

WAC 144: MAKE ART/STOP AIDS

Winter 2005
Prof. David Gere
T.A. Raquel Monroe
Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.
Kinross 126 (then moving back to Kaufman Hall 208)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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NARRATIVE

How might artists participate in the global movement to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS? This course is based on the increasingly accepted premise that the arts, working in close connection with public health and epidemiology, can serve as an effective tool in AIDS prevention and treatment efforts. We will review the literature of AIDS cultural analysis that emerged in the late 1980s in relation to gay men in the U.S. and will expand the reach of that literature by testing how it applies to the new political, social, and sexual exigencies that characterize the epidemic in its pandemic phase, e.g., in South Los Angeles, Haiti, India, Thailand, South Africa, and Brazil. Week by week, the course will gesture toward an understanding of how the arts can function to save lives around the world. The course includes a commitment to global activism, and to producing collaborative art work in a series of “theory in action” projects.

EVALUATION

on-time attendance and participation: 20%

Because class participation is so important and the quarter so short, you must attend all classes (and arrive on time). Your presence and contributions will help us grapple with difficult readings and unusually complex issues. Absences and latenesses WILL be counted against you when final grades are determined. If you must be absent, be sure to communicate with the teaching assistant. In winter 2005, attendance at one additional event is also required:

T/Feb. 22 Robert Sember lecture, Kaufman Hall, 3-5 pm.

close-reading worksheets: 15%

Throughout the quarter, please fill out a close-reading worksheet for each and every assigned reading. The close-reading method, which encourages in-depth critical thinking, will be discussed in class. These worksheets must be turned in at the start of each class—credit will not be given for late worksheets.

global AIDS presentation: 15%

At the end of the first week of class, you must sign up for one of six groups, each of which will focus on a location designated in the syllabus—South Los Angeles, Haiti, India, Thailand, South Africa, and Brazil. Working with your group, you will conduct a fact-finding mission on the epidemiology of the AIDS epidemic in that specific location. What does the current research tell us about numbers of cases, dominant means of transmission, local sexual practices, stigma and other cultural factors—in other words, the social, cultural, and historical context for HIV in your focus area? In addition, find out if there have been any particularly successful or unsuccessful AIDS interventions. What is the level of government funding? And which non-governmental organizations are working to stop the epidemic? Gathering this information is only the first step. You must then collate and prioritize it, using artistic media to present what you have discovered to the class. A dry blackboard-style presentation will flunk outright. (Grades for this project are shared by all members of the group.) Use this as an opportunity to test the ability of the arts to communicate information memorably and effectively.

theory in action projects: 50%

- #1: 5 points
- #2: 5 points
- #3: 5 points
- #4: 5 points
- #5: 5 points
- #6: 5 points
- #7: 5 points
- #8: 15 points

You will remain in your groups for many of these weekly projects. In general, all members of the group will receive the same grade. But in those cases where a person fails to contribute to the group work, he or she will receive an F for that project at the discretion of the instructor.

In written assignments, it is expected that you will use the best writing skills (sentence construction, grammar, spelling, and the like) you can muster, in conformance with the rules laid out in the UCLA English Department *Style Sheet* or any other standard guide. In exceptional cases, the instructor reserves the right to reject a paper with too many shortcomings of this sort and to require revision and a rewrite.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Course Reader available at Westwood Copies, 101 Gayley (next to Coffee Bean).

Books available at ASUCLA bookstore:

Crimp, Douglas, ed. *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*. Boston, Mass: MIT Press, 1987.

Carballeira, Paula, and Gideon Mendel et al. *A Broken Landscape: HIV and AIDS in Africa*. Washington, D.C.: ActionAid, 2002.

Gere, David. *How to Make Dances in an Epidemic: Tracking Choreography in the Age of AIDS*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

Irwin, Alexander, Joyce Millen, and Dorothy Fallows. *Global AIDS: Myths and Facts: Tools for Fighting the AIDS Pandemic*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2003.

Kidder, Tracy. *Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*. New York: Random House, 2003.

CLASS SESSIONS (subject to change)

MAKE ART/STOP AIDS

M/Jan. 10 The MAKE ART/STOP AIDS Project

W/Jan. 12 Ground Zero: HIV and Me

Reading/Worksheet Due: Grover handout ("AIDS: Keywords," pp. 17-30)

Theory in Action Project #1 Due (5 points): Working with a partner, create a visual collage that expresses your (similar or divergent) relationship to the AIDS epidemic. You may use any materials and work in any size. Be prepared to present your collage verbally to the class, in three minutes or less.

Th/Jan. 13 Highly Suggested: Lecture on "Modern African Choreography" by WAC Regents Lecturer Germaine Acogny, 6-7:30 p.m., Lenart Auditorium, Fowler Museum

M/Jan. 17 MLK Jr. Holiday

CULTURAL ANALYSIS/CULTURAL ACTIVISM

W/Jan. 19 AIDS Cultural Theory

Reading/Worksheets Due: Crimp ("AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism," pp. 3-16) and Treichler ("AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse: An Epidemic of Signification," pp. 31-70), in Crimp, ed., *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*

M/Jan. 24 Gran Fury, Revisited

Reading/Worksheets Due: Crimp, with Rolston ("AIDS Activist Graphics: A Demonstration," pp. 13-24) in the course reader, and Gere ("Seize Control of the FDA," pp. 63-76), in *How to Make Dances in an Epidemic*

W/Jan. 26 Making a Point

Theory in Action Project #2 Due (5 points): With your designated group, create a poster campaign to convey the critical idea that AIDS is not over. Not yet. Be prepared to show and discuss the poster(s) and your concept in class.

WOMEN AND HIV IN THE U.S.

M/Jan. 31 Gendering the Epidemic

Reading/Worksheets Due: Treichler ("Beyond Cosmo," pp. 235-77) and Hammonds ("Gendering the Epidemic," pp. 230-44) in the course reader

Global AIDS Presentation: South Los Angeles

W/Feb. 2 Creating Interventions

Special Guest: Vickie Mays, Professor of Psychology and Public Health, UCLA

Reading/Worksheet Due: Connors ("Sex, Drugs, and Structural Violence," pp. 91-123) in the course reader

Theory in Action Project #3 Due (5 points): see next page

Part One (prior to class)—Each group will be assigned to create an arts-based AIDS intervention for “at-risk” men or women living in Compton, West Hollywood, Skid Row, Pico-Union, or San Fernando Valley Los Angeles. Working with your group, please come prepared with the following information:

- ? From the web, or from other sources, find and blow up a map of your assigned community.
- ? What health services are already available to this community? For example, where are the AIDS service organizations, free health clinics, hospitals, substance abuse treatment centers, domestic violence safe houses, etc.? Are they accessible through public transportation? Mark these locations on your map, as well as transportation routes.
- ? What arts services are readily available to this community? For example, theaters, studios, museums, storefront displays, open-air plazas, arts centers. Mark these locations on your map.
- ? Who lives in your community? Gather detailed demographic information—gender, race/ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, age.
- ? From among those who live in your community, which populations are most vulnerable to HIV, and which population would you like to target? Taking the time to target a specific sector of your assigned population will increase the likelihood of your creating a successful intervention.
- ? Risks—which risk factors (behaviors and other factors) are particular to this population, and which one(s) will you be addressing?
- ? What type of intervention do you think is most important for your chosen population—education, prevention, or treatment?
- ? What will be your artistic medium—theater, spoken word, puppetry, dance, music, etc.?

Part Two (in class)—Prof. Mays will guide you and your group through the process of constructing your intervention. At the end of class you will pitch it to an “official” from the Los Angeles Office of AIDS Programs and Policies. You will be given time to design your intervention and to workshop the pitch in class.

REACHING THE GLOBAL POOR

M/Feb. 7 Everyone Deserves Treatment

Reading/Worksheet Due: Kidder (*Mountains Beyond Mountains*, pp. TBA)

Global AIDS Presentation: Haiti

W/Feb. 9 Unraveling Myths

Reading (no worksheet) Due: Irwin, et al (*Global AIDS: Myths and Facts*, pp. TBA)

Theory in Action Project #4 Due (5 points): With your group, produce a small play—under ten minutes—dramatizing and counteracting one of the myths in the *Global AIDS* book. Confer with the instructor to make sure that each group chooses a different myth.

MESSAGING FOR CHANGE

M/Feb. 14 Edutainment

Reading/Worksheets Due: Singhal and Rogers (“Entertainment-Education,” pp. 287-338), Bandyopadhyay (“The ‘Fallen’ Learn to Rise,” pp. 1-27), and Jana et al (“Female Commercial Sex Workers,” pp. 150-65) in the course reader

Global AIDS Presentation: India

W/Feb. 16 Pro-Sex AIDS Interventions

Theory in Action Project #5 Due (5 points): With your group, plan and propose an arts-based AIDS intervention with sex workers living in your focus area (e.g., South Los Angeles, Haiti, India, etc.). Prepare a lively, arts-based ten-minute group presentation that explains your choices and provides a preview of the intervention.

Global AIDS Presentation: Thailand

M/Feb. 21 President's Day Holiday

Suggestion: Begin Working With Your Group Now on the Final Project!

IMAGES OF SUFFERING

T/Feb. 22 Required Lecture: Robert Sember on "Art and Health," 3-5 p.m., Kaufman Hall

W/Feb. 23 What Photography Can Do

Special Guest: Robert Sember, Associate Research Scientist, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

Film to be viewed in advance at the Instructional Media Library: *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* (1993, 99 minutes), IML code 06824

Reading/Worksheets Due: Kleinman and Kleinman ("The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times," pp. 1-23) and Phelan ("Infected eyes: Dying Man With A Movie Camera, *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*," pp. 153-73)

M/Feb. 28 Giving Voice to Suffering

Global AIDS Presentation: South Africa

Reading (no worksheet) Due: Mendel (*A Broken Landscape*)

Theory in Action Project #6 (5 points): Working on your own, select one image from the Mendel book with which you identify most strongly. Then, "narrate" the image in one page (250 words)—that is, tell a story about it, and you. Be prepared to show the image and present a portion (about one paragraph) of your text in class.

SEX VS. ABSTINENCE

W/Mar. 2 The Punany Poets

Special Guest: Jessica Holter, founder, The Punany Poets

Reading/Worksheet Due: Monroe handout

- M/Mar. 7 Honoring Desire
- Reading/Worksheet Due: Gere ("Transcendence and Eroticism" in *How to Make Dances in an Epidemic*, pp. 229-61)
- Global AIDS Presentation: Brazil
- W/Mar. 9 Theory in Action Project #7 (5 points): With your group, devise a brilliant, engaging, unforgettable condom demonstration—one that you believe you would be allowed to present to a class of college undergraduates in your designated location (South Los Angeles, Haiti, India, etc.)

MAKE ART/STOP AIDS

- M/Mar. 14 Final Theory in Action Project #8 (Final - 20 points): With your group, and building on the ideas you have developed throughout the quarter, propose a project that mobilizes the arts to stop the epidemic in your designated "Global AIDS" location. Be as detailed as possible: What exactly would you do, and how would you involve people of the affected community? How would the project look/sound/feel? And what effect do you intend it to have? Your presentation should be creative, compelling, and arts-based, and should take no longer than fifteen minutes. Be absolutely certain that your project effectively addresses the needs of the people in your specific focus area. Be prepared to present on Mar. 14 or 16, as assigned.
- W/Mar. 16 Final Theory in Action Project continued/Evaluations