* [website]

Recommended:

Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London: Verso, 2013).

Jacques Rancière, "Democracy, Republic, Representation," *Constellations* 13.3 (September 2006): 297-307.

Chantal Mouffe, "Agonistic Politics and Artistic Practices" [Vimeo]

PART III

11.15

Keyword(s): ART WORLD / AUDIENCE

Readings:

Arthur Danto, "The Artworld" *The Journal of Philosophy* 61.19 (1964): 571-84.

Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience" in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004): 9-52.

Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).
[The Prize, The Magazine, The Biennial]

Suzanne Lacy, "Debated Territory: Toward a Critical Language for Public Art" in *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics, 1974-2007* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010): 172-84.

Bassam El Baroni, "Notes on the Question of Audience" in *Future Publics (The Rest Can and Should Be Done by the People)* eds. Maria Hlavajova and Ranjit Hoskote (Utrecht: BAK, 2015): 116-127.

Recommended:

Pamela Lee, *Forgetting the Art World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012) [excerpts: Intro, Chs 3 + 4].

11. 22

Keyword: MUSEUM

Readings:

Jennifer Tyburczy, *Sex Museums* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[Preface, Introduction, Chs 4 & 5]

Hans Haacke, "Museums: Managers of Consciousness," *Art in America* 72 (February 1984): 9-17.

Andrew McClellan, "The Public" in *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008):155-192.

Recommended:

Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum* (New Press, 1994).

Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

Carol Duncan, "From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum" in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): 21-47.

11.29

Case Study: Kara Walker's: A Subtlety:

Readings:

Dossier .pdf of reviews and critical texts related to Walker's project

Explore: Creative Time dedicated website: <http://creativetime.org/projects/karawalker/> Kara
Website for "Kara Walker: Afterword" (*Sikkema & Jenkins Gallery*, 2014): <http://tinyurl.com/htjeo4o>

Recommended:

Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, *Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).