
Anarchism

ENGLISH 1005-012: First Year Seminar II
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Fall 2023

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Lakeview (116 S. Michigan Ave) Room 206
Tues 8:30am-11:15am

“The state is a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently.”

—Gustav Landauer

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The term "anarchism" derives from the Greek *an-archia*, non-rule, and describes the idea of a society without state, classes, or other forms of oppression and exploitation. However, anarchism is not only an idea, but also a practice: it names a political struggle for emancipation, an attempt to bring the idea of self-organization and solidarity into practice. We will begin by exploring a range of classical anarchist positions concerning the state, human nature, mutual aid, the family, and revolution. Readings will be drawn from classical theorists like Kropotkin, De Cleyre, and Goldman, as well as contemporary philosophers like Chiara Bottici. Reconstructing these debates will allow us to practice analyzing, synthesizing, and situating philosophical claims and political arguments, while formulating our own understanding of a diverse range of social problems. Alongside our theoretical texts, we will also explore the utopian imagination of anarchist science fiction, including recent work by O'Brien and Abdelhadi. Applying theoretical frameworks to the analysis of literature will allow us to practice more sophisticated styles of writing and argumentation incorporating multiple sources, styles, and formats. Students can expect to produce 20-25 pages of scaffolded, revisable, formal writing, including a midterm essay and an in-depth research project. In-class workshopping of student papers should also be expected.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

FYS students will learn to embrace the writing process and establish writerly habits, while developing guided critical reading, thinking, and writing skills necessary for their success in upper-level course work. Students learn to collaborate and to take their work, and the work of their peers seriously, thereby establishing best practices of critique.

FYS I students learn to:

- formulate inquiries emerging from readings of texts
- analyze and synthesize multiple texts and cite evidence
- construct a claim and an argument
- practice the writerly process (i.e. revision, reflection, and peer review)
- establish research methods

REQUIRED TEXTS

Kropotkin, Peter. *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, Ed. Shatz (Cambridge University Press, 1995/2005). ISBN: 978-0-521-45990-7.

O'Brien and Abdelhadi, *Everything for Everyone: An Oral History of the New York Commune, 2052-2072* (NY, Common Notions, 2022). ISBN: 9781942173588.

Both books are available for purchase at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in the DePaul Center. All other readings will be made available on Canvas either in PDF format or via HTML links. In order to minimize the presence of screens in the classroom, I ask that you please print out all PDF/HTML reading assignments, take notes on the print version, and bring these with you to class.

READING SCHEDULE (all readings are to be completed *before* the date listed next to them)
For those exploring anarchist thought and history more broadly, a useful reading list is [here](#).

The Anarchist Imagination

9/5

Week 1 -Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* Ch. 1-2 (20 pgs)

In-class workshop: "Problem | Argument | Idea"

Take-home assignment:

Apply the "Problem | Argument | Idea" to *Conquest* Ch. 3-4, and complete it on your own. Submit your writing via the "Assignments" portal on Canvas before the start of class on 9/12. Please also print it out and come prepared to share your results with the class.

9/12

Week 2

Readings:

-Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* Ch. 3-4 (20 pgs)

-O'Brien and Abdelhadi, *Everything for Everyone: An Oral History of the New York Commune, 2052-2072*, Introduction, Chapter 1 (34 pages...*but it's a fast read*).

In-class workshops:

-Peer review of "Problem | Argument | Idea" assignment;

-Using one text as a "lens" to interpret another

Take-home assignment:

-“Applying a Source as a Lens”: In 1-2 pages, identify and define a key concept or a claim from Chapter 5-8 of Kropotkin’s *Conquest* and apply that concept or claim to a passage from O’Brien and Abdelhadi’s *Everything for Everyone*. Analyze what Kropotkin’s idea reveals about the scene, its stakes, the novel generally, or anarchist politics more broadly, using specific details from the passage to create a claim about the text. Due Sunday, 10pm via Canvas.

9/19

Week 3

-Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* Ch. 5-8 (41 pgs)

-O'Brien and Abdelhadi, *Everything for Everyone*, Ch. 2-3 (40 pgs)

In-class workshops:

-Peer review of "Lens" assignment;

-“What is a Paragraph?”

Take-home assignment:

- “Preparatory Essay” (1-2 pages). A “hotspot” is a passage or moment in a text that is particularly interesting, suggestive, or provocative. In this short paper, I’d like you to select one or two “hotspot” quotes from Kropotkin’s discussions of luxury (Ch. 9), and write three paragraphs about it:

(i) In paragraph one, summarize the key argument, concept, or idea in your own words, using proper citation practices. Explain it. Parse it. Tell your reader precisely what Kropotkin means.

(ii) In paragraph two, offer a critical reflection on Kropotkin’s argument, citing one example from the real world: What seems unexamined or problematic in his reasoning or analysis? Can you think of any limitations of his argument? How might the author's ideas be expanded, complicated, deployed, or differently engaged? How might Kropotkin’s argument be complicated or challenged by...*[insert an example of your choosing]*?

(iii) In paragraph three, select one short scene or quote from Ch. 4-6 of O’Brien and Abdelhadi’s *Everything for Everyone* that responds (could be positively or negatively) to the concerns you raised in paragraph two. Your goal in this is to use this second text to either confirm or assuage the concerns you raised in the previous paragraph. Include a Works Cited page in Chicago Manual of Style format (online [here](#)). Due 9/26 in Canvas by the start of class. Please also print your paper out and bring it with you on 9/26.

9/26

Week 4

-Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* Ch. 9-11 (34 pgs)

-O’Brien and Abdelhadi, *Everything for Everyone*, Ch. 4-6 (55 pgs)

In-class workshops:

-Peer review of “Preparatory Essay” assignment

-“Finding, Using and Citing Secondary Sources”

Take-home assignment:

-Discussion Board Post: In anticipation of Abdelhadi’s visit to our class on 10/3, please write out three “focus questions” that reflect critically on some aspect of *Everything for Everyone* (especially ch. 7-8, but not exclusively), and/or that you think might generate a fruitful in-class discussion. *I am asking you, as a class, to curate our discussion with Eman based on your own concerns as readers and writers. What issues raised by her work do you find most pressing to discuss?* Due by the start of class via Canvas.

10/3

Week 5

-Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* Ch. 12 (15 pgs)

-O’Brien and Abdelhadi, *Everything for Everyone*, Ch. 7-8 (42 pgs)

Guest speaker: Eman Abdelhadi

Anarchism in practice: the Ukrainian and Spanish Revolutions

10/10

Week 6

-Arshinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918-1921)*, [Ch. 3](#) and [Ch. 5](#), (18pgs)

-Film: [Libertarias](#) (Beware: the last 15 minutes are upsetting. Stop at 1:53 if you like)

Optional, but highly recommended: Bookchin, *To Remember Spain* Ch. 1 (“An Overview of the Spanish Libertarian Movement”) [[online](#)] (34 pgs)

In-class workshops:

- “What is an Annotated Bibliography?” (more info [here](#))
- Midterm paper thesis construction workshop.

Midterm Prompt (subject to revision by instructor):

“For the sake of argument, let’s assume that a full scale social revolution is the only imaginable way to overcome the contradictions that plague American society. What might its precipitating factors be? What should this revolution hope to accomplish, and what methods might it employ to do so (i.e., what are its *means*, what are its *ends*)? What, in your view, did Kropotkin & O’Brien/Abdelhadi get right, and what issues might they have overlooked or inadequately addressed? What differences exist between their respective visions of revolution, and what might this tell us about the prospects for, and obstacles to, social revolution in the 21st century?” Paper should be 5-6 pages in length.

Midterm paper workshop

10/17
Week 7

Read: Landauer, “Anarchic Thoughts on Anarchism” (8pgs)

In-class workshops:

Peer essay exchange: *Complete rough draft of Midterm due at start of class*

Revised midterm essay due Sunday 10/22, 10pm via Canvas

Take-home assignment:

Discussion Post: Our readings (and podcasts) on anarcha-feminism for this coming week (10/24) include texts from the 19th and early 20th Century, as well as new efforts to produce a manifesto suited to the 21st century. In your discussion post, identify two convergences and two divergences between these earlier texts and those written in recent years. How has the anarchafeminist position adapted to changing circumstances? What has remained consistent? Due 10/24 by the start of class, via Canvas.

Anarchism and Feminism

10/24
Week 8

- De Cleyre; “Those Who Marry Do Ill” (7 pgs)
- Goldman: “The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation” (8 pgs)
- Podcast: [The Ex-Worker #28](#): “Anarcha-Feminism, Part II: Early Critiques and Visions” (*start at 29:20, or read the excerpted transcript [here](#)*).
- Bottici, “An Ongoing Manifesto” (10 pgs); (*a collective reading of an earlier draft can be watched online [here](#).*)

Strongly recommended:

-Bottici, “Bodies in Plural” (*do not stress over the technicality of the section on “transindividuality” in Spinoza, just push through to the end*)

Take-home writing assignment:

“Parsing frameworks, proposing a thesis”: For next week, I have assigned one article and two video lectures on the Zapatista experiment. In this 1-page writing assignment, I would like you to do two things:

1. First, identify what, in your view, is the main difference in how each writer/speaker *frames* the novelty of the Zapatista experiment. The “frame” should set out the following: (a) What is the *key feature* of the Zapatista experiment? What is the new *question* or *problem* that the Zapatistas pose, and to which their experiment responds? *Take note: Is their framing primarily historical? philosophical? political? biographical? Or, is it perhaps a mixture of these? Does the author/speaker feel the need to contrast the Zapatistas with other experiments in emancipatory community? If so, why?*
Your goal here is to quickly lay out three different *angles of approach* to a single phenomenon. (E.g. “*The Zapatista experiment has been approached through a variety of different angles. For instance, ...Similarly/by contrast,...Finally,...*”)
2. Using your discussion of these differing angles or *frameworks* as a segway, propose a thesis for a longer paper on the Zapatista. I am not asking you to actually write this paper, but merely to propose a thesis statement that you *could* imagine defending in 5-6 pages, if you were asked to. This means your thesis statement must be a realistic, focused claim for which evidence can be mobilized, and which would be of interest to an audience.

From Black Power to Zapatismo and the alter-globalization movement

10/31

Week 9

- Baschet, “[Zapatista Autonomy: A Destituent Experiment?](#)”
- Film: Alston, “[Black Liberation and the Zapatistas](#)” (video lecture)
- Film: Quiquix, “[Zapatismo and Pluriversal Ontologies](#)” (video lecture)

Take-home assignment:

- Research Essay Proposal (due by start of class 11/21)
- Begin researching a topic and identifying sources*

Municipalism and regional autonomy

11/07

Week 10

- Bookchin, "The Communalist Project" (20 pgs)
- Film: *The Communes of Rojava — A Model in Societal Self-Direction* [[online](#)]

In-class workshop:

“Applying a Source as a Lens”: Working in groups, identify and define a key concept or a claim from Bookchin’s “The Communalist Project” and apply that concept or claim to a scene or theme from *The Communes in Rojava*. Work together to analyze the idea and the scene, and their stakes for anarchist politics more broadly.

Take-home assignment:

-*Discussion Board Post*: In anticipation of Nicholas Smaligo’s visit to our class on 11/14, please write out three “focus questions” that reflect critically on some aspect of the David Graeber essays I have assigned, and/or that you think might generate a fruitful in-class discussion. *I am asking you, as a class, to curate our discussion with Nicholas based on*

your own concerns as readers and writers. What issues raised by Graeber's work do you find most pressing to discuss? Due by the start of class via Canvas.

9. Anarchism in the alter-globalization movement

11/14

Week 11 -Graeber, "[The Shock of Victory](#)" (12 pgs)
-Graeber, "Revolution in Reverse" (25 pgs)
Guest speaker: Nicholas Smaligo

Recommended:

-Smaligo, "Closing Paradise's Gate" ([online](#))

8. From Democracy to Freedom

11/21

Week 12 *Final Research Project Proposal due by start of class. Please print it out and bring it.*

In-class workshop:

-Peer review of final research project proposals.

Take-home assignment:

-*Discussion Board Post:* In anticipation of Sonali Gupta's visit to our class on 11/28, please write out three "focus questions" that reflect critically on some aspect of the essays I have assigned for 11/28, and that you think might generate a fruitful in-class discussion. *I am asking you, as a class, to curate our discussion with Sonali based on your own concerns as readers and writers. What issues raised by the texts, and the struggle against Cop City in Atlanta, do you find most pressing to discuss? Due via Canvas by the start of class 11/28.*

10. Anarchism and ecological struggle

11/28

Week 13 -Farrell, "The Strategy of Composition" ([online](#)) (14 pgs)
-Anonymous, "Balance Sheet: Two Years Against Cop City" ([online](#)) (20 pgs)
Guest speaker: Sonali Gupta

Recommended:

-Crimethinc, "The Forest in the City" ([online](#)) (56 pages...*read as much as you like*)

11. Final research project workshops

12/5

Week 14 Final research project workshop II

12/12

Week 15 *Peer Essay Exchange:* Complete rough draft of final research project due at start of class.
Final research project essay due 10pm, 12/15 via Canvas

ATTENDANCE

Each SAIC course, whether held online or in-person, or a hybrid of both, is a learning community that relies on regular, active engagement from all participants. Other than in-person activities which are missed due to illness, all students are expected to fully participate in each of their courses, including in-person classes, synchronous online sessions, and regular, independent work and study. Ultimately, faculty will give credit to students enrolled in a course only if they have responded adequately to the standards and requirements of the course overall. The full SAIC Engagement, Participation, and Attendance Policy can be found in the 2023/2024 Student Handbook, on page 76. All students should review and be familiar with this important policy, as well as how it will be applied in this particular course.

If you miss three or more classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, you will fail this class, if you do not withdraw. The deadline for withdrawal is Oct 31, 2023.

REQUIREMENTS

You must complete and submit all work by the final day of class (12/12) and achieve an overall course grade of 70% or higher to receive CREDIT for this course. If you have a 69% average (or lower), you will receive NO CREDIT for this course and will have to repeat it. Completing assignments does not guarantee credit for the course. To get credit for this course, you need to earn at least a 70% average on all work and adhere to the attendance, preparation, and participation policies. Students should keep track of their own grades.

Discussion posts and other writing exercises comprise 20% of your grade. Throughout the course, you will be required to complete short writing assignments that respond to our readings, and train different aspects of the writing process (e.g. overviews, body text, comparisons, rhetoric, argumentation, etc.). Some of these will be “Discussion” posts completed on Canvas. These should be roughly ~500 words, and should be written in full sentences with good grammar.

Your midterm essay comprises 30% of your grade. A full draft of your 5-6 page paper is due in class on 10/17, and a revised draft is due via Canvas on 10/22 by 10pm. A portion of this grade includes participation in an in-class peer review workshop, as well as the revision of your work before submitting the final version.

Your final research project comprises 50% of your grade. A 7-8 page paper is due in class on 12/12, and a revised draft is due via Canvas on 12/15, 10pm. A portion of this grade includes a research project proposal, as well as participation in two in-class writing workshops (a research proposal workshop, and a peer review session), as well as the revision of your work before submitting the final version.

No late papers will be accepted without prior approval by the instructor.

CITATIONS & FORMATTING

Any source you consult and that informs your ideas or your language (including course texts) must be cited using both in-text footnotes, and a “Works Cited” page. Both must be formatted according to Chicago Manual of Style standards. For citation standards, see here: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Unless I’ve indicated otherwise, all the work you turn in to me must:

- be type-written, in 12-point *Times New Roman* font;
- have 1” margins all around;
- be double-spaced;
- include a *single-spaced* heading in the upper left-hand corner of page one with your name, my name, the course title and section, and the date;
- include a title;
- have your last name and a page number in the upper right hand corner of each page
- if submitted electronically, be titled as follows: Last Name_Assignment (e.g., Aarons_Essay 1 Rough Draft).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one’s own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct also includes the falsification of academic or student-related records, such as transcripts, evaluations and letters of recommendation. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education.

Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity.

POLICY ON AI-ASSISTED CONTENT GENERATION TOOLS

In this course, the submission of any AI-generated work is strictly prohibited without advance, written permission from the instructor. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their instructor if they are interested in utilizing AI tools (apps, etc.) to develop content they plan to submit for a course assignment. If students are not sure if a tool they plan to use is considered AI-facilitated, they are encouraged to ask their instructor.

Submitting AI-generated content without receiving permission from the instructor to do so will be considered a violation of community rules for this course and may constitute a violation of the School’s Academic Misconduct Policy.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule a virtual appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you and your instructors with a letter outlining the approved accommodations via email. You must request accommodations for each course before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

STUDENT SUPPORT

The Office of Students Affairs at SAIC is here to support all students with resources to aid in their success inside and outside of the classroom. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing food everyday, and/or do not have a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Office of Student Affairs - (312) 629-6800; studenthelp@saic.edu during business hours. If you contact them after hours, someone will respond the next business day.

The SAIC Wellness Center, which includes Counseling Services, Health Services and the Disability and Learning Resource Center, is also here to support students' mental health, health and accessibility needs. You may contact them at:

- Counseling Services: counselingservices@saic.edu and 312-499-4271 (press 1 to speak to a counselor after hours)
- Health Services: healthservices@saic.edu and 312-499-4288/877.924.7758
- Disability and Learning Resource Center: dlrc@saic.edu and 312-499-4278

In case of an emergency, please contact SAIC Campus Security, 24 hours a day, by visiting any campus security desk or calling 312.899.1230.

WRITING CENTER INFORMATION

The Writing Center is located in the Lakeview Building, at 116 S. Michigan Ave, on the 10th floor. They can be reached at writingcenter@saic.edu, or at (312)499-4138. Their website is: <http://www.saic.edu/academics/academicresources/writingcenter/>

Although you may call ahead to see if there are any openings on short notice, it is generally recommended that you schedule appointments in advance where possible. You may do so here: <https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter>

OFFICE HOURS

I will be available for Zoom office hours. Please just email me or talk to me before or after class to schedule a time slot.