

**OCCUPY EVERYTHING:
 Revolution in American Memory, 1791 - Occupy Wall Street
 J. Michelle Coghlan – University of Manchester**

Course Overview

This interdisciplinary third-year seminar explores the figure of revolution and the role of radical memory in American culture. Because the time of revolution is always “out of joint”—always looking backwards to 1776 and 1789 and forwards to the flash of the wished-for/ever-feared yet-to-come—our study proceeds on a loosely chronological approach that begins with two takes on revolution in contemporary U.S. culture: *Occupy: Scenes from Occupied America*, a collection of eyewitness accounts from NYC, and Christopher Nolan’s nightmarish vision of class warfare in *The Dark Knight Rises*. We then turn to the ways that nineteenth-century American writers and orators recollected the 1791 Haitian revolution as an abolitionist clarion call, a revenant of 1776, and a terrifying portent of antebellum slave revolt before exploring the ways that returning to the Paris Commune of 1871 allowed Americans to refashion their own revolutionary past even as it gave them a new road map for occupying revolution. We conclude our study by examining the aftershocks and promise of revolution in a variety of literary and cultural responses to the 1886 Haymarket bombing and the 1968 trial of the Chicago 8. In addition to situating literary texts within their wider historical contexts, our aim in this module is to link these cultural issues back to the larger question of the relationship between literary form and cultural memory, interrogating the ways that a variety of genre—among them, manifestoes, poetry, oratory, realist fiction, and film—mediate and refashion national narratives of, as well as debates on, revolution and the larger meaning of American identity and democracy. This research seminar also introduces students to a variety of relevant conceptual approaches to the study of media and cultural memory as well as radical forms and popular culture. Finally, it gives them the opportunity to hone their archival sleuthing skills in relevant digital archives and develop group presentations on their findings.

Assessments

Essay (3,000 words)	50%
Final Group Project (2,500 words)	35%
Participation	15%

(Participation is inclusive of: group presentation, 500-word article review, essay outline + annotated bibliography, 4 Diigo contributions, attendance & regular participation in seminar discussion)

OVERVIEW OF COURSE STRUCTURE

WEEK	TOPICS & READINGS
	PART ONE: OCCUPY WALL STREET FROM LEFT AND RIGHT
1	<p style="text-align: center;">Occupying the Present/Radical Pre-Occupations</p> <p>Introduction & Overview <i>In class screening:</i> Nicholas Mirzoeff, “Why I Occupy” (September 2012 <i>Public Culture</i> essay)</p> <p>Secondary Readings:</p>

	Michael Denning, “‘The Special American Conditions’: Marxism and American Studies” Harry Harootunian, “Remembering the Historical Present”
2	<p style="text-align: center;">Re-figuring the 99%</p> <p><i>The Dark Knight Rises</i> dir. Christopher Nolan (2012) <i>Occupy! : Scenes from Occupied America</i> (2012)</p> <p>Secondary Readings: Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular” David Harvey, “The Right to the City” & “#OWS: The Party of Wall Street Meets its Nemesis” Matthias Schwartz, “Pre-occupied: The Origins and Future of OWS” (online)</p>
	PART TWO: THE PROMISE & TERROR OF 1791
3	<p style="text-align: center;">Unthinkable Uprisings in the Age of Revolution</p> <p>Leonora Sansay, <i>A Secret History, or the Horrors of San Domingo</i> (1808)</p> <p>Secondary Readings: Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as Non-event” John Mac Kilgore, “Rites of Dissent: Literatures of Enthusiasm and the American Revolution” Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, “The Secret History of the Early American Novel: Leonora Sansay and the Revolution in Saint Domingue”</p>
	<i>Guided Collections and Archive Tour (People’s History Museum)</i>
4	<p style="text-align: center;">Re-possessing the Haitian Revolution</p> <p>Herman Melville, <i>Benito Cereno</i> (1855) William Wells Brown, “Toussaint Louverture” (1863)</p> <p>Secondary Readings: Anna Brickhouse, “The Writing of Haiti: Pierre Faubert, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Beyond” Jeannine Marie Delombard, “Salvaging Legal Personhood: Melville’s <i>Benito Cereno</i>.”</p>
	PART THREE: REMEMBERING THE COMMUNE
5	<p style="text-align: center;">Parisian Amazons & Visual Cultures of Sentiment & Sensation</p> <p>Sarah Piatt, “The Palace-Burner”; Edward King, “A Woman’s Execution.” Selected contemporary coverage of the Commune</p> <p>Secondary Readings: J. Michelle Coghlan, “Becoming an American in Paris: the Romance of the Commune in the 1890s” Russ Castronovo, “American Literature Internationale” Joshua Brown, Introduction to <i>Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of the Gilded Age</i> (e-book; available online through U of M Library)</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;">Radical Futures, Anarchic Archives</p> <p>Jack London, <i>The Iron Heel</i> (1908) Voltairine de Cleyre “The Commune is Risen” (1912)</p>

	<p>Secondary Readings: Jeffery Clymer, “‘This Firm of Men Killers’: Jack London and the Incorporation of Terrorism” Eugenia DeLemotte, “Refashioning the Mind: The Revolutionary Rhetoric of Voltairine de Cleyre” Kristin Ross, “Watching the Detectives”</p>
	PART FOUR: HAYMARKET MARTYRS & AFTERSHOCKS
7	NO CLASS (Essay outline + annotated bibliography due by email)
8	<p style="text-align: center;">Incendiary Speech & Subversive Print Cultures</p> <p>Lucy Parsons, “I am an Anarchist” (1886) <i>The Life of Albert Parsons</i> (1889) via <i>Social Book</i> platform Selected contemporary coverage of the Haymarket Trial</p> <p>Secondary Readings: Jeffery Clymer, “Imagining Terrorism in America: The 1886 Haymarket Bombing” Shelley Streeby, “Looking at State Violence: Lucy Parsons, José Martí, and Haymarket”</p>
	EASTER BREAK (3,000 WORD ESSAY DUE)
9	<p style="text-align: center;">Haymarket & American Memory</p> <p>W.D. Howells, <i>A Hazard of New Fortunes</i> (1890) Voltairine de Cleyre, “Anarchism and American Traditions” (1909)</p> <p>Secondary Readings: Sophia Forster, “Americanist Literary Realism: Howells, Historicism, and American Exceptionalism” Kristin Boudreau, “Elegies for the Haymarket Anarchists.”</p>
	PART FIVE: 1968 & THE SPIRIT OF '76?
10	<p style="text-align: center;">Making it New: Revolution and the Ends of History</p> <p><i>Chicago 10 : Speak Your Peace</i> dir. Brett Morgan Mario Savio, “An End to History” (1964) Joan Didion, “Slouching Towards Bethlehem” (1967)</p>
11	<p style="text-align: center;">Forms of Dissent & Backward Glances</p> <p><i>Punishment Park</i> dir. Peter Watkins (1971) Leslie Fiedler, “The Two Memories” (1968)</p>
12	<p>End-of-Term L3 Project Presentations (2,500 word Group Projects due in Week 14)</p>