GESM 111: PERFORMING REVOLUTIONS
THE GLOBAL HISTORY OF THEATRE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

When: FA 2018 — MW — 10:00 – 11:50 am
Where: MCC 102
Instructor: Brent Blair, PhD
Office: MCC 101b
Office Hours: TH 1 – 1:50 pm by appointment only
Contact Info: bblair@usc.edu; (213) 740-7175

Course Description and Overview

This course explores the history, theory, and current practice of public performance as a tool for global socio-political transformation. Students investigate techniques such as flash mobs, agitation propaganda, street and guerrilla theatre, as well as Theatre of the Oppressed from the postcolonial era through the present. The course will involve virtual dialogues with practitioners based in India, Mozambique, Brazil, and Afghanistan, along with live visits from local grass-roots activists. The class will create its own collective “revolutionary theatre” project, and will observe examples of community-based events for social change in the south Los Angeles area.

Learning Objectives

Students will engage in personal and collective research around the global history and theory of theatre as critical and cultural dialogue for social change. The class includes lectures, internet resources, film, video, multimedia, live performance, community engagement experiences, field trips, Skype sessions with global practitioners, and class dialogues. During this semester-long investigation of art as a tool of liberation, students will explore models created and developed by practitioners such as Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed), Luis Valdez (Teatro Campesino), and performance ensembles struggling for social change in the former Yugoslavia, Uganda, South Africa, the Philippines, as well as the instructor’s own experiences recently in Ukraine, Rwanda, India, Nigeria, and Australia. Students will emerge with a strong experience of the use of theatre as a means of social transformation leading to a more complex understanding of the communities surrounding the USC campus.

Core GE Learning Objectives (See Appendix)

Class Community-based Critical Engagement Project

“Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”

Frederick Douglass, 1857

“A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.”

- Martin Heidegger, 'Building, dwelling, thinking'

This course includes the creation of collaborative, student-centered, community-based public expressive art project for social change. The project is designed to invite liberation from injustice through the employment of expressive art. To this end students will be asked to explore the nature of identity and have a working understanding of the presence of privilege and power in their interpersonal interactions.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All texts are excerpts of material primarily found in the public domain and available free of charge on Blackboard.
Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly readings

Each reading comes with a specific prompt for a few paragraphs of reflection.

REFLECTION PAPERS MUST BE IN THE FOLLOWING FORMAT:

1. MS Word (or equivalent) attached with this title:
   
   2digitweek#.surname.assignment.docx – so for me: “01.blair.freire.docx”

2. Header clearly identifies the assignment: i.e. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"

3. Body of response includes DIRECT QUOTE from the reading to which reader is responding

4. Submit via Blackboard ONLY (This is a PAPERLESS CLASS. No hard copies, please.)

Critical Papers

1. Critical papers are designed to be research papers on a particular theme or thesis (established problem), relating directly to the course material (including lecture notes).

2. MLA or APA format (please review online or contact the Writing Center at USC for help)

3. All concrete statements made MUST BE CITED and REFERENCED. Minimum 4 - 5 sources.

4. Critical papers must be submitted in MS Word attached with this title:
   
   2digitweek#.surname.paper1.docx – so for me: 06.blair.paper1.docx

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER:

DUE Tuesday, 12/12/17, 4:30 p.m.

10 page research paper assembled around a particular thesis related to Performing Revolutions. It should contain a critical investigative question and should posit some theories. It may take any of the following forms:

1. Current problem / socio-political rupture affecting a specific community for which the writer (you) posits a hypothetical social change performance project and evaluates the rationale for this project, its possible benefits and detriments, and potential efficacy.

2. Current problem / socio-political rupture for which there is already a theatrical or community arts solution in place. Investigate the depth and breadth of this project, its history, and evaluate its efficacy, looking at pro's and con's from current critical perspectives. Support and critique this project with citations and provide a conclusive evaluation from your perspective on what should be done in the future with this prospect.

3. Past (historical) problem / socio-political rupture that was given a community arts treatment. Evaluate its history, type of art that was used for social change, whether it was agit-prop, witness theatre, guerrilla theatre, public art, etc. How did it serve this particular movement? Was it effective? Why or why not?

NOTE: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE. THIS PAPER IS THE FINAL.

Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presence and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Reflection Papers (1 page)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Critical Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Critical Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACE Project (Planning &amp; Implementation)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Syllabus for GSEM 111: Performing Revolutions Fall 2018, Page 2 of 7
Assignment Due Dates & Grades

- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.
- Assignments due on date listed in the syllabus. Late assignments up to one week will be accepted at 50% of the credit, and will not be accepted after that except in cases where the instructor has been notified and agreed in advance.

Presence in class:

This work is co-participatory. As much of the work this semester is done in group collaboration, attendance is necessary for the class’ success. Make every effort to make every class. Only medical conditions excuse absences.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

For details, see the page on Blackboard

Assignment Color Guides: Written Response, Read Only, Read & Discuss, Written Work, Activity

Week One

Cultural literacy: What is oppression? What constitutes a “revolution”? Aug 20 & 22

Ruptures, disruptions, interruptions of humanized experience – exploration of power, the power of culture and the cultures that support and oppress humanity. Who are we? How do we know who we are? Through whose eyes do we view the world? What is “liberation”? What is oppression? Is a revolution simply an upheaval or undoing of oppression? What constitutes real transformation? Class dialogues about rupture, collective ruptures, and cultural challenges to the human experience.

Ped. of the Opp.’d – Ch 1, pp. 1–20 (Freire) – RESPONSE
Due Wed, 8/22/18, by 10:00 a.m.
Title your submission: 01.surname.freire.docx

Survey –Privilege (Online) – FILL OUT, BRING TO CLASS
Due Wed, 8/22/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Structural Analysis – Oppression (Hinson & Bradley) – READ
Due Wed, 8/22/18 by 10:00 a.m.

Week Two

Culture and Imperialism: Intrusions and Intersections Aug 27 & 29

Look at culture and cultural narratives, especially imperialist narratives and emerging resistance to these within subaltern culture. What is the culture of oppression and empire? What role does memory play in how this oppression is fueled by dominant power, and how does “culture” supplement, even co-author, this narrative?

Culture & Imperialism –pp. xi – xxviii, & pp. 1-14 (Said) – RESPONSE
Due Mon, 8/27/18, by 10:00 a.m.
Title your submission: 02.surname.said.docx

Week Three

Resistance literacy: What is resistance? Sep 3 is Labor Day, NO CLASS Sep 5

Understanding cultural difference can lead to new models of resistance, or liberation art. We will identify what constitutes “cultural difference” and how to navigate the progressive, liberatory change within these circumstances, including an introduction to the arts of culture jamming, cultural interruption or cultural re-appropriation and re-imagining. We will invite a brief overview of liberation theatre movements in 20th century.

Staging the Politics of Difference, pp. 361-390 (Olson and Worsham)
Due Wed, 9/5/18, by 10:00 a.m.
Title your submission: 03.surname.bhabha.docx
Week Four  What is a dominant message? Hegemony? Fragility?  Sep 10 & 12

Investigation of images in contemporary culture – look at Media Literacy, artistic representations, commercial identity, commodification of self. Class takes a look at colonized or co-opted cultural identity by how events in the US history of human rights have, or have not, been represented through the lens of contemporary social media, with a specific focus on the history of the #blacklivesmatter movement. Students read opposing narratives from recent social media on race, privilege, cultural identity, and “white fragility,” and look at presumptions of oppression from different perspectives. Whose interests are being represented in these narratives? Whose are being co-opted or framed/blamed? What is “truth” in these narratives?

A Review of the U.S. Civil Rights Timeline: Black Lives Matter – REVIEW  Due Mon, 9/10/18

"Why I’ll Never Apologize ...Privilege” (Fortgang) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 9/12/18, by 10:00 a.m.
"Why White People Freak Out...” (Adler-Bell & DiAngela) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 9/12/18, by 10:00 a.m.
“White Fragility is Racial Violence” (Shroyer) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 9/12/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 04 surname. fragility.docx

Week Five  Story-telling for social change: methods and styles  Sep 17 & 19

Student engage in class exercise to gather and arrange images without jumping to conclusions. First experience conducting a workshop using verbal, visual and physical images of persuasion and story-telling for social change. Class engages in a dialogue about commercial culture, art as an instrument of coercion or manipulation. Students create mini-commercials in small groups and perform them in class. Exploration of disparate methodologies and styles, including agit-prop, witness theatre, guerrilla theatre, documentary theatre, street theatre, etc.

Yesmen Video: “YesMen Fix the World” – WATCH  Due Mon, 9/17/18, by 10:00 a.m.
Creative Outline / Presentation of Yesmen-esque Projects – PREPARE  Due Wed, 9/19/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 05 surname. yesmen.docx

CRITICAL PAPER I: 5 page paper – Culture, Oppression, & Cultural Change  DUE: Mon, 9/24, by 10:00 a.m.

WRITE A FIVE PAGE CRITICAL PAPER in APA or MLA format on the theme “culture, oppression, & cultural change”. Look back at the material covered so far in class, and pick a personal experience with which you have a particularly strong connection. How might you imagine this experience of yours to be shared collectively by others, beyond just your personal world? How is it an event of cultural oppression, and how might you imagine avenues towards cultural change?

Title your submission: 05 surname. paper1.docx

Week Six  Theatre of the Oppressed – Performing Revolutions in Latin America  Sep 24 & 26

Students learn basics of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), focus on analytical image. Class talk about epistemology – “how do we know what we know?” Class workshop on Image Theatre, followed by exploration of the history of Latin American movements such as TO and Teatro Campesino (California).

3 Videos: Teatro Campesino; Pl. del Mayo; Zapatistas – WATCH, RESPONSE  Mon, 9/24/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 06 surname. 3videos.docx

“My Three Theatrical Encounters” (Boal) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 9/26/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 06 surname. boal.docx
Week Seven  Performing Revolutions in Asia  Oct 1 (BRENT AWAY OCT 3 – INDEPENDENT WORK)

Students engage in an exploration of Asian examples of theatre and social change, from South Asia (India – Jana Sanskriti, for example), Southeast Asia (Thailand, Philippines, etc.), Central Asia (current work in Pakistan and Afghanistan), and contemporary performative art and social justice works elsewhere in Asia.

“SpoiledSons” (DaCosta) – RESPONSE  Due Mon, 10/1/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 07.surname.dacosta.docx

Week Eight  Performing Revolutions in Africa  Oct 8 & 10

Overview, African theatre/social change, including: Nigeria; Rwanda; South Africa; Mozambique; Senegal.

“My Husband’s Denial” (Video) – WATCH  Due Mon, 10/8/18, by 10:00 a.m.

We Cry on the Inside” – READ  Due Wed, 10/10/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Midterm Exam (Available after 10/3/18, 12:00 p.m.)  Due Wed, 10/10/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 08.surname.midterm.docx

Week Nine  Performing Revolutions in Europe & Australia  Oct 15 & 17

Exploration of history of German workers’ movements (1800’s) leading to popular theatre in: Germany; France; UK; Belgium; and a Skype session with contemporary practitioners in Ukraine.

“Fascism, Russia, and Ukraine” (Snyder) – RESPONSE  Due Mon, 10/15/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 09.surname.ukraine.docx

Week Ten  Performing Revolutions in the United States  Oct 22 & 24

Students engage in an extensive review of existing theatre for social change movements in the U.S., and look for example at the use of puppets and pageantry for parade, protest, and festival theatre.

“San Francisco Mime Troupe” (Video) – WATCH AND DISCUSS  Due Mon, 10/22/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Amiri Baraka Revolutionary Theatre (Video) – WATCH AND DISCUSS  Due Mon, 10/22/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Satirical Video of Social Rupture (i.e. Daily Show) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 10/24/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 10.surname.satirical.docx

PAPER TWO: 5 page paper – Performing Global Revolutions  Due Mon, 10/29/18, by 10:00 a.m.

WRITE A FIVE PAGE CRITICAL PAPER in APA or MLA format on the theme “performing global revolutions”. Look back at material covered so far, and pick a geographic location outside of the U.S. with which you have a strong connection. How might you imagine this to be a site for a creative, cultural, or artistic “revolution” of sorts? How has it been a product of global empire or oppression, and how might art intervene?

Title your submission: 10.surname.paper2.docx

Week Eleven  Performing Revolutions in Los Angeles  Oct 29 & 31

Students explore the intersection of art and social change in LA, focus on the ethics the project. Who is invited to our project? Who’s left out? How will we evaluate our work after this is over? What are the ethics of REV art?

Day Laborers (Video) – WATCH AND DISCUSS  Due Mon, 10/29/18, by 10:00 a.m.

“Devil in Hand” (Blair) – RESPONSE  Due Wed, 10/31/18, by 10:00 a.m.

Title your submission: 11.surname.blair.docx
## Week Twelve

### Imagining and Designing the Revolutionary Performance

Nov 5 & 7

Students began planning and imagining their “revolutionary” performances for on or around the USC campus area. What ruptures speak most urgently to the class? Build teams, work together in groups, prepare and problematize.

- "Imago Logos Rep Action Eval” (Blair) – READ/REVIEW
- "What is Representation?” (Blair) – READ/REVIEW

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft, Class Rev Project – PREPARE</th>
<th>Due Wed, 11/7/18, by 10:00 a.m.</th>
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## Week Thirteen

### Problematizing and Preparing the Revolutionary Performance

Nov 12 & 14

Class prepare to assemble group “LACE” projects on or near campus.

- REV Project Performative Treatment – PREPARE
- REV Projects Prepared, Groups I & II (In Class Work – details worked out) Due Wed, 11/14, by 10:00 a.m.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>REV Project Performative Treatment – PREPARE</th>
<th>Due Wed, 11/14/17, by 10:00 a.m.</th>
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## Week Fourteen

### Implementing and Evaluating the REV Projects (I)

Nov 19 (No class Nov 21 – Thanksgiving)

Class present their prepared public theatre “Revolutionary projects” and evaluate their colleagues’ projects.

- Rev. Projects Performed, Group I
- Rev. Evaluation Reflections, Day I (EVERYBODY)
- Rev. Self-Evaluation Reflections, (“Group I” ONLY)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rev. Projects Performed, Group I</th>
<th>During class on Mon, 11/19/18, from 10:00 – 11:50 a.m.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Evaluation Reflections, Day I (EVERYBODY)</td>
<td>Due Mon, 11/26/18, by 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Self-Evaluation Reflections, (“Group I” ONLY)</td>
<td>Due Wed, 11/28/18, by 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Title your submission: 14.surname.REVeval1.docx</td>
<td>Title your submission: 14.surname.SELFeval1.docx</td>
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## Week Fifteen

### Implementing and Evaluating the REV Projects (II)

Nov 28 & 30

Class continue to present and evaluate their “Revolutionary projects”.

- Rev. Projects Performed, Group II
- Rev. Evaluation Reflections, Day II (EVERYBODY)
- Rev. Self-Evaluation Reflections, (“Group II” ONLY)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rev. Projects Performed, Group II</th>
<th>During class on Mon, 11/26/18, from 10:00– 11:50 a.m.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Evaluation Reflections, Day II (EVERYBODY)</td>
<td>Due Wed, 11/28/18, by 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Self-Evaluation Reflections, (“Group II” ONLY)</td>
<td>Due Wed, 11/28/18, by 10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title your submission: 14.surname.REVeval2.docx</td>
<td>Title your submission: 14.surname.SELFeval2.docx</td>
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## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct

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/](http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the Department of Public Safety [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-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/](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](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](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/](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.