SOC 491
Department of Sociology
Boğaziçi University
Spring 2021
Thu: 14:00-17:00
@Zoom + @Moodle

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Office hours by appointment

The Body, Aesthetics, and Performative Cultures of Resistance: An Introduction*

This specialization seminar takes up the challenge to rethink corporeality and underscore the intertwinement of aesthetics, politics, and contemporary cultures of resistance. While practices based on expanded notions of choreography, performance, and movement constitute the springboard of our collective journey, the course gathers voices from various fields to reflect on the following questions: How can we understand the body as the source, site, and target of emotions, pain, and desire? How can we account for the body as a sociopolitical construct and/or mediation, and still move beyond disembodied theories of agency? What does it mean to document and bear witness to atrocity and violence? Given the centrality of the body in current "crises"— as in migratory movements, the re-entrenchment of bordering processes, state violence, and the on-going COVID-19 pandemic — we probe whether corporeality can be envisaged as a site of recuperation where vulnerability can become a source of resistance. Throughout the course, we study some key texts regarding the relation between aesthetics and politics, performance and performativity. We also study literature, history, art and cultural documents and focus on some case studies regarding how the body figures in contemporary political culture, in particular, in "performances of resistance" and social protest. We will view selected cases of artistic as well as everyday performances.

Meetings open at 13:45

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89492991081?pwd=SnNxL20zOWtFRmE2ZUpnOGJjV3d1dz09
Meeting ID: 894 9299 1081
Passcode: 446064

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0pfuuhpzoqEtX3-eVaxpymilMIT5EOliW-/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqjIoE92UsBGGRpx5Bor4a_PxmH5fj7dlz1LgNSFLchr7P-5vG4YqNffc

* The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus.

Course Requirements

Participation. Your fundamental requirement in the course is to engage in it, which means to read the assigned material carefully before each meeting and to participate actively in discussions. Please bring one or two questions about the texts you have read for the weekly session to share in the chat function on Zoom. No more than two unexcused absences are permitted. Please contact me by e-mail if you are unable to attend a class for any reason **Class participation counts as 25% of your final grade.** If you miss a Zoom meeting, please let me know. I will email the video recording to you. After you watch the video, please fill in the following form and turn it in before the next session. https://moodle.boun.edu.tr/mod/resource/view.php?id=357284

Presentation. These presentations should reflect on the assigned reading(s) of the session, either by examining a singular passage or an argument, or by drawing connections across the readings and cases (artistic performances/everyday life performances/protest acts). Whatever format of presentation you choose, you can either accompany it with a 5-7 minute prerecorded audio or video to walk us through the presentation, or a 5-7 minute live explanation of your presentation in class. You have three options as explained below for your presentation. You can create these either by computer or you can take a high-resolution photo of a hand-drawn image to share (through the screen-sharing function on Zoom) with the class. The design is up to you. You can get as creative as you would like within these parameters. **Presentations count as 25% of your final grade.**

Option 1: Concept map
Option 2: Word cloud
Option 3: Poster presentation
Poster Tips for Humanities Conferences by Danielle J Boujon
https://wp.nyu.edu/archivesandpublichistory/2014/05/13/poster-tips-for-humanities-conference-posters/

Final Project. Your final project needs to treat a well-articulated question or problematic, engaging with the material we have covered throughout the course to address a contemporary or historical phenomenon (social movement, protest, or an artistic work such as a film, exhibit, performance, etc.) as a case study. Again, you have several options for the format as explained below. You need to turn in your **final project topic on June 3**, **Thursday**, a little more than three weeks before the **project due date June 28, Monday**. I can suggest some topics, though you are welcome to examine questions or cases of your own. **Your final project will constitute 50% of your grade.**

Option 1: Essay (5 single spaced pages, 12 Times New Roman)
Option 2: Photo-essay or video-essay accompanied with a 1-2 page "artistic statement"
Option 3: 10-15 minute podcast

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in serious academic penalties, from a failing grade in the class to expulsion from the university. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite or reference all outside sources of information and ideas. The Chicago Manual of style is an excellent online guide to proper citation format and research standards. https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

Students with Disabilities. Please let me know if you will need any academic accommodation or if you have other concerns. All conversations will be kept confidential.

Readings. The required and most of the recommended readings are uploaded on our Moodle course page.
https://moodle.boun.edu.tr/mod/folder/view.php?id=359200

I. Introduction & Conceptual Clarifications

Session 1 | March 18 | Introduction to the Course

Session 2 | March 25 | Performance and Performativity

Required readings:
Schechner, Richard. 2006. "What is Performance?" *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 28-51.
Schechner, Richard. 2006. "Performativity." *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge. pp. 123-169.
Jackson, Shannon; Marincola, Paula (eds). *In Terms of Performance*. The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, Philedelphia Arts Research Center, University of California, Berkeley.
Read the entry: "Performativity" http://intermsofperformance.site/

II. Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics

Session 3 | April 1 | Agonistic Encounters

Required readings:
Ranciére, Jacques. 2006. "The Distribution of the Sensible: Politics and Aesthetics." In *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London and New York: Continuum, pp. 12-19.
Mouffe, Chantal. 2013. "Agonistic Politics and Artistic Practices." In *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso, pp. 85-106.

Watch one of the two videos (on your own):
Jérôme Bel, *Veronique Doisneau* (2005)
Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIuWY5PInFs
Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjPcRRH_4CM
Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L10LlVPE-kg
Part 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfsOj4a2ggA

Marcelo Evelin/Demolition Incorporada, *A Invenção da Maldade* (2019)
https://vimeo.com/356182458

Session 4 |April 8 | Political Action *as* Performance

Required reading:
Arendt, Hannah. 2006. (1961). "What is Freedom?" In *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin Books, pp. 142-169.

Peruse the project website (on your own):
Sarah Vanhee, *Lecture for Every One* (2013 – 2020)
https://www.sarahvanhee.com/lectureforeveryone

Session 5 | April 15| Aesthetics and Protest

Required readings:
Taussig, Michael. 2013. I'm So Angry I Made a Sign." In *Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-44.
Öztürkmen, Arzu. 2014. "The Park, the Penguin, and the Gas: Performance in Progress in Gezi Park." *TDR/The Drama Review*. 58 (3): 39-68

III. The Body as Weapon, The Body as Protest

Session 6 | April 22 | Bodies in Assembly, Vulnerability, and Resistance

Required readings:
Ahıska, Meltem. 2016. "Violence against Women in Turkey: Vulnerability, Sexuality, and Eros", In *Vulnerability in Resistance*, edited by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay, pp. 211-235
Akıncı, Eylül Fidan. 2017. "Sacred Children, Accursed Mothers: Performativities of Necropolitics and Mourning in Neoliberal Turkey." Brady, S. (Ed.), Mantoan, L. (Ed.). *Performance in a Militarized Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-65.
Butler, Judith. 2015. "Bodily Vulnerability and Coalitional Politics." *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 123-153.

Guest speaker in class (TBC):
Eylül Fidan Akıncı, Doctoral Candidate, CUNY, Theatre Studies.

Session 7 | April 29 | Movement, Gesture, and Choreographies of Resistance

Required readings (pick two):
Goldman, Danielle. 2007. "Bodies on the Line: Contact Improvisation and Techniques of Nonviolent Protest." *Dance Research Journal* 39(01): 60-74.
Lepecki, Andre. 2013. "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: Or, the task of the dancer." *TDR/The Drama Review 57*(4): 13-27.
Schneider, Rebecca. 2018. "That the Past May Yet Have Another Future: Gesture in the Times of Hands Up." *Theatre Journal* 70, no. 3 (2018): 285-306.

Solomon, Noémie. 2018. "dancing a people to come: Variations on Sovereignty in Québécois Choreography." In *Bodies of Evidence: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics of Movement*. Vienna: Passagen Verlag, pp. 81-99

Watch (on your own):
Dana Michel, *Mercurial George* (2016)
https://vimeo.com/176796425?utm_source=email&utm_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm_campaign=28749
(Passcode will be provided)

Session 8 | May 6 | Radical Acts

Watch (on your own, before class):
Petr Pavlensky, *Man and Might* (2017).
https://vimeo.com/211632426

Required readings:
Bargu, Banu. 2018. "The Corporeal Avant-Garde: Petr Pavlensky." In *Bodies of Evidence: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics of Movement*, ed. Gurur Ertem and Sandra Noeth. Vienna: Passagen Verlag, pp. 101-21.
Hameed, Ayesha. "A Rough History (on the destruction of fingerprints." In *Bodies of Evidence: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics of Movement*, ed. Gurur Ertem and Sandra Noeth. Vienna: Passagen Verlag, pp. 35-51.

Session 9 | May 20 | Constructions of Normalcy and Refiguring the Body

Required readings:
Belser, Watts J. 2016. "Vital Wheels: Disability, Relationality, and the Queer Animacy of Vibrant Things." *Hypatia* 31 (1): 5-21.
Deleuze, Gilles. 2005. "Ethology: Spinoza and Us." In *The Body: A Reader*, pp. 58-61.
Freund, Peter. "Bodies, Disability and Spaces: The Social Model and Disabling Spatial Organisations," *The Body: A Reader*, pp. 182-186.

Watch (on your own):
Leni Riefenstahl, *Olympia* (1936)
https://youtu.be/H3LOPhRq3Es
Xavier Le Roy, *Self Unfinished* (1998)
https://youtu.be/G3rv1TeVEPM
Jérôme Bel, *Disabled Theatre* (2012)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mlo0wjpH2c
La Ribot, *Happy Island* (2018)
https://youtu.be/G3rv1TeVEPM

IV. Convenient Untruth

Session 10 | May 27 | Aesthetic Justice

Watch before class:
Hakan Topal, *Still Life* (2012-2016)
(link and passcode will be provided)

Required Reading:
Topal, Hakan. 2014. "Collateral Damage, Condolence and the Aesthetic of Impossibility Justice" in *Aesthetic Justice*, edited by Pascal Gielen and Niels Van Tomme. Valiz, Amsterdam.
Weizman, Eyal. 2019. "Open Verification." *e-flux*. June 18.
https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/becoming-digital/248062/open-verification/

Peruse the "Forensic Architecture" website (on your own):
Forensic Architecture
https://forensic-architecture.org/

Guest speaker in class:
Hakan Topal, Artist and Assistant Professor of New Media and Art+DesignPurchase College, State University of New York

Session 11 | June 3 | * No Zoom Session*****
***** Topics for final projects due by the end of the week *****

Watch (on your own):
Curtis, Adam. 2016. *HyperNormalisation*. BBC.
https://vimeo.com/191817381

Use this time to catch-up on readings and videos.

Session 12 | June 10 | Performative Force of Political Lies (during Covid-19 and beyond)

Required reading:
Arendt, Hannah. 2006. (1967). "Truth and Politics." In *Between Past and Fut*ure, 222-259.
Butter, Michael, and Sharon Howe. 2020. *The Nature of Conspiracy Theories*. Polity Press. (Selections TBC).

June 28 | * Final papers due *****

Recommended Readings and Additional Resources

Performance

Carlson, Marvin. 2004. "What is Performance?" In *Performance Studies Reader*, edited by Henri Bial. London and New York: Routledge. pp. 68-73.

Derrida, Jacques. 2000. "Signature, Event, Context." In *Limited Inc.* Chicago: Northwestern University Press, pp. 1- 23.

Goffman, Erving. "Performances: Belief in the Part One is Playing." In *Performance Studies Reader*, edited by Henri Bial. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 59-63.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Double Day.

Jackson, Shannon. 2004. "Discipline and Performance: Genealogy and Discontinuity." In *Professing Performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-39.

Jones, Amelia. 2011. "The Artist is Present: artistic re-enactments and the impossibility of presence." *TDR.* 16-45.

Kaprow, Allan. 2003. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, pp. 1-26.

Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1999. "Performance Studies." http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/issues/rock2.htm

Mauss, Marcel. 1973 (1935). "Techniques of the Body." *Economy and Society*, 2:1, 70-88.

Phelan, Peggy. 1993. "The Ontology of Performance," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, pp. 146-166.

Performativity

Austin, J.L. 1975. Lectures I and II. In *How to Do Things with Words*. Harvard University Press, pp. 1-24.

Barthes, Roland. 1977 (1967). "The Death of the Author" in *Image-Music-Text*, Hill and Wang, pp:142-148.

Barthes, Roland. 1997 (1969). "From Work to Text" in *Aesthetics*, ed. Susan Feagin, Patrick Maynard. Oxford University Press. pp: 270-274.

Butler, Judith. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40:4 (December 1988), 519-531.

Felman, Shoshana. 2002. *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1999 (1969). "What is an Author?" in Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology. Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984 Vol. 2 ed. James D. Faubion et al. The New Press, pp. 205-222.

Jones, Amelia. 2008. "Naming Power and the Power of the Name: Janez Janša Performs the Political in/for the Art World," in *Name Readymade*. Ljubljana: Moderna galleria. http://www.aksioma.org/name_book/name_readymade.pdf

Turner, Victor. 1966. Ch. 3 "Liminality and Communitas." In *The Ritual Process*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 94-130.

Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics

Adorno, Theodor W., Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and Georg Lukács. 2010. *Aesthetics and Politics*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, Chantal. 2013. "What Is Agonistic Politics?" In *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso, pp. 1-18.

Mouffe, Chantal. 2015. "Marcelo Evelin. Dance as an Agonistic Encounter." In *Time We Share: Reflection on and through Performing Art*s, edited by Dani Blanga-Gubbay and Lars Kwakkenbos. Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesarts & Mercatorfonds, pp. 246-254.

Thompson, Nato. 2016. *Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Melville House.

Arendt, Hannah. 1998. (1958). Part V: "Action." In *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ertem, Gurur. 2020. "Political Action as Virtuoso Performance and the Redemptive Potential of Art." In *Lecture for Every One*, Sarah Vanhee. Art Paper Editions, Amsterdam, pp. 249-255.

Fuentes, Marcela A. 2015. "Performance, Politics, Protest." In *What is Performance Studies*? Duke University Press.
http://scalar.usc.edu/nehvectors/wips/performance-politics-and-protest

Reed, TV. 2016. Ch: 5 "Protest as Artistic Expression." In *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, edited by Fahlenbrach, Kathrin, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 77-93.

White, Micah. 2016. *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*. Toronto: Knopf.

Bodies in Assembly, Vulnerability, and Resistance

Butler, Judith. 2015. "Bodies in Alliance and Politics of the Streets." In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 66-98.

Dabashi, Hamid. 2012. "La vita nuda: Baring Bodies, Bearing Witness." *Al Jazeera*, January 23.
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/01/201212111238688792.html.

Ertem, Gurur. 2018. "Gezi Uprising: Performative Democracy and Politics of the Body in an Extended Space of Appearance." In *Media Practices, Social Movements, and Performativity: Transdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by M. Lünenborg, S. Foellmer, C. Raetzsch. London: Routledge, pp.81-99.

Gambetti Zeynep. 2014. Occupy Gezi as Politics of the Body. In: Özkırımlı U. (eds) *The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey: #occupygezi*. Palgrave Pivot, London.

Sirman, Nükhet. 2016. "When Antigone Is a Man Feminist "Trouble" in the Late Colony". In *Vulnerability in Resistance*, edited by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay, 191-210.

Tzelepis, Elena. 2016. "Vulnerable Corporealities and Precarious Belongings in Mona Hatoum's Art". In *Vulnerability in Resistance*, edited by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay. Durham: Duke University Press, 146-166.

Pabst, Andrea. 2016. Ch: 16 "The Body." In *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, edited by Fahlenbrach, Kathrin, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth. New York: Berghahn

Movement, Gesture, and Choreographies of Protest

Foster, Susan Leigh. 2003. "Choreographies of Protest." *Theatre Journal.* 55 (3): 395-412.
Graff, Ellen. 1999. *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
Martin, Randy. 2006. "Toward a Kinesthetics of Protest." *Social Identities* 12, no. 6 (2006): 791-801.
Renee, Aymami E. 2016. Ch: 17 "Dance as Protest." In *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, edited by Fahlenbrach, Kathrin, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth. New York: Berghahn Books.

Radical Acts

Anderson, Patrick. 2010. Chapter 2: "Enduring Performance" and Chapter 3: "How to Stage Self-Consumption." In *So Much Wasted: Hunger, Performance, and the Morbiditity Resistance.* Durham: Duke University Press.
Bargu, Banu. 2016. "Why Did Bouazizi Burn Himself? The Politics of Fate and Fatal Politics." *Constellations* 23(1): 27-36.
Dabashi, Hamid. 2012. *Corpus Anarchicum: Political Protest, Suicidal Violence, and the Making of the Posthuman Body*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Kafka, Franz. 2012 (1922). "A Hunger Artist and Other Stories." In *A Hunger Artist and Other Stories.* Oxford, New York. Oxford University Press, pp. 56-64. https://www.kafka-online.info/a-hunger-artist.html
Siméant, Johanna, Christophe Traïni, Johanna Siméant, and Christophe Traïni. 2016. *Bodies in Protest: Hunger Strikes and Angry Music.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Constructions of Normalcy and Refiguring the Body

Davis, Lennard J. "Visualizing the Disabled Body: The Classical Nude and the Fragmented Torso," *The Body: A Reader*, pp. 167-181.
Grosz, Elizabeth A. 1994. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Kracauer, Siegfried, and Thomas Y. Levin. 1995. Ch: "The Mass Ornament." In *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, pp. 75-88.

Convenient Untruth and the Performative Force of Lies

Arendt, Hannah. 2005. (1954). "The Seeds of a Fascist International," in Essays in Understanding; 1930-1954, pp. 140-150.
Arendt, Hannah. 1971. "Lying in Politics." In *Crises of the Republic*, 2-47.
Ertem, Gurur. 2019. "The Gezi Indictment as the Destruction of the World and the Redemptive Potential of Art. Thinking with Hannah Arendt." *The New Embassy of Turkey*.
Foucault, M; Agamben G.; Benvenuto, S. 2020. Philosophers on Coronavirus. European Journal of Psychoanalysis. Feb-March. Roy, Arundhati. 2020. "Pandemic as Portal." *Financial Times*, 2 April. https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/coronavirus-and-philosophers/
Roy, Arundhati. 2020. "Pandemic as Portal." *Financial Times*. 3 April. https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca