Insofar as power is a matter of presentation, its cultural currency in antiquity (and still today) was the creation, manipulation, and display of images. - Jas Elsner

In a nutshell, *The Art of Persuasion* fully online course focuses on the cultural and political appropriation of visual and performance art for the purposes of public conformity, propaganda, and dissent (1935-present day). The fall 2015 semester will look at 1935-1960 and the spring 2016 semester will look at 1961-present day.

**Course Summary**

Art, informed by the human experience, no matter its epoch, focus, or demographic, is wrought with dissension and counterpoint; and while scholars have learned to dig deeper and not allow insufficiency of findings to resolve into indifferent wrongness, they have also learned to not take the contradictions of our history too personally. There is no such thing as perspective-free history since those who write the history are themselves fallible. While one may agree with the words of R.G. Collingwood regarding man’s self-knowledge, your ‘res gestae,’ being the indicator of our incumbent progress, historical accuracy comes only from an honest intention. And honesty is, perhaps, out of reach for us. Keeping this in mind throughout the semester, we will examine how ambitions of power and the development of certain artistic (visual and performance) canons were mutually influenced; what rebel vs. state-sponsored art can tell us about ruling regimes and power relations; how propaganda in art affected society and historical events; and how our own preconceptions and contemporary concerns about propaganda, media, and political manipulation color our own approach to recent history and current culture.

**Course Objectives and Outcomes**

- Students will gain an understanding of the various filters through which they understand themselves, others, and the interconnected histories of visual and performance art.
- Students will gain insight into the authority of visuals and artifacts – or the lack of – in their understanding or misunderstanding of history, politics and culture.
- Students will gain appreciation of the breadth of the performing / visual arts as cultural mediums (including the limitations) for accessing target populations.
- Students will learn to recognize the influence of Western values on how they perceive themselves and others.
- Students will examine the relationship between art, political power, and identity.
- Students will explore and analyze the different media and techniques of message dissemination through visual/non-verbal means in Western politics.
- Students will improve their analytical writing skills by learning to read, understand, and criticize scholarship.

**Required Textbooks or Readings**

All required course text and readings will be made available via external website links or embedded .pdf. There is no required textbook purchase. At the end of every lecture is a bibliography, and the student has the opportunity to read further in any module where s/he may seek further knowledge or understanding.

**Course Format**

The format of this course will consist of mostly discussion with some limited lecture based in film and PowerPoint. At the end of each week, a guide to the readings as well as the Discussion Board assignment for the following week will be handed out. To facilitate discussion, you are expected to complete the assigned reading ahead of time and study any images/video posted on the course website; the weekly Discussion Board assignment is intended to help you keep up with this material and to prepare you for analytical written assignments and your final multimedia project. Readings will be made available on Blackboard.

A note about the Course Documents and Readings

The assigned study material will fall into roughly three categories:

1) general background reading
2) image and video sources

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1 Syllabus and calendar subject to change.
3) scholarly articles and essays

The vast bulk of your readings will fall within these categories; these need to be read carefully. All of them will have been written in order to explicitly argue one or more interpretations, and often will be written from a strong point of view. After reading these essays, it is important that you be able to articulate the author’s thesis, the arguments, the evidence, the methodology, and any assumptions or presumptions that underlie the narrative.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

*Weekly Discussion Board assignments:* Brief essays (ca. ½ to 1 page) that respond to a question or set of questions, one of the readings, or an image or images. You must post early enough to allow other classmates to respond to your post. You are required to respond to two other posts by classmates. These will be graded for content and style. There will be ca. 12 of these; I will drop the one with the lowest grade from your average. *Do not* underestimate the importance of these.

*First Paper:* A short paper (ca. 3 pages) analyzing a given work of art, intended to get you thinking about how to look at art, images, and performance footage. Will have a due date in the first half of the semester.

*Second Paper:* A short (ca. 5-6 pages) analytical paper. You’ll have various options, including monument/object comparisons, an analysis of a movie adaptation of an event/person, or a response to some scholarship. Will be due near the end of classes.

*Multimedia Project:* Guidelines and recommendations to be made available online. Based upon readings, film, and discussion, you will either (1) create your own art-based propaganda in a chosen medium or (2) analyze in a way that *is not written* a work of art within the time period 1935-1960 that we have not previously discussed.

*Final Reflection Paper:* A looser written assignment than the prior analytical papers (ca. 4-5 pages). This serves as a reaction to course material presented, so that the professor may have evidence of objectives met. This also serves to express how the student has assimilated the course material into a framework for critically observing and understanding contemporary examples of the coursework presented within the students’ own lexicon of daily experience.

*Extra Credit:* If an exhibit or performance is available that focuses on some aspect of this course, the student may ask permission to attend and write a brief (ca. 2 page) reflection of the work they witnessed. Please note, further proof of attendance at the exhibit must be submitted along with the reflection paper (i.e. image of student with art work, or scanned ticket/admission).

**Grading Breakdown**

*Discussions:* 25 Points  
*Analytical Paper I:* 15 Points  
*Analytical Paper II:* 15 Points  
*Multimedia Project:* 25 Points  
*Final Reflection:* 20 Points  
*Extra Credit:* 5 Points  
*Total:* 100 Points

**Grading Scale**

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**Attendance**

This is a fully online course. As such, no attendance will be taken. The *only* barometer for assessing student participation will be in the *timely* submissions of assignments and discussions throughout the semester.

**Policies**

*Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges*

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.

*Honors Citizenship Requirements*
Beginning in Fall 2014, Honors College students are required to accumulate at least **20 citizenship points** each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate **10 citizenship points**. See [http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/citizenship/](http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/citizenship/).

**Academic Misconduct Policy**
Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

*FIU Code of Academic Integrity*: [http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html](http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html)

*FIU Honors College Student Handbook*: [http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html](http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html)

*FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy*: [http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html](http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html)

**Student Portfolios**
The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. You will decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in your portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes.

Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is thought provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment.

Each Honors College course includes at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements.

**Global Learning Objectives**
This course has been certified as meeting the university’s Global Learning requirement. This semester’s major component, Reacting to the Past, satisfies all three of the Honors College Global Learning Objectives.

Global Awareness: Through your engagement in writing analytical papers, you will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the diverse thinking of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

Global Perspective: Through your engagement in the “reacting” game and writing the research paper, you will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

Global Engagement: Through your engagement in the Discussion Board and multimedia project, you will demonstrate a willingness to engage in evidence-based negotiation in order to solve a global issue.

*Changes will be announced in class or by FIU email: pwinter@fiu.edu*
*No tardy assignments accepted. No emailed or late responses accepted.*
Schedule of Modules

Module 1 – Introduction to Course Material
Week 1 (Aug 24-Aug 28): Introduction to the Course 1935-1960 (lecture) / 'Introduce Yourself' Video Blog
Week 2 (Aug 31-Sep 4): The Power of Images; Defining 'Propaganda' (lecture) / Discussion Board

Module 2 – Philosophies of Art and Politics
Week 3 (Sep 7-Sep 11): Post-Modernism vs. Modernism (lecture) / Discussion Board
Week 4 (Sep 14-Sep 18): Post-Colonialism and Feminism (lecture) / Discussion Board
Week 5 (Sep 21-Sep 25): Nature, Object, Method, and Value (lecture) / First Paper + Video Blog

Module 3 – World War II, Nazism, and Ausdruckstanz
Week 6 (Sep 28-Oct 2): Laban, Jooss, and Wigman (film) / Discussion Board
Week 7 (Oct 5-Oct 9): Degenerate Art (film), Fighting for Modernism / Zaption Assignment
Week 8 (Oct 12-Oct 16): Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Birth of Butoh (film) / Discussion Board

Module 4 – American Dreams, American Realities
Week 9 (Oct 19-Oct 23): Rise of Rock and Roll (lecture) / Discussion Board
Week 10 (Oct 26-Oct 30): Segregation Ruled Unconstitutional in US & the Barbie Doll (lecture) / Discussion Board

Module 5 – The Pace Quickens
Week 12 (Nov 9-Nov 13): First Televised Presidential Debates: The Public Image (film) / Discussion Board
Week 13 (Nov 16-Nov 20): Berlin Wall and the Kunstfigur (lecture) / Discussion Board
Week 14 (Nov 23-Nov 27): Wrap-Up and Looking Forward 1961-present (lecture) / Multimedia Project
Week 15 (Nov 30-Dec 5): Final Submissions / Final Reflection Paper

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2 To be revised as the semester progresses. See separate handouts in Course Documents for assigned readings, guide to these readings, and discussion topics.