A poem can change the world. Or just one person’s life. What explains the connection between an artwork and an individual, a wider public, a world? This course serves as an introduction to a pathway of courses that investigate this question by examining the variety of ways in which the arts make and meet people. We explore different modes of engagement: from the creation of stories that help us imagine and understand the complex lives of others to the research that informs this process; from criticism and curation that deeply analyze artworks to arts in the service of political ends; from the institutions and markets that channel the arts to creative therapies and communal art-making processes that help heal wounds and envision new lives together. Different publics build and need different artworks, so we also look at how networks – cities, institutions, collectives – shape, deter, or support the arts. We think through what arts and engagement mean: who defines these ideas, to what ends, for what purposes, for how long? Case studies ground our broad investigation into how imagination and creativity connect to societal insight and action. The course also introduces students to the variety of theory, practice, and experience in the arts in which New School faculty are engaged.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the ways in which the arts are linked to social, political, economic, urban and demographic forces.
- Build a varied, nuanced understanding of what “engagement” may encompass (i.e., imagination, research, criticism, politics, therapy, etc.).
- Introduce students to the variety of theory, practice, and experience in the arts in which New School faculty are engaged.
- Prepare students for more advanced courses in this curricular area by introducing modes of engagement, varieties of publics, and different definitions and examples of creativity and expression.

**READING AND MATERIALS**

The required reading and materials are available on Canvas and are compiled by week. To access the materials directly, log on to canvas.newschool.edu with your New School user name and password.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reflection Paper (25%)**: Write a 5pg paper that looks at a personal experience with the arts through the lenses of moral imagination, imagination of the future, or social research. **Due October 1**.

**Workshop Response (20%)**: Write a 3pg response to the workshop by looking at one of the works by Fred Wilson in the New School Art Collection. Think about the choice of the artwork, its placement, and how you might curate the piece. **Due October 22**.

Fred Wilson, *X, from Exit Art portfolio “TANTRA”* (2005), 3rd Fl. 66 W. 12th St.

Fred Wilson, *Untitled (Pride and Prejudice)* (1993), Lobby by Kellen Gallery, 2 W. 13th St.
Defining a Community (20%): With your final project in mind, write 2-3 pgs about the community the artwork engages. Think about how it is defined, what forces provide stability and instability, the benefits and drawbacks of grouping together, and how the arts intervene in these questions. Due November 19.

Final Project (35%): In groups, we will work together to define a final project that connects the arts to social engagement. This could include making something, conducting research, interviews, or defining a community project. We will work throughout the semester on defining groups, common interests, and possible results. Due December 15.

CLASS POLICIES
Attendance: All credit students are required to attend class each week. Your grade for the course as a whole will be lowered one step upon 2 absences (i.e., from B to B-). Three or more absences will result in an automatic failure of the class.

Lateness: If you are more than ten minutes late to a class it will count as an absence. Late papers will not be accepted and no incompletes given.

Cell Phones + Laptops: Cell phone and laptop use is prohibited at all times in the classroom. Turn them OFF before class. The exception to the laptop rule is students who can provide documentation of a learning disability that requires the use of their laptops.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism -- the use of another person’s words or ideas in any academic work -- 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. For information on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should visit the New School Learning Center.

Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Libraries. The New School Library offers frequent research workshops for students, the day, time, and location of which are posted to the Library webpage (http://library.newschool.edu/events/) each semester.

Learning Center. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the academic services offered by the university, including help with writing, math, and ESL. The center is located at 66 W. 12 St., 6th floor. To make an appointment, you can e-mail the center at learningcenter@newschool.edu, call 212.229.5121, or schedule an appointment through Starfish (located under Services). For further information, please visit the Learning Center web site: www.newschool.edu/learning-center/

Disabilities. In keeping with the university’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. Students requesting any accommodations will need to meet with Jason Luchs, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. All conversations will be kept confidential. Mr. Luchs’s office is
located at 80 Fifth Ave, 3rd Floor (luchsji@newschool.edu, 212.229.5626 x3135). You may also access more information at http://www.newschool.edu/studentservices/disability/

CLASS SCHEDULE
(Related public events at The New School are noted in italics. Your participation is not required but encouraged.)

Week 1
Aug 27
Introduction
Reading: Zadie Smith, “Some Notes on Attunement” (2012)
Visit exhibit “Offense + Dissent: Image, Conflict, Belonging,” Kellen Gallery

Week 2
Sept 3
Moral Imagination
How do the arts connect to people? With what purposes?
Guest: Tim Quigley, Associate Professor of Visual Studies
Readings: Iris Murdoch, “The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited” excerpt (1959)
Martha Nussbaum, “Cultivating Humanity and World Citizenship” (2007)
Case Study: Colm Tóibín, “A Priest in the Family,” Mothers and Sons (2006)

Week 3
Sept 10
Imaginations of the Future
How do the arts imagine conceptions of society?
Guest: Margarita Gutman, Associate Professor of International Affairs
Case Study: Buenos Aires

Week 4
Sept 17
Arts as Social Research
How do the arts form research into society?
Reading: Modris Eksteins, Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age (1989): Prologue, ch. 1
Julia L. Foulkes, “Seeing the City: The Filming of West Side Story” (2014)
Case Study: The New School and modernism

Sept 24
NO CLASS—Rosh Hashanah

Week 5
Oct 1
Arts as Politics
How do the arts serve political purposes?
Case Study: Leni Riefenstahl
Assignment Due: Reflection Paper

Week 6
Oct 8
Criticism
How are the arts elucidated for a public?
Readings: Arthur Danto, After the End of Art (1998); introduction
Arlene Croce, “Discussing the Undiscussable,” *New Yorker* (1994)

**Case Study:** Bill T. Jones, *Still/Here* (1994)

### Week 7

**Preparation for Workshop**

**Oct 15**  
**Reading:** Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic* (2014)  
**Watch:** Kara Walker on Her Artistic Process  
http://youtu.be/lGZ7ijiCWOQ?list=FLSPi8tF5fp8yH6hv0MBmDlw  
**Listen:** *This American Life* Episode #527: 180 –Act 1: “Seeing the Forest For the Little Trees” (Begins at minute 6:43)  
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/527/180-degrees

**Fri, Oct 17**  
**2-5pm**  
**Guest:** Piper Anderson, Arts Activist and Educator

**Oct 20**  
*Cultural Boycotts, Vera List Center, The New School*

### Week 8

**Curation**

**Oct 22**  
**What are the ethics of curatorship?**  
**Guest:** Carin Kuoni, Director of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics  
Ivan Karp and Fred Wilson, “Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums,” *Thinking About Exhibitions* (1996)  
**Case Study:** Fred Wilson at The New School  
**Assignment Due:** Workshop Response

### Week 9

**Creative Arts Therapy**

**Oct 29**  
**What are the healing powers of the arts interpersonally?**  
**Guest:** Louise Montello, Assistant Professor of Creative Arts and Health  
**Readings:** Peter Renshaw, “Being in Tune: Seeking Ways of Addressing Isolation and Dislocation Through Engaging in the Arts” (2013)  
**Case Study:** Music Therapy

### Week 10

**Communities 1**

**Nov 5**  
**How do the arts foster or disrupt communities?**  
**Guest:** Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, Assistant Professor of Urban Studies  
**Readings:** Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another* (2002): ch. 5

**Case Study:** Seward Park Urban Renewal Area

**Nov 6-9**  
*Expressive Arts Conference, The New School*

**Week 11**  
**Nov 12**  
How do the arts foster or disrupt communities?

*Guest:* Ricardo Montez, Assistant Professor of Performance Studies


Alan Berubé, “How Gay Stays White and What Kind of White It Stays” (2001)


**Nov 14-15**  
*Creative Time Summit (Live Streaming and Events)*

**Week 12**  
Networks

**Nov 19**  
What group formations structure the arts’ creation, impact, meaning?


Harold Rosenberg, “Tenth Street: A Geography of Modern Art” (1959)

*Case Study:* Arts in NY in 1950s (Abstract Expressions, NY Poets, Beats)

*Assignment Due:* Defining a Community

**Nov 26**  
NO CLASS—Thanksgiving

**Week 13**  
Institutions

**Dec 3**  
How do institutions structure value, access to the arts?


*Case Study:* Lincoln Center and BAM

**Week 14**  
Policy

**Dec 10**  
How does the government intervene (or not) in the arts?


Case Study: Copyright and intellectual property debates

**Dec 12**  
*Event commemorating the 20th anniversary of the landmark exhibition “Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art”*

**Week 15**  
Final Projects Due

**Mon, Dec 15**