

# The Politics of Everyday Life

CTCS 678: Seminar in Film Theory and Medium Specificity

Prof. JJ Wild

Tuesday, 2-5:50

SCA 216

Fall 2025



Everyday life is the measure of all things: of the fulfillment or rather the nonfulfillment of human relations; of the use of lived time; of artistic experimentation; of revolutionary politics.  
—Guy Debord, 1961

Debord's assertion informs the basis of our exploration of the critical concept or philosophical domain called "everyday life:" how does film, media, and technology participate in *or make possible* the critique, production, or perception of the everyday?

Arising in post WWII France as an alternative to Structuralism and Phenomenology, the theory of the everyday offered the possibility of examining lived experience as it emerges from within the constraints and contradictions of Capitalism. In examining space and time (phenomena) alongside routine and repetition (culture, industry, society), theorists of the everyday bear witness to and examine the dominant relations of production structuring life. But they also insist that *le quotidien* (the everyday) is an active and fundamentally open domain, and hence crucial to the project of human liberation. Our consideration of the "politics" of everyday life begins from this assumption.

Our study will be foundational (Freud; Marx; Simmel), canonical and contextual (H. Lefebvre; M. Blanchot; M. de Certeau; G. Debord/The Situationist International; P. Bordieu; K. Ross; R. Felski; L. Berlant, and others), but also highly exploratory in its design. *Conceived as a laboratory for thinking about everyday life in our contemporary moment, I encourage students to enroll who are interested in conducting new research in all areas of film and art practice; social media, new and emerging technologies; environmentalism, extraction, infrastructure, etc.* (photo: A. Gursky, *Kuwait Stock Exchange II*, 2008)