

“The People”: Ideas and Images

BA Programs CPS + PPE | 2 credits, 4 ECTS

AY 2023-2024 | Winter term | Tue. 17:40-18:40 + Thu. 13:50-14:50

Instructor: Ulrich Meurer | meureru@ceu.edu

The instructor is available for individual questions after every class. You can also book additional OFFICE HOUR slots via email.

Access to all readings, web-resources and videos via MOODLE:

<https://ceulearning.ceu.edu/login/index.php>

Link for selecting a topic/date for your in-class IMPULSE (until Jan. 12, 2024 / see below: section on ‘assignments’):

<https://nuudel.digitalcourage.de/F1KeprvKXdw5xKkX>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since the advent of political philosophy, “the people” has been at the center of numerous models of sovereignty, state, and governance. And likewise, it has haunted cinema since the screening of the very first motion picture, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895). However, the term presents itself as highly variable: it can provide the basis for all types of democracy or form the ethnic body of nationalism, it is linked to class conflicts, populisms, and (anti-)colonial struggles. Thus, voyages to the land of the people, claims political theorist Jacques Rancière, may return to the origins, descend to the underworld or lead to a Promised Land . . .

One reason might be that “the people” is not a given entity but always dependent on strategies of visualization and representation – both in the political and aesthetic sense. Therefore, the course explores the many meanings of “the people” in seminal texts by, amongst others, Karl Marx, Chantal Mouffe, Peter Kropotkin, Judith Butler, and Frantz Fanon. At the same time, we will see how the masses of proletarians, protesters, revolutionaries, subalterns have been imagined over the last 130 years of fictional and documentary filmmaking: the course links political philosophy to cinematic representation – and cinematic philosophy to political representation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be introduced to ► seminal historical and current concepts of “the people” in modern political theory. They will get insight into ► representations of the people in cinematic screen media. They will ► make creative connections between political philosophy and forms of visual representation. They will develop their skills in the ► systematic interpretation of theoretical texts and image sources. They will learn ► how to operate with images in the humanities and social sciences. Participants will train their ► ability to structure, formulate, and evaluate arguments through in-class discussions, short presentations, and written papers. They will have the opportunity to ► apply their practical knowledge in the form of audio/visual works.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE + READINGS:

- ▶ Participants are expected to prepare mandatory readings and audiovisual resources (printed in black) prior to the respective class.
- ▷ Grey font indicates optional readings/material: it serves as additional basis for presentations, for a further exploration of the topic and as inspiration for the final papers ...

0. The Word 'People' (Intro)	
WEEK01 09.01. + 11.01.	COURSE TOPIC + organizational issues and assignments ▶ Alain Badiou: "Twenty-four Notes on the Uses of the Word 'People'", in: Alain Badiou et al.: <i>What is a People?</i> New York: Columbia University Press 2016, 21-31. ▷ Erika Balsom: "The Crowd Is Dead, Long Live the Crowd", in: <i>Cinema Scope Magazine</i> 85 (Dec. 22, 2020): https://cinema-scope.com/features/the-crowd-is-dead-long-live-the-crowd/
I. The Media of the People	
WEEK02 16.01.	THE PEOPLE SPEAKS (AND SINGS) ▶ Mladen Dolar: <i>A Voice and Nothing More</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2006, 104-124. ▷ Jacques Rancière: <i>Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1999, 1-3; 21-42.
18.01.	▶ <i>Sous les toits de Paris</i> (René Clair, 1930) [movie accessible via MOODLE]  ▷ Christopher Faulkner: "René Clair, Marcel Pagnol, and the Social Dimension of Speech", <i>Screen</i> 35/2 (Summer 1994), 157-170.
WEEK03 23.01.	THE PEOPLE REPRESENTS ITSELF (POLITICALLY AND VISUALLY) ▶ Judith Butler: "'We, the People': Thoughts on Freedom of Assembly", in: Alain Badiou et al.: <i>What is a People?</i> New York: Columbia University Press 2016, 49-64.
25.01.	▶ <i>Circling the Square / Κυκλώνοντας το Τετράγωνο</i> (Zanmanfu, 2011): https://vimeo.com/31599646 ▶ <i>Disobedience / Ανυπακοή</i> (Zanmanfu, 2011): https://vimeo.com/26969029 ▶ <i>Austerity Measures</i> (Guillaume Cailleau, Ben Russell, 2011): https://vimeo.com/32502282 ▶ <i>The Reconciliation / Blitzen#1</i> (Clara Bausch, 2011): https://vimeo.com/66051352  ▷ Mandy Rose: "Making publics: Documentary as do-it-with-others citizenship", in: M. Boler, M. Ratto (eds): <i>DIY Citizenship: Critical Making and Social Media</i> . Boston: MIT Press 2014, 201-212. ▷ Ulrich Meurer: "The People Is Missing: Laboratory Athens & Minor Cinema", Paper for the <i>3rd Conference on Contemporary Greek Film Cultures</i> "Strategies of the Documentary", Vienna, 16-18 May, 2018.

II. The 'Nature' of the People

WEEK04
30.01.

THE PEOPLE MAKETH WAR

- ▶ Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press 1998, 82-95; 111-122.
- ▷ Jeremy Kleidosty: *An Analysis of Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan*. London, New York: Routledge 2017, 9-19; 34-43.

01.02.

- ▶ *The First Purge* (Gerard McMurray, 2018)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL29y0ah92w&t=1s> [Trailer – full movie can be accessed via MOODLE]



- ▷ Jared L. Hausmann: "Purge-ian Jurisprudence", in: *University of La Verne Law Review* 36/1 (2014), 61-74.

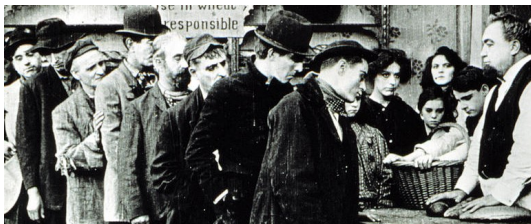
WEEK05
06.02.

THE PEOPLE HOLDS STILL

- ▶ Jules Michelet: *The People*. London: Longman, Brown Green, and Longmans, 1846, 17-29; 72-88.
- ▷ If you like: pp. 1-7 (top); 121-126.
- ▷ Bettina A. Lerner: "Michelet, Mythologue", in: *Yale French Studies* 111: Myth and Modernity (2007), 61-72.

08.02.

- ▶ *A Corner in Wheat* (D. W. Griffith, 1909)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By6qokGa7FE>



- ▷ Sergej M. Eisenstein: "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today", *Film Form. Essays in Film Theory* (ed. Jay Leyda), New York, London: Harvest HBJ 1949, 195-257 (esp. 235-257).

III. Contact with the People

WEEK06
13.02.

THE PEOPLE EXTRA MUROS

- ▶ Eric Wilson: „Criminogenic Cyber-Capitalism: Paul Virilio, Simulation, and the Global Financial Crisis“, in: *Critical Criminology* 20 (2012), 249–274.
- ▷ Jean Baudrillard: "The Horizon of Disappearance", in: *The Perfect Crime*. London, New York: Verso 1996, 35-44.

15.02.

- ▶ *Cosmopolis* (David Cronenberg, 2012):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvYyKTZtUG0> [Trailer – full movie can be accessed via MOODLE]



<p>WEEK07 20.02.</p>	<p>THE DISCOVERED PEOPLE</p> <p>► <i>Europa '51</i> (Roberto Rossellini, 1952) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNO919eqx2M</p> 
<p>22.02.</p>	<p>► Jacques Rancière: <i>Short Voyages to the Land of the People</i>. Stanford: Stanford UP 2003, 1-5; 105-134. ▷ Jacques Rancière: <i>Staging the People: The Proletarian and His Double</i>. London, New York: Verso 2011, 7-19.</p>
<p>WEEK08 27.02.</p>	<p>THE PEOPLE WITHOUT SUBJECTS</p> <p>► Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari: <i>A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia</i>. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press 1987, 239-252. ▷ Niels Werber: "Sense per Simplicity: Ant Societies as a Self-description Formula of Society", <i>MLN</i> 130/3 (April 2015), 430-446. ▷ Peter Kropotkin: <i>Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution</i>. Oakland: PM Press 2021, 29-47 (esp. 29-40).</p>
<p>29.02.</p>	<p>► <i>Phase IV</i> (Saul Bass, 1974) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bcs3_b3VXSU [Trailer – full movie can be accessed via MOODLE]</p> 
<p>IV. Populisms</p>	
<p>WEEK09 05.03.</p>	<p>THE GEOMETRIC PEOPLE</p> <p>► Siegfried Kracauer: "The Mass Ornament", in: <i>The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essays</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1995, 75-86. ▷ Walter Benjamin: Epilogue from "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in: <i>Illuminations</i> (ed. Hannah Arendt), New York: Schocken 1968, 241-242. ▷ Martin Jay: "'The Aesthetic Ideology' as Ideology; Or, What Does It Mean to Aestheticize Politics?", in: <i>Cultural Critique</i> 21 (Spring 1992), 41-61.</p>
<p>07.03.</p>	<p>► <i>Triumph des Willens</i> (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLYWhsVccwk [full movie can also be accessed via MOODLE]</p>  <p>▷ Brigitte Peucker: „The Fascist Choreography: Riefenstahl’s Tableaux“, in: <i>Modernism/Modernity</i> 11/2, April 2004, S. 279-297.</p>

<p>WEEK10 12.03.</p>	<p>THE SPLIT PEOPLE</p> <p>► <i>Fahrenheit 11/9</i> (Michael Moore, 2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBJ64uVaovA [full movie can also be accessed via MOODLE]</p> 
<p>14.03.</p>	<p>► Chantal Mouffe: <i>For a Left Populism</i>. London, New York: Verso 2018, 13-23; 44-60. ▷ Ernesto Laclau: "Populism: What's in a Name?", in: Francisco Panizza (ed.): <i>Populism and the Mirror of Democracy</i>. London, New York: Verso 2005, 32-49.</p>
<p>V. The People Fights</p>	
<p>WEEK11 19.03.</p>	<p>THE (POST-)COLONIAL PEOPLE</p> <p>► <i>La battaglia di Algeri</i> (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpn4Htrfv88 [full movie can also be accessed via MOODLE]</p>  <p>▷ Valérie Orlando: "Historiographic Metafiction in Gillo Pontecorvo's <i>La bataille d'Alger</i>: Remembering the 'Forgotten War'", in: <i>Quarterly Review of Film & Video</i> 17/3 (2000), 261-271. ▷ Thomas Riegler: "Gillo Pontecorvo's 'Dictatorship of the Truth' – a Legacy", <i>Studies in European Cinema</i> 6/1 (2009), 47-62.</p>
<p>21.03.</p>	<p>► Frantz Fanon: <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>. New York: Grove Press 2005, 1-52 [esp. 1-17 / 31-52]. ▷ Riley Quinn: <i>An Analysis of Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth</i>. London, New York: Routledge 2017, 9-18; 34-47.</p>
<p>WEEK12 26.03.</p>	<p>THE (LUMPEN-)PROLETARIAT</p> <p>► Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i>. New York: Internat. Publishers 2007, 8-31. ► Karl Marx: <i>Capital</i> 1 (Marx/Engels: Collected Works, Vol. 35). Moscow, London, New York: International Publishers 1996, 634-642 (section 4 / especially 634-639). ▷ Jean-Claude Bourdin: "Marx and the Lumpenproletariat", <i>Actual Marx</i> 2/54 (2013), 39-55. ▷ James Ingram: "Lumpenproletariat", in: <i>Krisis</i> 2 (Marx from the Margins: A Collective Project, from A to Z) (2018), 101-104.</p>
<p>28.03.</p>	<p>► <i>Land of the Dead</i> (George A. Romero, 2005): https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0418819/ [Trailer – full movie can be accessed via MOODLE]</p>  <p>▷ David McNally: <i>Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism</i>. Chicago: Haymarket 2011, 253-269.</p>

ASSIGNMENTS :

Attendance and ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in discussions & image interpretations **10% of the final grade**

- ▷ Students are expected ▶ to TAKE PART in the discussions, comment on other students' impulses or presentations, react to the instructor's input and questions, reflect on the readings and audiovisual material ... ▶ Participation is ASSESSED with respect to the relative QUANTITY AND QUALITY of the comments (targeted engagement with the concepts and readings, conclusiveness of argumentation, wider contextualization).

In-class IMPULSE **25% of the final grade**

- ▷ Every participant will act as an 'EXPERT' ON ONE OF THE WEEKLY CLASS TOPICS. They ▶ prepare the material (readings / audiovisual sources) and present its MOST IMPORTANT / INTERESTING / PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS IN TWO BRIEF IMPULSES (each 10-12 min. max!) in the respective Tuesday and Thursday classes. Each impulse focuses on the text/film given in the schedule.
- ▷ The short impulses should ▶ engage with the topic in a CRITICAL WAY (*no mere summaries of the material*) and may give ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL OR THEORETICAL INPUT.
- ▷ The impulse should be accompanied by a ▶ NUMBER OF QUESTIONS OR LIST OF ISSUES that will guide our discussion. Ideally, the 'experts' act as co-instructors for the selected session.
- ▷ Every participant ▶ selects a TOPIC/DATE from the syllabus for their impulse and enters their name in the respective poll UNTIL FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2024:
<https://nuudel.digitalcourage.de/F1KeprvKXdw5xKkX>
- ▷ Depending on the number of participants, every topic can be ▶ prepared BY 1 TO MAX. 3 STUDENTS (group impulse). However, do not select a topic/date already assigned to another student as long as there are unallocated slots!

1 concise IMPULSE HANDOUT **10% of the final grade**

- ▷ For their impulses, the participants are required to create a written 1-page handout that shows ▶ the ORDER of the presented points, the MAIN ARGUMENTS, CONCLUSION, and further QUESTIONS.
- ▷ The handout ▶ should be structured in SHORT PASSAGES, KEYWORDS OR BULLET POINTS – no continuous text and long sentences; the structure and central ideas of the brief presentation should become visible at first glance. It serves as ▶ previous INFO SHEET and afterwards as learning and memory aid for the other course participants.
- ▷ The ▶ handout is ASSESSED with respect to its STRUCTURE, ACCURACY, AND CLEARNESS (*visual material and critical statements can of course be included*).
- ▷ ATTENTION: The handout ▶ should be submitted NO LATER THAN 3 DAYS BEFORE the respective class. Please, send it as .doc/.docx/.pdf file to the instructor who will upload the document on MOODLE.

MIDTERM DEMONSTRATION 20% of the final grade

- ▷ Participants write a brief ► 1-page ANALYSIS OF A DEPICTION OF “THE PEOPLE” from their home country or culture of origin. The paper should give a DETAILED DESCRIPTION (content, formal & compositional aspects) and then lead to a short explanation of THE SPECIFIC CONCEPT OF THE PEOPLE and historical context expressed in the image. The image is chosen by the student. It should be included in the paper.
- ▷ The paper ► will be SUBMITTED DURING MIDTERM WEEK (FEB. 12-18). Please send a .doc or .pdf document to the instructor who will add comments and give written feedback.
- ▷ The paper ► may serve as BASIS FOR YOUR FINAL COURSE WORK.

Final PAPER or final AUDIOVISUAL WORK 35% of the final grade

- ▷ Participants can produce either a written FINAL PAPER or an AUDIO/VISUAL RESEARCH WORK.¹
- ▷ The ► SUBJECT OF THE FINAL PAPER OR AUDIOVISUAL WORK is chosen by the student. A discussion of the subject with the instructor is not obligatory but recommended. ► The final work can ADOPT A SUBJECT FROM THE COURSE SESSIONS; in this case, it should clearly EXPAND THE APPROACH AND SCOPE of the respective in-class discussions and presentation, e.g., by introducing new readings and additional material, focusing on specific aspects, widening the perspective. ► However, it is recommended, to CHOOSE A SUBJECT THAT HAS NOT BEEN PART OF THE SYLLABUS as long as it is connected to the overall theme of “THE PEOPLE”.
- ▷ The paper should ► treat its topic in an ‘ACADEMIC’ MANNER, i.e., refer to at least three titles of scholarly literature. ► In any case, students are required to DEVELOP AN EXPLICIT RESEARCH QUESTION that states their interest and goals.
- ▷ Searching for ► relevant BOOKS, ARTICLES, etc. is PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT. Students may consult the instructor, but are basically responsible for compiling their work material themselves.
- ▷ Upon consultation, ► the final work CAN ALSO BE PRODUCED IN GROUPS OF TWO – in this case, you can opt for a SHARED OR INDIVIDUAL GRADE. For individual grading, you must clearly indicate who produced which part of the work.
- ▷ The final paper ► should have a LENGTH OF ~1.500 TO 2.000 WORDS (*excl. cover sheet, list of contents, bibliography, etc.*). IMAGES should be inserted in the text (no separate section for illustrations). The STYLE FOR REFERENCING AND CITING can be freely chosen but should be consistent throughout the paper. Papers should be in .doc, .docx or .pdf format.
- ▷ Papers are ► SUBMITTED VIA E-MAIL, the ► DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION is MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024.

¹ Please take note of CEU’s PLAGIARISM POLICY: <https://documents.ceu.edu/documents/p-1405-1>. Generally, students are allowed to use generative AI (ChatGPT, Bard, Bing, etc.) for the composition of their written course work. However, the instructor advises against doing so. Students are liable to indicate any use that they have made of generative AI for the preparation of their written work, identifying the software and distinguishing whether it has served on the research, composition, or editing stage. The use of such tools will be treated as plagiarism unless it is fully specified in the paper. If generative AI was used at any moment for the composition of the text, students are obliged to submit, together with their written work, the prompt/s used as input for the AI and a digital copy (pdf) of the AI’s answer or output. The document will be considered as an initial draft; the final version of the paper must show unmistakable evidence of revision, expansion and elaboration regarding its academic form, content, and intellectual engagement with the subject.

- ▷ Main CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION of the papers are:
 - ▶ Choice of topic (connection to course subject / adequate breadth [*you only have 1.500 words!*] / sufficient range of source material)
 - ▶ Originality of approach (subject, form of expression, combination of material and method that offer a 'new' perspective)
 - ▶ Clarity of structure (the order of your points, examples, arguments should be motivated and transparent / avoid redundancies and repetitions)
 - ▶ Conclusiveness of argumentation (no broad generalizations / illustrate your points with examples / verify them with scholarly sources)
 - ▶ Development of own thoughts/conclusions (ideally, your work not only assembles thoughts from your sources but adds at least one original aspect ...)
 - ▶ Clarity of style / verbal expression (does *not* mean 'empirical', 'dry', 'academic')
 - ▶ Formal correctness (compliance with the guidelines concerning word count / consistency of footnotes and bibliography)

 - ▷ Instead of a written paper, ▶ students may also prepare an AUDIO/VISUAL WORK (PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO, PAINTING, SCRAPBOOK, INSTALLATION, PODCAST, WEBSITE, ETC.): the work can be ▶ composed of SELF-PRODUCED MATERIAL AND/OR FOUND FOOTAGE. ▶ Formal and technical issues, extent or intended length should be coordinated with the instructor.
 - ▷ Final audio/visual works will ▶ not be graded according to technical criteria but based on the ORIGINALITY OF THE APPROACH AND THE POTENTIAL TO CONVEY THE MAIN ARGUMENT.
 - ▷ Audio/visual ▶ works MAY BE COMPLEMENTED BY A WRITTEN COMMENT to elucidate their conceptual or theoretical approach.
 - ▷ **Deadlines are the SAME FOR WRITTEN AND AUDIO/VISUAL works.**
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- ▷ **Every written course work (handout / midterm *demos*-tration / final paper ...) must state the student's first and last names!**