

# IMGD 480X: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, INTERACTIVE MEDIA, AND GAMES

## C Term 2015

MR 2-3:50 PM  
Kaven Hall 204

Instructor: Dr. Alexandrina Agloro  
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Office Hours: Monday 11AM-12PM; Thursday 1-2 PM; or by appointment, SL 208

### Course Description:

*“There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns” – Octavia Butler*

This course examines interactive media and games’ intersections with contemporary social movements. How are games well suited to shift worldviews and influence popular opinions? How are theories of social change in alignment with creative media making? Students will examine interdisciplinary art forms ranging from games to speculative fiction to art installations in order to understand art’s role in contemporary social movements. Students will also read and examine critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, and postcolonial literature in order to understand how and why social movements take place.

This course takes place in three parts: theory, case study analysis, and media workshop. Class time each week will be broken up into two sections. For the first portion of class, students will gain an understanding and discuss readings and theory pertinent to media and social movements. The second portion of class will be spent examining social change-oriented interactive media and games. As students are responsible for creating three separate media projects during course, portions of class time will be spent in hands-on media workshops learning and refining relevant media making skills.

### Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the foundations of social movements
- Identify intersections of art, politics, and interactive media
- Develop their own analysis of interactive media and games as facets of culture
- Analyze interactive media and games as case studies and verbalize critique
- Utilize media-making skills to create and produce their own media interventions

### Grading:

*Attendance and Participation:* 10%

*Speculative Fiction Story or Graphic Novel Assignment:* 30%

*Podcast Assignment:* 30%

*Multimedia Presentation:* 30%

### **Class Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and participation are requirements for passing this course. More than two unexcused absences will result in grade penalty. Valid excuses include illness and religious observances. This class will be most successful, and you will get the most out of it, if we work together as a group. This means the honest and thoughtful sharing of our ideas. The portion of your grade based on participation will reflect not how many times you speak in class, but how you share in developing a lively and respectful conversation. Thoughtful participation can take many forms—expressing your own ideas, asking a question, critiquing the day’s reading, drawing connections, and respectfully challenging the ideas of other students and the instructor. Reading quizzes will be instituted if it becomes evident that students are not reading.

### **Project #1: Speculative Fiction Story or Graphic Novel Assignment**

The first course project is the creation of a speculative fiction story or graphic novel. Students can choose to either write a short story or create a short graphic novel based on their own independent creation. We will spend the first few weeks of class reading about how to write/create speculative fiction. Stories will be around 5 pages in length.

### **Project #2: Podcast Assignment**

Students will create a short podcast about an assigned prompt. There will be 2 versions: a rough cut due **February 8**, and a final version due **February 18**. There will be an in-class workshop to teach the basics of recording voice and audio.

### **Project #3: Multimedia Presentation**

The multimedia presentation is the culminating project for this course. Throughout the term students will examine various case studies of interactive media and game interventions for social change. The multimedia presentation is your chance to imagine your own interactive media and/or game intervention and present it to the class. You don’t have to create the entire media piece or map out all the logistics—your job is to just imagine how you would create something to intervene in a social issue. What is the issue/community/topic involved in your media intervention? What are the interactive components? Where do you foresee challenges and opportunities? Presentations must have a multimedia component and include elements such as: Prezi, Scalar, Twine, video, audio, animation.

### **Fair Use and Citation Guidelines**

WPI asserts that its use of media within courses is covered under Fair Use, since it is educational in nature. All projects created by students will need to consider copyright and fair use, and must include academically-appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

WPI seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and these obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid

using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Please inform me if you have a disability or other condition that might require some modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information contact the Office of Disability Services at [disabilityservices@wpi.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@wpi.edu).

### **Writing Center**

Located on the first floor of Daniels Hall (Room 116), the Writing Center is a valuable resource for helping you improve as a writer. Writing Center tutors are your peers (other undergraduate and graduate students at WPI) who are experienced writers themselves and who enjoy helping others tackle thinking and writing problems. Although a single tutoring session should never be seen as a quick fix for any writing difficulty, these sessions can help you identify your strengths and weaknesses, and teach you strategies for organizing, revising, and editing your course papers, projects, and presentations. Writing Center services are free and open to all WPI students in all classes, and tutors will happily work with you at any stage of the writing process (early brainstorming, revising a draft, polishing sentences in a final draft). Visit the Writing Center website to make an appointment.

### **Email**

I check email regularly Monday-Friday, 9 AM-7 PM and intermittently on the weekends. Expect I will respond within 24 hours, if I don't and it's pressing, email me again. Students are responsible for reading and replying appropriately to emails sent from the instructor in a timely fashion. Please forward emails from your school email address to the one you check regularly- I will be emailing you at your school email address.

Facebook Policy: I do not accept friend requests from my students on Facebook while the course is in session. After the semester is over, you may friend request me (I will never request you- that crosses an inappropriate boundary), and I will add you, but on a limited profile view basis, as is appropriate for instructor/ student relationships.

### **Course Texts:**

- *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction From Social Justice Movements*. (2015) Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown (Eds.) AK Press.
- *Unflattening*. (2015) Nick Sousanis. Harvard University Press.
- *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*. (2014) Jeff Chang. St. Martin's Press.

### **Optional Texts:**

- *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*. (1999) Emma Pérez. Indiana University Press.
- *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*. (2012) Grace Lee Boggs with Scott Kurashige. UC Press.

**\*\*All other readings are available on myWPI or e-book through the library.\*\***

*Note: This syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of the instructor.*

## COURSE OUTLINE

### PART 1: THE RADICAL IMAGINATION

#### Thursday January 14

Review syllabus, watch *American Revolutionary* in class

#### Monday, January 18 - NO CLASS WPI HOLIDAY

#### Thursday January 21

Assignment:

- Walidah Imarisha, "Rewriting the Future: Using Science Fiction to Re-Envision Justice" (<https://bitchmedia.org/article/rewriting-the-future-prison-abolition-science-fiction>)
- Selections from *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*
  - Introduction: Walidah Imarisha
  - The Only Lasting Truth: The Theme of Change in the Works of Octavia E. Butler
  - Outro: adrienne maree brown
  - + 1 other story of your choice from *Octavia's Brood*

#### Monday January 25

Assignment:

- Read *Unflattening*

#### Thursday January 28

Assignment:

- "Introduction" in *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* [e-book in library]
- Chapter 1- "Rainbow Power: Morrie Turner and The Kids" in *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*

### PART 2: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

#### Monday, February 1

**\*\*Speculative Fiction/Graphic Novel Due\*\***

Assignment:

- Listen: Another Round Episode 19: "Was That a Microaggression or Just Tuesday? (with Audie Cornish)" <https://soundcloud.com/anotherroundwithhebenandtracy/episode-19-was-that-a-microaggression-or-just-tuesday>

## Thursday February 4

Assignment:

- Chapter 5- “Color Theory: Race Trouble in the Avant-Garde” in *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*
- Chapter 12- “Demographobia: Racial Fears and Colorized Futures” in *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*

## Monday February 8

Assignment:

- James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation” in *The Fire Next Time*. 1963. [available on Google Books]
- Roxane Gay, “On The Death of Sandra Bland and Our Vulnerable Bodies” *New York Times*. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/opinion/on-the-death-of-sandra-bland-and-our-vulnerable-bodies.html>)
- Christopher Ingraham “Why White People See Black Boys Like Tamir Rice as Older, Bigger and Guiltier Than They Really Are” *Washington Post*. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/12/28/why-prosecutors-keep-talking-about-tamir-rices-size-36-pants/>)
- Timothy Williams and Mitch Smith, “Cleveland Officer Will Not Face Charges in Tamir Rice Shooting Death” *New York Times*. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/29/us/tamir-rice-police-shooting-cleveland.html>)

## Thursday February 11

**\*\*Rough Cut of Podcast Due\*\***

Assignment:

- Chapter 15: “Who We Be: Debt, Community and Colorization” *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*
- Epilogue: “Dreaming America” in *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*

## PART 3: INTERSECTIONAL MEDIA

### Monday February 15

Assignment:

- Read or Listen-“Star Wars and the American Imagination” by Mumia Abu-Jamal. In *Octavia’s Brood* or listen to him read: <http://boingboing.net/2015/12/30/mumia-abu-jamal-on-science-fic.html>
- Curtis Marez, “Cesar Chavez, The United Farm Workers, and the History of Star Wars.” In *Race After the Internet*. [available on MyWPI]

### Thursday February 18

NO CLASS ADVISING DAY

## Monday February 22

**\*\*Final Podcast Due\*\***

Assignment:

- Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Changes: Why The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted” *The New Yorker* (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell>)
- Michael Barthel and Elisa Shearer, "How do Americans Use Twitter for News?" (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/19/how-do-americans-use-twitter-for-news/>)
- Guillermo Gómez-Peña, “Notes From Technotopia: On The Cruelty Of Indifference, An Anti-Gentrification Philosophical Tantrum” [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v-nwi3b0OC0CAfHMBpp8soGQ8M\\_HefUKrjz6DsyFYU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v-nwi3b0OC0CAfHMBpp8soGQ8M_HefUKrjz6DsyFYU/edit)

## Thursday February 25

NO PHYSICAL CLASS- Prepare for multimedia presentations

## Monday February 29

Assignment:

- Grace Lee Boggs, “These Are the Times to Grow Our Souls” in *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism in the Twenty First Century* [available on MyWPI]
- Read *Never Alone* Reviews:
  - Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2014/12/29/never-alone-review-native-alaskans-explore-the-future-of-oral-tradition/>
  - Wired Review: <http://www.wired.com/2014/11/never-alone-review/>

## Thursday March 3

MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS