

POLS241: Political Design and Futuristics ***Tactical Media and Futures Jamming***

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Spring 2012
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Saunders 632

Saunders 244
Office hours: TR 1–1:30
TR 1:30–2:45

Course Description

The primary task of the futurist is to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch phenomena that escapes sensation in the present. As Futures Studies centers on the study of *images* of the future and not predicting the future, futurists must, at times, think and work like an engineer, architect, designer, chef, and artist. Focusing on the development of social and political alternative images of the future, *POLS241: Political Design and Futuristics* builds on the foundational coursework of *POLS171: Introduction to Political Futuristics* and charts new territory in examining multi-sensory and aesthetic methods and theories for developing and implementing alternative and preferred futures scenarios, or more palpable visions of the future. Although students who have taken *POLS171* have an experiential and intellectual advantage, *POLS241* critically engages new material within the field and does not serve as a mere extension of *POLS171*. Consequently, previous knowledge of Futures Studies is not required for successfully completing this course.

During the first two weeks of the semester, we will review Futures Studies' methods and strategies with an emphasis on questions concerning sensation and mediation in evaluating and crafting political designs. Our aim is to explore the relation between consciousness, perception, and worldview by focusing on cultural, aesthetic, and scientific inquiries into the multi-sensory dimensions of human experience as a point of entry for analyzing the context for politics. During weeks three to seven, students will work in groups to craft scenarios, political designs, and media for 02030. In support of the final group presentation and project, we will study forms of tactical media, culture jamming, and affective futuring as modes of creative resistance and productive engineering towards alternative political ecologies both now and in the future(s). Throughout this section, we will examine various modes of alternative scenario development and futures artifacts through film, media, and texts in order to synthesize a theoretical and methodological framework for futures-based interventions. During the final eight weeks of the semester, students will have the chance to workshop and create and disperse experiential scenarios by and through various forms of media. The final weeks of the semester will focus on active engagement—literally, performing tactical media

and futures jamming based on their group's scenario for 02030.

In support of the final group presentations, the last section of the course will function as a futures-based Yes Lab (<http://yeslab.org>) with the express aim of enacting alternative scenarios in creative and experiential ways as a means to promote and stimulate political discourse and action. Students will work in groups on issues/movements/topics of their own choosing to create and deploy alternative artifacts and images as a means of engaging stakeholders on the issues at play in the political designs inherent to their alternative scenarios.



Course Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students should be able to:

- Exercise foundational knowledge about the field of Futures Studies
- Utilize and apply various Futures Studies methodologies
- Craft alternative and preferred social and political futures scenarios
- Conceptualize the place and function of aesthetic imagery and multi-sensory mediums within the field
- Critically examine trends and visions for better futures
- Express ideas and arguments clearly and effectively in written, oral, and multi-sensory aesthetic forms

Course Requirements

A portion of the readings and work for this course will be delivered through Laulima. If you are unfamiliar with this interface, please make the necessary arrangements during the first week of the semester. Your first online participation assignment requires you to login to Laulima and respond to the first discussion posting by stating that you "have read over the syllabus and agree to the terms and conditions presented within it."

<https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal>

Students are expected to comply fully and completely with the University of Hawaii's Student Conduct Code Policies and the Department of Political Science's policies and procedures, especially those concerning plagiarism.

http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/

Grading

Weekly Reading Responses	25%	250 points
Media Analysis	15%	150 points
Final Group Project and Presentation	35%	350 points
Attendance and Participation	25%	250 points

Weekly Reading Responses: Students will write 1-page (12-pt font, double spaced, 1 inch margins) response papers to the week's readings for the first 6 weeks of the semester starting in Week 2. These papers are due on Thursdays and cannot be turned in late or made up.

Media Analysis: Students will write a 3-page paper (see above) analyzing a work of art, film, play, protest signage, etc to examine the ways in which it mediates a political discourse. You may choose your object of examination, but clear it with me before you pick *Bambi* or something similar as there are certainly some things that I would prefer you not study. Due on the Thursday of Week 7.

Final Group Project & Presentation 30% – The class will be divided into four groups with each one responsible for developing and presenting an alternative futures scenario for 02030. Your group will develop the basic parameters of your scenario, and your task as a group is to present the political design of the scenario using multi-sensory aesthetics, including, but not limited to, film, drama, photographic slideshow, cooking demonstration, interpretive dance, etc. Ultimately, your group is responsible for finding a creative and engaging way to deploy tactical media related to various perspectives within your scenario. In order to receive full credit for this assignment, your group needs to complete 1) a 3-page scenario overview, 2) 5 media artifacts, and 3) a 30-minute in-class presentation.

Attendance and Participation – 30%

Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and online, via Lulima, Twitter, etc. We are going to use various forms of social media throughout the semester, including Facebook, Google+, and other sites, so if you're not much of a talker, you will have the chance to gain participation points (but don't be afraid to speak up in class). As such, this is one course where you will not get into trouble for taking in class, unless of course I sense that you're talking about the past! Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class session.



Course Calendar

Week 1 – Introductions, Syllabus, What is Futures Studies?

Dator, "Alternative Futures at the Manoa School"

Dator, "Laws of the Future"

Dator, "Futures Studies as Applied Knowledge"

Dator, "Society as a Social Invention"

Dator, "Notes on Futures Methods"

Week 2 – Futures is not History in Reverse!

Slaughter, "Environmental Scanning"

Colborn, "How Attitudes Shape Our Future"

Inayatullah, "Critical Futures Research"

Sweeney, "Futures is not History in Reverse"

Week 3 – Introduction to Tactical Media: Diagnosis/Prognosis

McLuhan, "Understanding Media"

selections from Duncombe, "Dream: Re-Imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy"

Lovink and Garcia, "The ABC of Tactical Media"

Klein, "No Logo"

Week 4 – To Jam or not to Jam: Is that a question?

Lasn, "Culture Jamming"

"A User's Guide to (Demanding) the Impossible"

Ramos, "Consciousness, Culture, & Communication of Foresight"

Rushkoff, "Program or be Programmed"

selections from Lanier, "You are Not a Gadget"

Week 5 – Complex media and Media complexes

Webb, "Representation in the consciousness Industries: art and the mass media"

Debord, "Society of the Spectacle"

Bloem, van Doorn, and Duivesteyn, "Me the Media: Rise of the Conversation Society"

Cubit, "Media Art Futures"

Week 6 – Art as Mediation as Distraction as Intervention

Banksy, "Banging Your Head Against a Wall"

Banksy, "Existencilism"

Exit Through the Gift Shop

Ranciere, "The Paradoxes of Political Art"

Bogard, "Distraction and Digital Culture" (<http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?>)

[id=131](#))

Clark, "Walter Benjamin: Theory of Distraction"

(<http://tomclarkblog.blogspot.com/2011/05/walter-benjamin-theory-of-distraction.html>)

Week 7 – Jamming the Future(s): Is it even possible to say "No" in a Yes Lab?

yesmen.org

occupywithaloha.com

Yes Men: Fix the World

Candy, Futures Jamming 101 (<http://futuryst.blogspot.com/2008/09/future-jamming-101.html>)

Walker, Implausible Futures for Unpopular Places

(<http://places.designobserver.com/feature/implausible-futures-for-unpopular-places/28738/>)

"Experiential Futures as Public Sociology"

Week 8 – Group Project Lab: Scenario Development

Jacobs & Statler, "Ambiguity at Work: Scenario Development Through Serious Play"

Dator, "Some Hints on Writing Scenarios of Preferred Futures"

Wright, "Scenarios as sensemaking"

Week 9 – Group Project Lab: Governance Design

Tunstall, "In Design We Trust: Design, Governmentality, and the Tangibility of Governance"

IFTF, "The Future is a High-Resolution Game"

Sweeney, "Structure (is all that) Matters: A Meditation on Programming versus Designing Governance"

Week 10 – 14 Group Project Lab: Making a Design Felt

Week 15 – 16: Presentations