

*School of Music and Theater**College of the Arts**Winter 2026*

SJA 235 Artist as Citizen: Social Movements, Responses and Impacts

Instructors: Darrell Grant and Amanda Singer

Contact: grantd@pdx.edu and amsinger@pdx.edu

Class Location: CH401

Class Time: M/W 11:00pm - 12:40pm

CRN: 43917

“I am invested in illustrating the possible.” Theaster Gates

Course Description

This course will examine, discuss, and report on social justice movements throughout history, and in today’s political landscape – including local, national and global efforts. We will study the past, learning from activist accounts and scholarly investigations, and consider the ways that activism has and can create change. The focus of our inquiry will be on the ways that art and social justice activism work together, and how past actions can inform progress in the present.

Course Outcomes/Learning Objectives

- Appreciate the theories and history of social justice in the US and abroad
- Recognize movements, past and present and the artistic responses and activism surrounding those movements
- Understand the impact of the arts and how to harness that impact into change
- Realize agency and artistic citizenship

Course Prerequisites

None

Required Materials

1. The Syllabus.
2. [brown, adrienne maree. \(2017\). *Emergent strategy : shaping change, changing worlds*. AK Press.](#)
3. Additional “no-cost” readings are assigned each week and are linked on our Canvas course site.

Major Assignments

1. **Participation: 100 points**

Class participation is worth 5 points for each class, twice a week, over 10 weeks.

Expectations for participation are that you are present in class, and willing to stay engaged with active class discussion. Even if you are silent, the expectation is that you will stay engaged with the discussion and will contribute to the learning of the class community.

Points will be automatically granted for any classes that are cancelled because of holidays, or due to instructor absence.

2. **Weekly QOR Assignments: 100 points (10@ 10 points each) Due Sundays @ Midnight**

Weekly writing assignments are expected to be approximately 200 to 500 words long and will explore reactions and questions that arise from reading materials, guest speakers, videos or class discussions. All papers should be turned in as word documents on Canvas, double spaced, with 1-inch margins, and will follow the Quote, Question & Response (QQR) format:

Purpose: The QQRs provide a way to process and reflect on readings, videos, guest speakers and other course materials, and provide the opportunity to pose questions that are important to us.

Quote: Pick a significant passage (1-3 sentences) from your choice of materials presented – it can be from assigned reading or from content presented in class (from instructors or guest presenters). This quote/passage should be one that raises questions for you, surprises you, or connects to other readings/topics of interest.

Question: Come up with a question that you want to discuss or further consider based on your understanding of the readings. These questions should be designed to elicit deeper discussion on our course readings. Please avoid questions that lead to simple yes/no answers.

Response: Please reflect on the materials and write a 2-3 paragraph response. You might include questions or ideas that emerged, connections you see among the readings, videos, or websites assigned, or you might explore ways that the material connects to your own experience.

3. **Creative Journals: 80 points (4 @ 20 points each), Due Saturdays at Midnight**

The Creative Journal assignment functions as an outlet for creative practice throughout the course of the term. Students will be provided a prompt by the instructors, which will be posted in each Creative Journal assignment description on Canvas, and students will then be asked to create an artistic response of choice: creative writing, music, dance, poetry, spoken word, short video, photography, visual art, etc. We want to encourage you to regular practice flexing your creative muscles – your work does not need to be a masterpiece, but it does need to be a creative response that consists of more than a written summary or reflection.

4. **Group Campaign Development/Presentation: 70 points**

5. **Zine Creation: 50 points**

<i>COTA 135</i>		<i>Percentage</i>
Participation	100	90% A
Weekly Assignments	100	80% B
Creative Journal	80	70% C
Campaign Group Presentation	70	60% D
Final Campaign Zine	50	59% F
Total	400	

Proposed Schedule (Subject to Changes)

	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	1/5	Introduction to Course	Brown: Intro, Principles, Elements Milbrandt, M. K. (2010). Understanding the role of art in social movements and transformation. Journal of Art for Life, 1(1), 7-18.	QQR#1 Due
	1/7	Writing Our Manifesto		
2	1/12	Social Movements Over Time	Brown: Fractals, Intentional Adaptation	QQR#2 Due Creative Journal#1 Due
	1/14	Social Justice Movement Impacts: Personal, Cultural and Political	Favianna Rodriguez: Change the Culture, Change the World	
3	1/19	MLK Holiday: Take Action Locally!	Brown: Interdependence How Have Artists Shaped Previous Protest Movements Oregonian: Albina	QQR#3 Due
	1/21	Starting Local! <i>Introduce Local (PSU) Campaign Project</i>		
4	1/26	Movements in the United States	Brown: Nonlinear Power of Place	QQR#4 Due Creative Journal #2 Due
	1/28	<i>Develop Campaign Groups: Issue Selection</i>	Hunter: Campaigning for Social Change	
5	2/2	Social Movements Typologies and International Movements	Brown: Resilience Types of Social Movements	QQR#5 Due
	2/4	<i>Campaign Groups: Mapping Issues</i>	What Global Social Justice Movements Teach Us	

6	2/9	Social Action Campaigns	Brown: Conversations	QQR#6 Due
	2/11	<i>Campaign Work Session</i>	Nham: Campaign Planning	Creative Journal#3 Due
7	2/16	Strategic Action	Elements of Strategy	QQR#7 Due
	2/18	<i>Campaign Work Session</i>	Activist Handbook: Campaign Strategy	
8	2/23	Music in Social Movements	Brown: Creating Possibilities and Spells	QQR#8
	2/25	<i>Campaign Work Session</i>	Pitches of Protest	Creative Journal #4 Due
9	3/2	Zine Workshop	How to Make a Zine	QQR#9
	3/4	Zine Workshop		
10	3/9	Campaign Presentations	None	QQR#10
	3/11	Campaign Presentations		Zine Creation Due

Course Attendance and Late Work Policies

Students are expected to be present for class and receive points for attendance (and will not receive points in the case of non-attendance). Reasonable requests for late work will be accepted, but nothing will be accepted past Week 9 of the term. Please read PSU policy on whether an incomplete is an option for you before approaching instructors with a request for an incomplete. Instructors reserve the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or political emergencies.

Recording Technology Notice

If we use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course, such technology is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. I will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.**

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

PSU Policies and Resources

<https://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/bulletin/student-policies-and-guidelines/>

Academics

PSU Grading System

- Undergraduate: <https://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/bulletin/undergraduate-studies/Drop/Withdraw Deadlines>
- Academic calendar: <https://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/bulletin/academic-calendar/>

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is the university's policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Incomplete Grades Policy

Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when these criteria are met:

- Required satisfactory course completion/participation
- Reasonable justification for the request
- Not sought as a substitute for a poor grade
- Presence of a written agreement (such as the [Incomplete Contract](#))
- A plan in place to resolve Incomplete status

The Office of the Registrar's website has [the full Incomplete Grades policy](#).

Student Services

Disability Access Statement

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is at 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 1825 SW Broadway; 503-725-4150; drc@pdx.edu.

Basic Needs at Portland State

It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance:

- **Basic Needs Hub:** basicneedshub@pdx.edu
- **Portland State Food Pantry:** psufp.com or pantry@pdx.edu
- **C.A.R.E. Program:** askdos@pdx.edu, (503) 725-4422
- **Student Health & Counseling:** askshac@pdx.edu, (503) 725-2800

Understanding Sexual Misconduct

PSU desires to create a safe campus. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the [Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources learning module](#). If you or someone you know

has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU's [Sexual Misconduct Response website](#).

Title IX Reporting

Students frequently come to me for assistance in matters not related to the course material. Please be aware that PSU's policies require instructors to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual and relationship violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to university officials, who will keep the information private. If you would rather share information about these matters with a PSU staff member who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please use these campus resources:

- Confidential Advocates: 503-894-7982 or [schedule online](#) (for matters regarding sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling: 1880 SW 6th Avenue #200; 503-725-2800

Discrimination and Bias Incidents

[The Office of Equity and Compliance](#) (OEC) addresses complaints of discrimination, discriminatory Harassment, and sexual harassment against employees (faculty and staff). If you or someone you know believes they have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint. Someone from the OEC will contact you to discuss how to best address your complaint.

[The Bias Review Team](#) (BRT) gathers information on bias incidents that happen on and around campus, and gives resources and support to individuals who experience them. You can report a bias incident you experienced or learned about. A member of the BRT will contact you if you indicate you would like to be contacted.

Religious Accommodations

If you would like to obtain religious accommodations, such as flexibility in attending evening courses or extension on assignments, please contact your instructors. If you need additional assistance, please contact the Office of the Dean of Student Life (DOSL) by emailing askdos@pdx.edu.

Cultural Resource Centers

Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. They honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. They provide opportunities for student leadership, employment, and volunteering; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge, and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!

- Multicultural Student Center
- La Casa Latina Student Center
- Native American Student and Community Center
- Pan African Commons
- Pacific Islander, Asian, and Asian American Student Center
- Middle East, North Africa, South Asia Initiative