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Office hours: Broad Hall 212
Th 11:00-12:30pm and by appt.

PHIL 074 (PZ)
Fall 2021
TuTh 2:55-4:10 pm
Hahn Building, Room 106

Power and Politics in Art



Wangechi Mutu, *Mama Ray*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Art is often said to have the power to transcend the mundane, and yet the production, significance, and reception of art are thoroughly worldly matters. This has always been the case, but over the past century theorists have interrogated the relationship between art, power, and politics with increasing urgency. In our contemporary world saturated with images, how do they instantiate or challenge relationships of power? If the artist is no longer considered a sovereign, self-knowing individual but a product of social forces, how should we then conceive of the artwork? If the artist no longer has the authority to dictate the meaning of their work, what does that mean for aesthetic interpretation? How is it possible to analyze racialized and gendered power dynamics aesthetically? This course will consider these questions through the lens of twentieth-century philosophy and Octavia E. Butler's trilogy, *Lilith's Brood*. Movements covered will include post-structuralism, French feminism, the Frankfurt

School, and Black aesthetics.

COURSE GOALS

1. Enable students to describe and evaluate various theories of aesthetics, politics, and power from twentieth-century and contemporary philosophy
2. Empower students to assess works of art using the theories studied in class, as well as mobilize them in their own artistic practices if desired
3. Teach students skills in reading and writing philosophy, including basic reasoning and the interpretation of challenging theoretical texts

Specific student learning outcomes:

- Evaluate themes and ideas from philosophies of art and politics
- Write and converse in a logically persuasive manner
- Reflect on themes from the course in light of specific artworks and movements

COURSE MATERIALS

1. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. ISBN 978-0140135152
2. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard. ISBN 978-0-374-53233-8
3. Octavia Butler. *Lilith's Brood*. ISBN 978-1844672974
4. Individual PDFs posted on Sakai under “Resources” for students to print

In addition to the peer-reviewed journals and scholarly books to which the Claremont Libraries provide access, there are two major open-access encyclopedias of philosophy on the Internet that are suggested for this course.

Please use these and the library resources, or request specific guidance from me via email, rather than depending on other, potentially unreliable, internet resources.

1. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP): plato.stanford.edu
2. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP): iep.utm.edu



Richard Mosse, from *The Enclave*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

Regular attendance and your engaged attention are expected. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Excused absences include illness or Covid-related difficulties, as well as notification prior to class beginning. (See Covid policy below.) I also reserve the right to add short quizzes prior if students do not seem prepared. These quizzes will count towards your participation grade.

Participation can take many forms: being vocal in discussion, active listening, respectful engagement with your peers, and meeting with me in office hours. I encourage everyone to experiment with forms of participation that may be new for them.

The assigned readings should be completed by the start of class.

3 Page Paper

Students will complete one analytical paper of 3 pages that examines a single image with reference to John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. The assignment will be distributed in class, and the essays must be uploaded to Sakai. Please submit a double-spaced Word document, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font.

Midterm Paper

Students will complete one argumentative paper of 5 pages that focuses on one or more of theories discussed in the course. Students may choose the specific topics of their essays, but I will distribute prompts for students who prefer them. Essays are to be uploaded to Sakai. Please submit a double-spaced Word document, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font.

Final Paper

By the end of the semester, students will turn in a final argumentative paper of 7-10 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font with normal margins. The assignment will be distributed in class, but the final paper can (substantively) build on the 3 page paper or the group project.

Group Presentation

By October 28, students will be assigned to groups of 3. Each group will select a theme in Octavia Butler's *Lilith's Brood* series and create a 20-25 minute presentation of their analysis to share in the final weeks of the semester (Dec 2, 7, and 9). Students can build on the topics we discuss in class (e.g., race, gender, difference, diaspora, sex, identity and technology, environment, or the erotic); they can relate *Lilith's Brood* to theorists we have not read in class or to the work of other artists (working in other media); or they can produce a work of art (with a 1-2 page write-up). Each group must provide a handout or create a PowerPoint.



Cindy Sherman, Untitled #359, Untitled #299

For papers, I suggest you use the Chicago Manual of Style for citations, though APA and MLA are also acceptable as long as you are consistent. If you use footnote citations, you do not need to submit a works cited page.

GRADE TOTAL

ACTIVITY	POINTS
Participation	20
Three Page Paper	10
Midterm Paper	20
Group Presentation	20
Final Paper	30
<hr/> TOTAL POINTS	100

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Covid Safety Awareness

The faculty at the 5C's knows that person-to-person interaction provides the best liberal arts education. The best learning occurs in small communities. This year we are gathering in person for what we do best: create, generate, and share knowledge. During the past academic year, we built community remotely, and this year we will build on the pedagogical improvements we acquired last year. For example, if we need to, we might meet on zoom from time to time, or hold discussions online on Sakai Discussions Board.

Our health, both mental and physical, is paramount. We must consider the health of others inside and outside the classroom. All Claremont Colleges students have signed agreements regulating on-campus behavior during the pandemic; in the classroom, we will uphold these agreements. We need to take care of each other for this course to be successful. I ask you therefore to adhere to the following principles:

- there is a mask mandate for all indoor spaces on campus. You must wear a mask for the entire class; eating and drinking are not permitted. Your mask must cover your mouth and nose. The college has zero-tolerance for violations of this policy, and our shared commitment to the health and safety of our community members means if you come to class unmasked you will have to leave class for the day.

- Class attendance is required, but if you need to miss class for health reasons, concerning symptoms, suspected Covid exposure, unexpected dependent care, technology issues, or other emergency reasons I will work with you. Let me underscore this: please make your decisions always based on health, safety, and wellness—yours and others—and I will work with you at the other end. Take the symptom “Pitzer Safe Daily Health Check” seriously; we’re counting on each other.
- When not in class, avoid closed public spaces, and if you can’t avoid them: wear your mask properly, wash your hands, and maintain social distance.
- If you, or a family member, are experiencing hardship because of the pandemic, talk to someone in the Dean of Students office. You are not alone during this time.

The pandemic is fast-moving, and we might have to adjust these principles as the semester evolves. I am always happy to receive your feedback to make this course work.

Let’s care for each other, show empathy, and be supportive. While there will likely be some community transmission and breakthrough infections, together, we can minimize their effect on our community and on your learning.

Technology Policy

Phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices are great, but not for our classroom except in cases where permission is arranged. Let’s practice sustained attention with one another, a welcome break after so much screen time last year. All PDFs should be printed unless permission is granted in advance.

Late Assignment Policy

You will lose 50% of the possible points for any assignment that you submit late if you have not discussed with me prior to the due date. I AM VERY HAPPY TO GRANT EXTENSIONS IF YOU WRITE TO/SPEAK WITH ME. Please communicate with me at least 48 hours before an assignment is due if you feel you need an extension.

Academic Integrity

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your faculty and the Pitzer Academic Support Services by email at academicsupport@pitzer.edu at the beginning of the semester if you have not already registered for accommodations.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is open this semester! Writing and Speaking Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Trained to think deeply about rhetoric and communication across the curriculum, these student peers facilitate conversations about everything from ID1 papers to senior theses, lab reports to creative writing, giving presentations to developing strategies for reading and engaging more deeply in class discussions. Additionally, staff offer specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language. To make an appointment with a Writing or Speaking Partner, please visit <https://www.pitzer.edu/writing-center/>.

Diversity and Inclusion

In our classroom, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability.

Non-Sexist Use of Language

We academics no longer use “man” or “mankind” to refer to the entirety of humanity or a hypothetical person. This extends to written work as well as discussions, and it will serve you well throughout the rest of your professional lives.

CONTACT

I prefer if you contact me via email at jordan_daniels@pitzer.edu rather than through Sakai.

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

August 31	Intro [Watch John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , ep. 1]
September 2	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , ch. 1; finish watching ep. 1 at home
September 7	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chs. 2-3, watch ep. 2
September 9	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chs. 4-7, <i>recommended: watch eps. 3 & 4</i>
September 14	Immanuel Kant, on genius
September 16	Cynthia Freeland, “Gender, Genius, and Guerilla Girls”
September 17*	THREE PAGE PAPER DUE
September 21	Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”; Franz Kafka, “The Judgment”

September 23	Roland Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i> , 1-50
September 28	Roland Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i> , 51-89, 106-119
September 30	Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?"
October 5	Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces"
October 7	Julia Kristeva, <i>Powers of Horror</i> excerpts
October 12	Deborah Caslav Covino, "Abjection," from <i>Amending the Abject Body</i>
October 14	Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility"
October 19	No class, Fall Break
October 21	Theodor Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression in Listening"
October 26	Theodor Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," watch Adam Curtis, "Century of the Self"
October 28	Theodor Adorno, "How to Watch Television"
<i>October 29 (Friday)</i>	5 PAGE PAPER DUE
November 2	bell hooks, "An Aesthetic of Blackness—Strange and Oppositional"
November 4	Octavia Butler, <i>Dawn</i>
November 9	Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"
November 11	Octavia Butler, <i>Adulthood Rites</i>
November 16	Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic"
November 18	Octavia Butler, <i>Imago</i>
November 23	Octavia Butler conclusion/group work session
November 25	THANKSGIVING
November 30	Field Trip to The Huntington Library (curated by Natalie Russell)
December 2	Group Project Presentations
December 7	Group Project Presentations
December 9	Group Project Presentations
December 15*	FINAL PAPER DUE