

Activist Art Since the 1960s: Art, Technology, Activism

HAVC 141K
Summer 2024
Online

Instructor: Madalen Claire Benson

History of Art and Visual Culture (HAVC), UCSC
Office Hours: TBC, <insert Zoom link here>
Sign up: <insert Calendly link here>

Overview

This upper-division lecture course will focus on major international developments and crises in activist-art practice, visual culture and global geopolitics, from the 1960s to the present. It pays particular attention to how artists critically address mass culture and spectacle, public space and experimental social relations, feminism, racial capitalism, anti- and post-colonial struggles, and environmental justice. We will consider how artists, activists, film- and video-makers, and critical theorists, operating in diverse geographical locations (including North America and Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa), have explored innovative ways of approaching the politics of aesthetics, collaborative practices, and socially engaged participation, contributing to critical and creative modes of re/imagining the world and our place within it.

Learning Objectives

The following goals will be modeled in lecture, while the discussions and assignments will support students as they apply what they learn:

- Students will learn how artists and activists use diverse forms of visual culture (including film, photography, protest art, etc.) across widespread geographical locales toward activist ends.
- Students will understand various theorizations of the role of art in activism, focusing on issues of public space and institutional critique, as well as critiques of colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and racial capitalism.
- Students will learn both major and lesser-known histories at the intersection of art and activism around the globe starting in the 1960s, identifying key movements around diverse issues of social and environmental justice.
- Students will grapple with critical questions about how and when politically engaged art becomes activism, as well as the role of art and visual culture in activism.

Course Format

The class comprises 10 thematic modules, with two modules scheduled per week. On the days scheduled for each module, I will release a lecture via Canvas on the assigned readings, visual material, and other content. Students are required to listen to and keep up with weekly modules, including viewing lectures, doing the readings, posting in the discussion, and submitting any assignments.

Assignments

Successful assignments will engage with visual analysis, close and critical reading of texts, research, and connections across readings and visual materials. Students are encouraged to bring in outside artworks, readings, and other references but should also demonstrate engagement with the course materials that serve as the basis of a shared classroom experience.

Discussion: Because we are not meeting in a classroom environment, discussion will be facilitated on the Canvas platform via the “Discussions” section. Each Module (two per week) will have a discussion prompt for you to respond to, released at the same time as the Module’s lecture. Once your response to the prompt is posted, you are then asked to respond to **two** of your fellow student’s posts, for a total of **three** posts per module. Your response to the initial prompt may be longer in length (~300 words), while your responses to your peer’s posts may be shorter (~100 words). Please be sure to respond to all aspects of the prompt, referencing the Module’s lecture and readings.

Two Quizzes: Quizzes will test students’ comprehension of material presented in readings and lectures. Based on questions with multiple choice answers, they will be administered over Canvas.

Final Essay (including a proposal and outline): In place of a final exam, a well-defended final essay (6 – 8 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt font) is due via Canvas <insert date>. The essay must demonstrate an understanding of the course materials, making reference to readings and/or artworks discussed. Due to the fast pace of the course, there will be assignments throughout to move you along in developing your essay and argument. A proposal including your preliminary research question will be due on <insert date here>, and an outline including your working thesis and 3 – 5 references with summaries will be due on <insert date here>. Essays will assess students’ ability to critically and creatively engage with course material.

Readings: Will be available on Canvas in the Module section or under Files with a folder corresponding to each Module.

A note on late assignments: Given the fast-paced nature of Summer Session, it is imperative that students stay on top of all readings and assignments. Additionally, it is crucial to complete all discussion posts and responses on time to foster an engaging class experience. Late work will be subject to a lower grade. Recognizing that unanticipated situations arise that may prevent a student from completing an assignment on time, please contact me as soon as possible if circumstances prevent you from turning in an assignment on time. *Discussion posts and responses cannot be submitted late.*

Grading:

Discussion Posts	30%
Final essay	40%
2 quizzes	30%

Content warning: This course examines topics that some may find emotionally challenging, including texts, images, and videos that show climate violence, politicized contexts such as Israel and Palestine, and creative practices involving eco-sexuality. Individual warnings will be provided in advance of classes that may be particularly sensitive. My hope is that these notifications will help your engagement by allowing time to prepare to address challenging material. I encourage students to take care. If that means needing to pause a lecture, either for a short time or for the rest of that presentation, you may do

so without academic penalty. If you have further concerns, please contact me.

Course Materials

The Canvas page for our course has been set up so that all materials (readings, videos, and lectures) are viewable within individual modules on the “Home” page. Modules aren’t made public until it is their time in the course. However, readings are available ahead of time through the “Files” tab so you can read texts before the lectures are released.

Course Schedule

Module/Dates	Readings and Media	Assignments Due (all times 11:59 pm Pacific Time)
<p>Module 1: Mon., X</p> <p>Introduction: Situationist Critique of Spectacle, Revolution after Art: May '68 in France</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tiernan Morgan & Lauren Purje, “An Illustrated Guide to Guy Debord’s ‘The Society of the Spectacle’,” Hyperallergic, August 10, 2016, https://hyperallergic.com/313435/an-illustrated-guide-to-guy-debords-the-society-of-the-spectacle/ - Hal Foster et al., eds., <i>Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism</i> (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 1957a, 391-97. - Allison Meier, “Designing a Revolutionary Visual Identity for the Black Panthers,” Hyperallergic, June 9, 2015, https://hyperallergic.com/212921/designing-a-revolutionary-visual-identity-for-the-black-panthers/ - Amiri Baraka, reading <i>Black Art</i>, 1967, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh2P-tlEH_w 	<p>WEEK 1</p> <p>Wed., X: Introduction Post and Module 1 Discussion Post</p> <p>Fri., X: Module 2 Discussion Post</p> <p>Sun. X: All Peer Responses</p>
<p>Module 2: Wed., X</p> <p>Militant Image: Subversive Performance and Third Cinema in South America under dictatorship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-80,” in <i>Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s</i>, ed. L. Camnitzer et al. (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 53-72. - Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,” [orig. publ. 1969] in <i>New Latin American Cinema: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations</i>, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 33-58. - Che Guevara, “Socialism and Man in Cuba” (March 1965) available at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm - Claire Bishop, “Social Sadism Made Explicit,” in <i>Artificial</i> 	

	<i>Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship</i> (London: Verso, 2012), 105-28.	
Module 3: Mon., X Revolutionary Sex: Radical Feminism, AIDS Activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johanna Fateman, "Fully Loaded: On Power and Sexual Violence," <i>Artforum</i>, Jan 2018, https://www.artforum.com/inprint/id=73188 - Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Dirty Commerce: Art Work and Sex Work Since the 1970s," <i>differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies</i>, 23.2 (2012), 71-112. - Silvia Federici, "Why Sexuality is Work," (1975), <i>Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle</i> (Oakland and Brooklyn: PM Press, 2012), 23-28. - Nicolas Lampert, "Art is Not Enough: ACT UP, Gran Fury, and the AIDS Crisis," <i>A People's Art History of the United States</i> (New York: The New Press, 2013), 252-262. 	WEEK 2 Mon., X: <u>Quiz 1</u> Wed., X: Module 3 Discussion Post Fri., X: Module 4 Discussion Post Sun. X: All Peer Responses
Module 4: Wed., X 1980s Postcolonial Britain and Cultures of Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - John Akomfrah, "Black Independent Film-making: A Statement by the Black Audio Film Collective" (1983), in <i>The Ghosts of Songs: The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective</i>, ed. K. Eshun and A. Sagar (Cambridge: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 144-46. - Coco Fusco, "A Black Avant-Garde? Notes on Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa," <i>Young British and Black: The Work of Sankofa and Black Audio Film Collective</i> (Buffalo: Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, 1988), 7-22. - Frantz Fanon, "Chapter 6. Conclusion," <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>, 1961, https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/fanon/conclusion.htm - Kobena Mercer, "Diaspora Culture and the Dialogic Imagination: The Aesthetics of Black Independent Film in Britain," <i>Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies</i> (London: Routledge, 1994), 53-66. 	
Module 5: Mon., X Anti- Apartheid in South Africa: from Struggle Documentary and Necropolitics to Rhodes Must Fall / Fees Must Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Okwui Enwezor, "Rise and Fall of Apartheid," in <i>Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life</i>, ed., Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester (Munich: Prestel, 2012), 20-45. - Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," in <i>The Unhomely: Phantom Scenes in Global Society</i>, ed. Okwui Enwezor (Seville: BIACS, 2006), 33-51. - Nomusa Makhubu, "On Apartheid Ruins: Art, Protest and the South African Social Landscape," <i>Third Text</i>, 10 Nov 2020, Part I, 569-581. - Achille Mbembe, "Zero World," in <i>Rise and Fall of Apartheid</i>, 66-71. 	WEEK 3 Tue., X: <u>Final Project Proposal</u> Wed., X: Module 5 Discussion Post Fri., X: Essay Discussion Post
Module 6: Wed., X	In place of this module's readings and lecture, this module will be dedicated to helping you develop your final essay assignment. In	

<p>Research</p>	<p>place of a discussion post, please share your research question and preliminary thesis statement on Canvas and respond to two of your peers with feedback.</p>	<p>Sun. X: All Peer Responses</p>
<p>Module 7: Mon., X</p> <p>The Extractive Zone: Petrocapitalism and Resistance in the Americas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ursula Biemann and Paulo Tavares, <i>Forest Law / Selva Jurídica: On the Cosmopolitics of Amazonia</i> (East Lansing: Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum / Michigan State University, 2014), 5-47. - Shela Sheikh, “More-than-Human Cosmopolitics,” <i>Propositions for Non-Fascist Living: Tentative and Urgent</i>, ed. Maria Hlavajova and Wietske Maas (Utrecht: BAK, 2019), 125-40. - Paulo Tavares, “In the Forest Ruins,” <i>e-flux</i>, Dec. 9, 2016, http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/68688/in-the-forest-ruins/ - Macarena Gómez-Barris, Chapter 4: “A Fish-Eye Episteme,” <i>The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives</i> (Durham: Duke, 2017), 91-109. 	<p>WEEK 4</p> <p>Tue., X: <u>Outline Due</u></p> <p>Wed., X: Module 7 Discussion Post</p> <p>Fri., X: Module 8 Discussion Post</p>
<p>Module 8: Wed., X</p> <p>Borders, Walls, Seas: Photojournalism, Media, and Migration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - T. J. Demos, “The Visual Politics of Climate Refugees,” <i>Beyond the World’s End: Arts of Living at the Crossing</i> (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 68-95. - Dan McQuillan, “Non-Fascist AI,” <i>Propositions for Non-Fascist Living: Tentative and Urgent</i>, ed. Maria Hlavajova and Wietske Maas (Utrecht: BAK, 2019), 113-24. - Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani (Forensic Oceanography), “Time to end the EU’s left-to-die policy,” <i>Open Democracy</i>, 25 June 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/time-to-end-eus-lefttodie-policy/ - Watch Ai Weiwei’s <i>Human Flow</i>, 2017 (2hr 20min), available via UCSC library 	<p>Sun., X: All Peer Responses</p>
<p>Module 9: Mon., X</p> <p>Activist Art after Occupy: #BlackLivesMatter, Abolition, and the Politics of Monument Removal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement,” <i>thefeministwire.com</i> (Oct 7, 2014), http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/ - Yates McKee, “Art after Occupy: Climate Justice, BDS and Beyond,” <i>Waging Nonviolence</i> (July 30, 2014), at http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/art-after-occupy/ - Rashmee Kumar, “How Identity Politics Has Divided the Left: An Interview with Asad Haider,” <i>The Intercept</i>, May 27, 2018, https://theintercept.com/2018/05/27/identity-politics-book-asad-haider/ - Nadine Bloch, “The Art of #BlackLivesMatter,” <i>Waging Nonviolence</i> (Jan 8, 2015), http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/art-blacklivesmatter/ - Paul B. Preciado, “When Statues Fall,” <i>Artforum</i>, 2020 	<p>WEEK 5</p> <p>Mon., X: <u>Quiz 2</u></p> <p>Wed., X: Module 9 Discussion Post</p> <p>Fri., X: Module 10 Discussion Post</p>

	https://www.artforum.com/print/202009/paul-b-preciado-84375 - “Saidiya Hartman on insurgent histories and the abolitionist imaginary,” <i>Artforum</i> , July 14, 2020, https://www.artforum.com/interviews/saidiya-hartman-83579	Sun., X: All Peer Responses <u>Final Essay Due (X by 11:59 pm)</u>
Module 10: Wed., X Climate Justice Now! Radical System Change and Environmental Justice Today	- Watch: <i>A Message from the Future</i> , with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 2019 (7.35 min, narrated by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and illustrated by Molly Crabapple), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9uTH0iprVQ - Jonas Staal, “Assemblism,” <i>eflux</i> (March 2017), 1-12, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/80/100465/assemblism/ - Wretched of the Earth, “An Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion,” <i>Common Dreams</i> , May 04, 2019, https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/05/04/open-letter-extinction-rebellion - Nick Estes, “A Red Deal,” <i>Jacobin</i> , August 6, 2019, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/08/red-deal-green-new-deal-ecosocialism-decolonization-indigenous-resistance-environment - “‘It’s Eco-Socialism or Death’, An Interview with Kali Akuno,” <i>Jacobin</i> , February 15, 2019, https://jacobinmag.com/2019/02/kali-akuno-interview-climate-change-cooperation-jackson	

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Course Workload

UC Senate Regulation 760 specifies that 1 academic unit corresponds to 6 hours of work per week during Summer Session. Therefore, as a 5-unit course, this class will require 30 hours of work per week. You can anticipate spending about 6 hours a week on lectures and class discussions and 24 hours on the course’s other elements. These hours may be broken down further as approximately 12 hours per week reading, engaging with assigned artworks, and taking notes; and 12 hours working on major assignments.

Program Learning Outcomes

The History of Art and Visual Culture department has identified four program learning outcomes (PLOs) for its B.A. program. This class fulfills these PLOs:

- PLO 1: Breadth of Cultural Knowledge: Students will be able to demonstrate an appreciation for, and foundation in, visual studies grounded in a range of historical, social, cultural, and ideological perspectives.
- PLO 2: Critical Thinking: Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills that will enable them to analyze and solve problems through observation, experience, reflection, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and/or explanation of visual, material, and historical cultural forms and values. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through oral and/or written communication.
- PLO 3: Research Proficiency: Students will be able to formulate research questions that

expand their knowledge of art and visual culture. Students will be able to apply research methods to answer these questions by consulting the current literature and developing independent results through archival, library, or field research.

- PLO 4: Written Communication: Students will be able to present clear visual and historical analysis and interpretation in writing. Students will be able to demonstrate standard writing conventions in visual studies appropriate to purpose and context.

Accessibility

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me by email, preferably within the first week of the course. I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following exam rules
- Using only permitted materials during an exam
- Viewing exam materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Keeping what you know about an exam to yourself
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam
- Accessing exam materials without permission
- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Using cell phones or other electronics to obtain outside information during an exam without explicit permission from the instructor
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.

Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Misconduct page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

Title XI and CARE

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as “confidential” employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through [CARE](#). Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the [Sexual Violence Prevention & Response \(SAFE\) website](#), which provides information and resources for different situations.
- [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can also report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University’s [Title IX Office](#), by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their [online reporting tool](#).
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

Religious Accommodations

UC Santa Cruz welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation without penalty. You should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your instructor early in the term. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students office](#).

Important Student Services

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with

their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Student Success and Engagement Hub](#)

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

[Tutoring](#) and Learning Support

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

[Slug Support Program](#)

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Slug Help/[Technology](#)

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts

Slug Help/[Emergency Services](#). For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, start [here](#). Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.