

## **DART 631|4 A : IMAGES OF RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE**

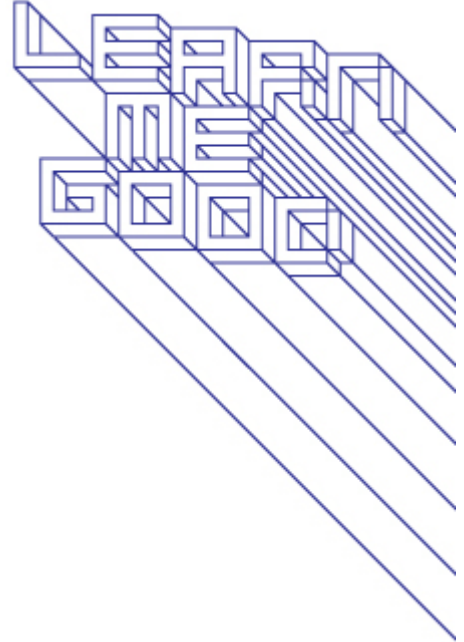
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**SESSION:** Winter 2023  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Christopher Moore  
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Design + Computation Arts  
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**DATE RANGE:** 09|01|23—17|04|23  
**SEMINAR:** Wednesdays 13:30—17:30  
**ROOM:** EV-6.735  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Email for an appointment  
**ZOOM:** <https://concordia-ca.zoom.us/j/5774917555>

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*“Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and in its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land. The growing society is there, yet it is also made and remade in every individual mind.”*

—Raymond Williams, “Culture is Ordinary” (1958)

As Raymond Williams expresses in his seminal essay on cultural studies, the interactions between people, objects, and imagery form the basis of personal and social identity. The clothes that we wear, the products we select in the grocery store, and even our morning rituals become codified representations of our values and systems of belief. Design artifacts and experiences weave complex narratives that connect politics, religion, ethics, and cultural histories into aesthetic concerns.

*“A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community. [...]”*

—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “Introduction: Rhizome.” *A Thousand Plateaux: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1980.

The emphasis in this course is on conceptual intent/ideation and material realization as it relates to the production of creatively focused projects. The course will take the form of weekly in-class

discussions, readings, presentations and group critiques of beta and finished works. The objective is to focus on analysis of various historical and contemporary socio-political movements and development of creative responses. You will be encouraged to investigate and use any techniques/technologies at your disposal, while also being open to radical alternatives. This course is designed to work towards developing a personalized toolkit of resources that relate to your own research explorations. These discoveries will be shared with your peers so that we can all benefit from the exposure to new knowledge, and a deeper understanding of each other's work. Above all, I want you to explore the limitless creative capabilities of digital (and analogue) media, and challenge yourself to produce thoughtful and intelligent projects.

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**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** Through a combination of self-directed studio practice, seminar discussions, and collaborative research, students will investigate design justice initiatives from both a historical and contemporary lens. Emphasis will be placed on independent publication practices, political and activist media production, and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Topics may address a range of critical perspectives related to the use of signs, icons, and visual symbols to convey ideas and communicate information. This includes graphic design, typography, illustration, and photography, as well as applications in information design, advertising, and electronic media.

**OBJECTIVES:** There will be two main laboratories for studying design issues:

1. **The classroom:** Included here are the lectures and contact time with the instructor and teaching assistant, as well as the preparations you make for class, including reviewing the weekly materials.
2. **The world around you:** Design is everywhere. One of the most important goals for prospective designers is to become sensitive to existing design, to the cultural circumstances that will inevitably govern your own designs, and to the human interactions that continually take place with the objects of everyday life and with the built environment. The only way to gain this sensitivity is to strive to improve your ability to perceive design with all your senses, as well as with your intellect.

**TEXTBOOKS:** There are no required texts for this course. However, weekly presentations, texts and additional online resources will be provided by the instructor (<http://www.learnmegood.ca>). All the course readings are available on the web, the course website, or via the Concordia Library. In general, you will be tasked with developing your own personalized bibliographies related to each assignment.

**MOODLE:** A Moodle forum for DART 631 has been created for information sharing/exchange and submission of assignments and class activities. Details on how to connect and utilize Moodle are located online at: <https://moodle.concordia.ca/moodle/>.

**PARTICIPATION:** What and how much you learn in this course is directly related to your participation in the seminar sessions. The classroom environment is an important tool for learning about methodologies and processes, and for developing critical and creative skills. Your most important contribution to this learning environment is your interest and active attention. Engage—use all your experience, knowledge and natural creativity to develop your skills and those of your peers. Your engagement will be directly proportional to your learning and success in this course.

I recognize that not all students are as comfortable as others in speaking regularly during group situations therefore, I will accept other activities as evidence of participation. For example, you can post an interesting link on Moodle, provide a

critique, design review, or media sample to share with your colleagues. I am always looking for new resources to update and refine the course delivery in subsequent iterations.

**E-MAILS:** In order for me to efficiently respond to questions, proper e-mail formatting is necessary. Please use appropriate subject titles, and indicate the course number when sending messages. For example, "DART 631: Assignment 2, Draft Text."

**ASSIGNMENTS:** As a key component of class participation, you will be asked to respond to various prompts over the course of the semester. These responses will test your comprehension of the fundamental concepts explored each week.

Assignments are to be completed on the dates when they are due—which always corresponds to our scheduled class sessions. All students must be prepared to present projects during the face-to-face sessions. Completed assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate Moodle link.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** You must correctly document in your assignments all ideas and media that have been incorporated in your projects, but have been borrowed from outside sources or from your colleagues. Failure to do so is considered as academic dishonesty and treated accordingly. For written papers, all sources used in the development of your work must be cited as references. Where text is borrowed from another source, quotation marks must indicate the citation and the source must be acknowledged appropriately. A useful overview and relevant links are available online via the Concordia Library site: <http://library.concordia.ca/help/citing>.

**LATE POLICY:** Projects submitted late will receive an automatic deduction of 5% per day unless prior arrangements have been negotiated. If you are struggling with the content, or having difficulties managing your time, please advise me. I am a compassionate individual, and am most often able to accommodate requests, if you provide a reasonable alternative.

You may also find it useful to schedule an appointment with the Student Success Centre. An advisor can work directly with you to improve your writing skills, review draft texts, and provide advice on time management or study skills: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/success/learning-support/writing-assistance.html>.

**PERSONAL SECURITY:** This course will strive for consistency with the University's policy on personal security and conduct, where it is acknowledged that freedom of expression and frank discussion of controversial issues are kept in balance with an individual's rights not to be subject to discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other forms of intolerance.

Harassment is a serious offence that includes but is not limited to sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behaviour need not be intentional to constitute harassment. Harassment occurs when an objective person in the position of an individual claiming harassment would find the conduct or comments would have the impact of creating a hostile environment. For further information, please consult section 17.30 of the Concordia University Calendar. Information and resources are also available through Concordia's Counseling Services and the University Chaplain.

**DEPARTMENT** The Department of Design + Computation Arts has established a standardized

**SYLLABUS:** Syllabus, addressing codes of conduct and academic regulations applicable to all courses. You are expected to become familiar with this document, which supersedes all other regulations identified in this course outline.

To view this document, visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/finearts/design/docs/dcart-undergraduate-syllabus.pdf>

**SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES**

All the projects developed in class must integrate the fundamental notions of sustainability: favouring local materials and production, reducing parts and costs, designing for disassembly, designing for repair and longevity, avoiding the use of toxic materials, glues, paints and finishes. These principles must be integrated in all the aspects of the design process: limiting the printing, using eco-friendly materials for the construction of preliminary maquettes and prototypes, and leaving the studio clean after class.

Students are expected to consider some of these principles in their final proposals. These principles are not mutually exclusive. They are intended to help you re-orient some of your design decisions.

1. Principle of Efficiency: reduce impacts (a life cycle approach)
2. Principle of Effectiveness: waste = food or principle of industrial ecology—don't use anything that cannot be metabolized back into the earth
3. Principle of Sufficiency: frugality, voluntary simplicity, etc.
4. Principle of Human Vitality: respect for people, and their skills
5. Principle of Cultural Vitality: respect for creativity and beauty
6. Principle of Holistic Thinking: whole systems thinking of the complex/interrelated implications of design
7. Equitable Accessibility: design for impaired, etc.
8. 4R's: rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle
9. Clean or at Least Renewable Energy Sources
10. Renewable Resources Only
11. Preservation: ensure there is a plan to preserve and maintain what you impact—requires an clear understanding of repercussions
12. Conservation: principle of using sparingly
13. Durability (long-life): second life design, emotional, interaction, attachment
14. Biomimicry or Nature Inspired Design: learn from the systems and constructions of nature, as this is inherently sustainable – but how to make the transformations sustainable?
15. Addressing Obsolescence: planned, economic, emotional or otherwise

**TERRITORIAL ACKN'MENT**

I/We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kaniien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

For further information, visit:

<https://www.concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html>

**EVALUATION:** 10% Readings / Participation / Attendance  
50% A Compendium of Change  
10% Oral Research Presentation

25% Chapbook  
05% Poster/Ephemera  
10% Reflective Summaries: Research Presentations  
40% Campaign for the Greater Good  
10% Overall Group Assessment  
25% Individual Contributions  
05% Reflective Statement

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## **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Please note that this is a tentative schedule of class activities—current information and syllabus updates may be viewed on the course website at <http://www.learnmegood.ca>. A more detailed bibliography and list of weekly resources appears at the end of this document. Please refer to this table for class preparation, due dates, homework, and supplementary resources.

### **AGENTS OF CHANGE / DESIGN FOR DEBATE**

#### **WEEK ONE—January 11**

##### **Design + Activism + Ethos**

Introduction: Course structure, philosophy, expectations, policies

Topics: Survey of historical and contemporary social justice movements and themes; personal design ethos

Activity: Define a 25-word personal design ethos statement and emblematic artifact

#### **WEEK TWO—January 18**

##### **HIV/AIDS (In)Action**

Topics: Representations of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s-1990s; history of ACT UP and Gran Fury; fine arts responses to the crisis

Assignment 1 Introduction: A Compendium of Change

Activity: Identification of subject for first assignment; preliminary research and individual consultations

Note: **DNE Deadline January 23**

#### **WEEK THREE—January 25**

##### **Printed Matter(s)**

Topics: Overview of independent publishing traditions and printed ephemera; relationship of graphics to activism

Activity: Preparation for research presentations; individual consultations

#### **WEEK FOUR—February 1**

##### **Research Presentations I**

Topics: Overview of research on socio-political movements; discussion and debate

Reflective Assignment: Write a brief reflection on the presentations delivered in the class session

Assignment Overview: Formatting research into chapbook collection

Activity: Group discussion and planning session; individual consultations

#### **WEEK FIVE—February 8**

##### **Research Presentations II**

Topics: Overview of research on socio-political movements; discussion and debate

Reflective Assignment: Write a brief reflection on the presentations delivered in the class session

Activity: Bookbinding workshop (TBA); individual consultations

**WEEK SIX—February 15**

**Work Session and Individual Consultations**

Activity: Continue development and layout for individual chapbook

**WEEK SEVEN—February 22**

**Assignment Presentations and Planning Session**

Topics: Reflection and critique of first assignment

Assignment Due: **A Compendium of Change – printed chapbook**

Activity: Group planning on format to compile the chapbooks

**READING BREAK—February 27-March 5**

**No Classes**

**WEEK EIGHT—March 8**

**Assignment Presentations and Critique**

Topics: Reflection and critique

Assignment Introduction: Campaign for the Greater Good

Assignment Due: **A Compendium of Change – poster/ephemera**

Activity: Group planning and assignment of tasks for final project

**WEEK NINE—March 15**

**Development Session and Group Meetings**

Activity: Group coordination and individual consultations

**WEEK TEN—March 22**

**Development Session and Group Meetings**

Activity: Group coordination and individual consultations

**WEEK ELEVEN—March 29**

**Development Session and Class Discussion**

Activity: Class coordination for public launch

**WEEK TWELVE—April 5**

**Launch of Public Campaign**

Assignment Due: **Public presentation of final Campaign for the Greater Good**

Activity: Observation and documentation of results

**WEEK THIRTEEN—April 12**

**Reflective Discussion**

Topics: Group discussion on the results of the final campaign

Assignment Due: **Individual reflective statement**

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**ASSESSMENT:**

*\* Please note that further detailed instructions will be outlined in the weekly presentations and class sessions.*

**A COMPENDIUM OF CHANGE (WORKING TITLE): A Collection of Historical and Contemporary Social Justice Movements**

**Value: 50% Overall:**

**10% Oral Research Presentation**

**10% Reflective Summaries: Research Presentations**  
**25% Chapbook**  
**05% Poster/Ephemera**

Overview:

For this assignment, you are asked to identify a social justice movement, institution, or organization to research. The subject can be drawn from any historical or contemporary era, but there should be a strong visual tradition associated with the group. Before committing to a final subject, you will outline several options to avoid duplication among your peers. By the end of this assignment, you will produce 4 outcomes:

Oral Presentation (Scheduled in weeks 4 and 5)

During either week 4 or 5, you will lead a presentation summarizing your research on the selected subject. In general, this should include a history of the organization or movement and identify some of the key individuals. Provide a synopsis of the key objectives of the group and the underlying social and/or political contexts which motivated these actions. What were the tensions and debates that led to public response and direct action? How did visual imagery assist in unifying and emboldening like-minded individuals? How did these visuals reflect the ideals of the organization? Finally, what were the positive and/or negative outcomes as a result of citizen action?

You will have approximately 45 minutes for your presentation and follow-up discussion (~20-30 minutes, with an additional Q&A). Advance readings may be assigned to the class as preparation for your talk. It is hoped that the discussion will aid and challenge you in refining your approach to the remaining assignment components. The purpose of this activity is to both establish the background research that will form the basis of your creative projects, as well as introduce your peers to new materials they may not have encountered in the past. Given that you will be designing an educational primer and introduction to your subject, consider how you might translate the material from your presentation into a printed chapbook (described below).

Reflective Summaries (Due in week 6)

Following each oral presentation, you will prepare a brief (~250 word) reflection on the content addressed in the class session. Focus on what resonated (or not) with the subject's objectives, tactics, and overall use of visuals. Were they effective in translating these actions, graphics, and slogans into significant social transformation? How might you have employed different strategies to achieve their stated goals? Ultimately, why did they succeed or fail in their mission?

You are advised to take notes during the presentations and prepare the summaries soon after the classes. Compile all of these responses into a single PDF document and upload to Moodle. You will be assessed on your engagement with the content and your thoughtfulness in reflecting upon and assessing the featured organization.

Limited Edition Printed Chapbook (Due in week 7)

The main outcome for this assignment is to distill the contents of your presentation into a compact chapbook (or pamphlet) that outlines the key principles and philosophies of your organization. You will create an original text that succinctly describes this material, illustrated with sample visual materials. To create consistency within the class, we will collectively decide certain standard design elements—size, printing, binding method, etc. It is up to the group to determine how much flexibility and freedom is to be afforded to individual book projects.

The end result will be a collection of titles that will be produced in a limited edition and collated into a collection. How individual projects will come together into a collection will be determined by the group. The concept is that every student will work individually, but we must come together as a whole, mimicking how activist groups organize towards a unified pursuit.

Each student will produce enough quantities to distribute amongst the class, plus 3 additional copies for archival purposes.

Poster or Piece of Ephemera (Due in week 8)

The final exercise in this assignment is to design a poster or other ephemeral item (t-shirt, placard, button, hat, sticker, etc.) that emulates the visual design and spirit of your selected subject. Having researched and studied your organization, you should be able to devise at least one slogan, logo, and/or other graphic mark that might easily have emerged from the movement. If you wish to consider this as a series, you are welcome to do so.

The final outcomes need not necessarily be printed, but depending on your medium of choice, it would be useful to provide a mock-up or digital simulation. For example, if you have chosen to design a protest sign, you may wish to locate a historic image from a rally and insert your design into the scene.

**CAMPAIGN FOR THE GREATER GOOD: A Self-Organizing Activist Visual Identity Program**

**Value: 40% Overall:**

**10% Overall Group Assessment**

**25% Individual Contributions**

**05% Reflective Statement**

Overview:

The final assignment for the semester is a collaborative class project modeled after the groups and movements explored during the class and research sessions. Together, we will devise a fictionalized activist group and design an impactful visual identity scheme and a series of promotional materials. To avoid ethics restrictions, this assignment does not involve external communities and is purely in the realm of the hypothetical. As such, the values and philosophy of the organization can be as realistic or speculative as the class prefers. The subject matter may be satirical or genuinely address “real world” scenarios.

Each student will be assigned distinct roles within the organization, mimicking how grassroots groups self-organize and develop a sense of community. These stakeholder positions may shift over the course of several weeks (eg. role-playing client/designer, political figures, media representatives), but the entire group must work cohesively to devise a comprehensive campaign.

The fictional group will define a mission statement or philosophy, as well as define a historical backstory. These texts will help inform the evolution of the project outcomes. The final result will involve a campaign “launch” that may take place in a physical location or be promoted online through social media and/or other another web presence (week 12). Consider hosting a virtual speakers series, a mini-protest activity, an exhibition, etc. Ensure that individuals have been tasked with observing and documenting the various actions and online activities.

Reflective Statement (week 13)

Following the launch of the campaign, you are asked to reflect upon the process of developing the fictional movement. What was successful interfacing with the public, and what were some of the successes and challenges presented in working with the group? How did this exercise better help you understand the social dynamics of an organization and the power of images in communicating values? Your text should be roughly 500 words and uploaded to Moodle.

**READINGS / PARTICIPATION / ATTENDANCE**

**Value: 10%**



Overview: Your active contributions to the learning environment will be observed on a weekly basis and assessed at the end of the semester. A regular attendance record, along with demonstrated engagement with the course materials and activities will be considered. Giving attention to your peers during presentations and critiques, providing suggestions for supplementary resources/examples, and participation in group discussions are vital contributions to facilitating a positive learning outcome for everyone in the course.

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## EVALUATION CRITERIA

In creative disciplines, the evaluation process is not always transparent or clearly stated. Multiple-choice and automated tests are easy to administer, but they cannot replicate the qualitative assessment necessary to judge a work of art or design. It is the instructor's role to determine the relative merit based upon multiple factors—some technical, some ethical, and others, aesthetic:

- Does the project meet the requirements, as stated in Assignment criteria?
- How much effort or engagement was involved in completing the project?
- Does the final work thoughtfully or provocatively comment on the chosen subject?
- Has the student progressed technically or conceptually in the development process?
- Does the work demonstrate an understanding of the creative and compositional principles discussed in the class sessions?
- Did the student make incremental progress on a week-to-week basis?
- Does the project demonstrate innovation, challenge, or take risks?
- Has the student exceeded the instructor's expectations?
- How closely does the work mirror professional/industry standards?

Having considered these factors, among others, the instructor must determine where the project should be placed within a given range for each criteria. The cumulative assessment of these factors is translated into a letter grade. For further granularity, please review the following general grade range descriptions:

**D-RANGE:**  
**[MARGINAL PASS]** The work is unsatisfactory. The student has unsuccessfully completed the project and/or has met only the most basic requirements. The work may exhibit only a passing resemblance to the criteria laid out for the project. The student may have diverged from the criteria without previous discussion with the instructor. The student may have submitted a project from another course or situation, and claimed it to be new work. The work is rife with mistakes, or is possibly unplayable/unreadable without expert technical intervention and/or a very forgiving eye. The work is incoherent or does not successfully or meaningfully communicate a concept or theme. The student is not progressing in their development. The work is below average in the opinion of the instructor.

**C-RANGE:**  
**[SATISFACTORY]** The work is acceptable. The student has made an earnest attempt to fulfill criteria laid out for the project. The student is not progressing well in their development. The student has not taken sufficient time to internalize, understand, own, and interpret the criteria for the project. The student may be unclear on the criteria for the project and has not asked for clarification from colleagues or the instructor. The student may have diverged substantially from the criteria without previous consultation with the instructor. The student has not referenced secondary sources of information or experience outside the classroom. The work contains too many technical errors – i.e. poor transitions, inappropriate pacing or conceptual structure, failure to acknowledge quoted material, scripting errors, audio problems, grammatical or spelling mistakes, too

short or substantially too long. The work is average and acceptable in the opinion of the instructor.

**B-RANGE:  
[VERY GOOD]** The work is good. The student has made an earnest attempt to fulfill the criteria laid out for the project. The student is progressing in their development. The student has taken sufficient time to internalize, understand, own, and interpret the criteria for the project, with notable success. The student may have referenced a few secondary sources of information or experience in an interesting way. The student's interpretation of the criteria may be somewhat lacking. The interpretation may lack sufficient personal voice or originality; it may be unsubtle. The work may experiment earnestly without huge success. The student may have diverged slightly from the criteria without previous consultation with the instructor. The work may contain a few technical errors – i.e. poor transitions, inappropriate pacing or conceptual structure, failure to acknowledge quoted material, scripting errors, audio problems, grammatical or spelling mistakes, too short or substantially too long. The work is generally good in the opinion of the instructor.

**A-RANGE:  
[OUTSTANDING]** The work is excellent. The student has fulfilled the criteria laid out for the project through active engagement while demonstrating a personal voice. The student has referenced many secondary sources of information or experience in an interesting way. The student has internalized all project criteria and offers supplementary ideas that support the criteria, or skillfully deconstructs the established criteria in a creative way. The student is progressing at an above-average rate. The project is at least almost totally free of technical errors. The project probably demonstrates earnest and successful experimentation.

**A+:** The student has fulfilled all criteria worthy of an A mark and has excelled beyond the instructor's expectations. The work approaches or attains the capacity of a professional in the field. The work approaches suitability for publication or professional broadcast. The work represents substantial, innovative experimentation.