

The Main Assignment: Revise, Critique, Revise, Critique, Revise, Exhibit

The main assignments for this class all build to one highly-polished exhibition of six pieces of original movement art (ephemera) and accompanying page articulating the theory of change for each.

The Art

Though developed in collaboration with UMMA staff and artists, this class is primarily about politics and policy, not composition. Thus, assessment will be mostly on your theories of change (see below). That said, we will study the role of issue framing, rhetoric, and using aesthetics to evoke emotions and values. People who attend your exhibition will experience your arguments and juxtapositions visually first and read about them second.

Each piece of art will be two-dimensional and fill an 11 x 17-inch portrait frame (so that it can be printed and displayed).

Assignments

Assignment 1

The first assignment is a list of six policies you would like to see changed. The plan is that you will work on these for the rest of the semester, so pick causes for which you want to make art!

- – 3 organizations are working to create each policy change
- * 1 stable URL to an example of ephemera from each organization's effort to change that policy (a total of 18 examples of art or graphic design aimed at policy change)

The aim of this assignment is:

1. To start thinking about policy changes that you might work to advance
2. To start to understand the organizational vehicles (Week 8) operating in that political space
3. To generate a corpus of example ephemera aimed at policy change for the class; most future assignments will be about creating your own.

Assignment 1 Template

Policy 1: [Policy change]

- Organization 1a: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]
- Organization 1b: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]
- Organization 1c: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]

...

Policy 6: [Policy change]

- Organization 6a: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]
- Organization 6b: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]
- Organization 6c: [NAME]
 - Organization Home Page: [URL]
 - Example ephemera: [stable URL to .png or .jpg]

The Theory of Change

(or Resistance)

Theories of change or resistance to change should be grounded in the assigned readings and additional academic research. Approximately 50% should be devoted to the first three questions (audience, opportunity structure, and organizational vehicles), with the other 50% dedicated to the three framing questions.

Opportunity Structure

What opportunities for and constraints on policy change exist in the current political and

institutional context? Who stands to gain and who stands to lose from change? What are their relationships to those in formal positions of power? Do coalitions need to be reshaped? Do a certain number of people need to win or lose elections? What are the odds of that happening?

What “specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements, and historical precedents for social mobilization (Kitschelt 1986, p. 58) shape the political terrain?

Audience

Who is the audience? Who must the movement aim to mobilize or persuade?

What *venues* are targets?

Vehicles

What organizations serve as vehicles to translate movement demands to organized political activity and policy change? Describe the organizational structures, organizational cultures, or interorganizational environments within the movement (Woodly 2015, p.,35)

Politics is fundamentally an organized activity. Thus, theories of change must include the role of organizations. Are they choosing the right battles? Are they framing the issues in the most effective way? Is their theory of change (or resistance to change) realistic? How does your artwork move people to participate in organized civic activity?

Framing

How do activists attempt to reframe the issue?

1. What **deeply-held values** does the frame evoke? How so?
2. What social **identities** does the frame mobilize or demobilize? How so? Is there *identity work* (Woodly 2015, p. 37) being done?
3. How does the frame undermine key premises or logics of **competing frames** and opposing arguments?

Formatting requirements

All drafts (excluding the final version printed for the exhibit) must have a word count.

All drafts (excluding the final version printed for the exhibit) must have footnotes to sources, including both research from the assigned readings and support for any factual claims you make.

I expect the annotated bibliographies to grow significantly as you respond to critiques, bolster your argument, and respond to possible counter-arguments.

An “annotated bibliography” in footnotes means two things:

1. Bibliography means that it cites factual claims that are not common knowledge, including the title, author, year, and a hyperlink to the source wherever possible. References do not count toward the word limit and should be single-spaced. References must be hyperlinked wherever possible. Please try to link to stable public URLs. For journal articles, DOI URLs are best (e.g., <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026619858874>), then some other stable repository like JSTOR or the publisher’s web page (e.g., <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7t5st> or <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1086026619858874>) if you can’t find the DOI URL. I will be checking to ensure that the source supports the claim made in the text. Fabricated sources are unacceptable, and the relationship between claim and evidence is critical.
2. Annotated means that it **may** include any additional context to help your reader understand why this source is important or why it supports the claim. If these are obvious, there is no need to annotate. Annotation is optional. It allows you to elaborate in ways you cannot in the tight word limit of the main essay.

Use footnotes for annotated bibliographies to make it easier for your peer reviewers, me, and future editors to connect what you say in the essay to the citation. If your exhibition is published, citations will likely take the form of hyperlinks, perhaps with endnotes or margin notes for some online publications.

Revisions Spreadsheet

Responding to comments: Each time you submit your revised exhibition, you must include a Google sheet detailing your thoughtful responses to all of the comments you have received thus far. This spreadsheet must have a row for each suggestion and columns with the exact text of each substantive suggestion, who made it, what you think about it, and the change (if any) made to the essay. This is your opportunity to show your work in doing the revision.

For non-substantive comments, you may paraphrase:

For example:

- If I had a bunch of spelling and grammar notes, I don’t need a line for each one. Just saying “Grammar” | “All fixed” on one line is fine. (But please use a grammar checker.)
- If I told you that something was factually incorrect, you don’t need to include my exact words; just something like “Revise description of X” is fine.

This spreadsheet will grow longer as you receive more suggestions from me and your peers.

You must share this spreadsheet with me each time you resubmit your revised essay(s). Put a link to your Google Sheet at the top of your essay. A large part of your grade is how you

respond to feedback, so I will use this spreadsheet as something like a rubric to assess your thoughtful engagement with my feedback and your peer reviews.

It is up to you whether you want to share this spreadsheet with your peer reviewers. Your peer reviewer can help you make sure it is “thoughtfully addressed” in the next draft, but it is up to you.

Peer Reviews

My expectation for the peer review is a significant and thoughtful engagement with the piece’s ideas, as well as detailed notes on the writing (similar to what I will you all in our meetings). This is an exercise in constructive critique, so there must be suggestions for improvement.

Your peer review will primarily take the form of a video of you reading and reacting to their entire assignment AND a transcript of the the recording. You may edit the video and transcript, but it must include you reading every word they wrote and commenting on every image they provided.

How to submit your review

Using Canvas

You can use the [Screen Capture Feedback Feature](#)

More on how to do this:

- [New in Canvas: Screen Capture Feedback Feature - MIT Sloan](#)

Assignment comments

 2

Add a comment

  NEW  Submit

Download submission comments

Using Zoom

You can also use Zoom. The benefit is that you can make a transcript at the same time and can edit the video. The downside is that it takes an extra step to upload.

You should be able to share a Google Drive link or attach a file in the “Comments for this Attempt” bar on Canvas.) Make sure to submit it in both places. The assignment upload goes to me so that you get credit for the assignment. The “Comments for this attempt” make it available to your colleague.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Giving helpful critiques is a nuanced art, and I am happy to talk it through with you.

Tips on peer reviews

From [Pedagogy in Action](#):

- Before you even make your first comment, read the document all the way through.
- Point out the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the document.
- Offer suggestions, not commands.
- Editorial comments should be appropriate and constructive. There is no need to be rude. Be respectful and considerate of the writer’s feelings.

- Be sure that your comments are clear and text-specific so that your peer will know what you are referring to (for example, terms such as “unclear” or “vague” are too general to be helpful).
- As a reader, raise questions that cross your mind, points that may not have occurred to your peer author.
- Try not to overwhelm your peer with too much commentary. Follow the feedback form and the issues you are supposed to address.
- Be careful not to let your own opinions bias your review (for example, don’t suggest that your peer completely rewrite the paper just because you don’t agree with his/her point of view).
- Reread your comments before passing them on to your peer. Make sure all your comments make sense and are easy to follow.
- Avoid turning your peer’s project into your project.