

ENGL 38: LITERATURE OF PROTEST

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify various forms of protest literature and examine their influence on humanity.
- Analyze the intersection of forms of protest (i.e. essay, poem, song, visual art).

Description

An exploration of protest found in literature, music, and art in the United States. Texts, such as essays, short stories, poetry, drama, music, paintings, photography, and film, which helped to inform, sustain, and empower during difficult periods of human history, will be examined. Evaluation of how various artists construe the relationship between aesthetics and politics (that is, the social/political purposes of their art) is the central question we will seek to answer. By examining the ways in which each work confronts the status quo of an inhumane society, we will trace a tradition of protest and discover the means and methods of protest across an array of sources.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify protest strategies and their effectiveness found in literature and other art forms
- Analyze various forms of protest and their relationship to a political landscape
- Compare the media's and/or audience's responses to different methods of protests
- Evaluate the ways in which protest literature and related art forms have confronted and ultimately influenced society
- Understand the intersection of more than one area of protest (e.g., gender, race, ability, sexual orientation)
- Create a protest project using one or more of the strategies from the course that has a targeted audience

Course Content

- Identification of various areas of protest, such as gender, race, lynching, war, ability, sexual orientation, capitalism, and poverty
 - Protesters' access to texts, such as literature, music, visual art, etc., and their influence on the message and audience
 - Essays by Thoreau, Mill, Baldwin, Lorde, Governor Pat Brown
 - Black spirituals
 - Suffrage parades
 - Public readings/speeches
 - Chicano/Latinx murals
 - Native Americans occupy Alcatraz
 - Vietnam march on the Pentagon
 - LGBTQ rainbow flag
 - Sit-in, bed-ins, lie-ins, die-ins, raised fists, and riots
 - Hunger strikes
 - Protesters' methods and their impact on social or political change, such as speeches, readings, hunger strikes, marches, and walkouts
 - Upton Sinclair's reading of the First Amendment to striking longshoreman, which led to the ACLU of Southern CA
 - Mizzou football players joining African American graduate student hunger strike and the ousting of the college president
 - Women's NOW march in NYC in 1970, which led to Title IX in 1972 and banning sexual harassment in the workplace in 1980
 - #NeverAgain teen protestors and the change in gun laws
- Analysis of forms of protest, such as sit-ins, hunger strikes, occupations, essays, poetry, parody, music, film, visual art, photojournalism, and social media/online campaigns
 - Banning of books or protest/censorship of films
 - Read-out and the play "Mas," in protest of Mexican American studies program from the Tucson Unified School District
 - William Trotter's protest of the 1915 "Birth of a Nation" film
 - The power of protest paintings, films, music, and photography
 - Andy Warhol's "Big Electric Chair," Banksy's "The Flower Thrower"
 - Chip Thomas' Native American murals, inspired by JR's "Face2Face Project" in Gaza
 - Exhibit "Whose Streets? Our Streets," 1980-2000
 - Agnes Varda's "Black Panthers" and Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing"
 - Joan Baez's "Saigon Bride," Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddamn," Kendrick Lamar's "To Pimp a Butterfly" and "Damn," 2Pac's "Changes," NWA's "Fuck the Police"
- Legal challenges and obstacles to various protests against issues, such as capital punishment, poverty, racial profiling, and abortion
 - Abortion laws at the state and federal level that criminalized women seeking and doctors performing abortions
 - Therapeutic Abortion Bill
 - Canada College's Richard Orser's arrest for abortion counseling
 - Marches and legal appeals in California before Roe v. Wade was passed
- Audience scope and influence on protests, such as:

- a. Large televised strikes, marches, and riots
 - i. Labor Strikes (railroad, coalminers, USPS, UPS, UFW, fast food workers)
 - ii. Watts, Century City Riots, Rodney King/LAPD
 - iii. March for Women in January, 2017
- 4. Evaluation of a protest's legacy
 - a. Legal, social, political, or economic changes that occurred as a result of the protest
 - i. The 1977 Section 504 protest in SF, which led to the ADA in the 1990s
 - ii. Take Back the Night's - and, later, SlutWalk's - impact on Title IX implementation on college campuses
- 5. Intersection of areas and forms of protest to fully address injustice using Standpoint Theory or another theoretical lens
 - a. Matrices of oppression, such as:
 - i. Trans people of color
 - ii. Disabled veterans
 - iii. African immigrants
 - b. Protesting mythical norms and othering
 - c. Analyzing lyrics in films
 - d. Examining the nexus of online and in-person protests (e.g., #MeToo, Women's March)

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facility or equipment needed.
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access, ongoing access to computer with email software and capabilities and current internet browser, email address.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Two or more critical papers and/or essay exams
 Journal entries, reader responses, quizzes
 Final protest projects
 Class discussions, student presentations

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture
 Small and large group discussion
 Group activities and projects

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Alexie, Sherman. The Exaggeration of Despair. 2005.

Baldwin, James. "Everybody's Protest Novel." Notes of a Native Son. 2012.

Baraka, Amiri. Black Art. 1966.

Cong, Huynh, and Nick Ut. Napalm. 1972.

Darity, Jr., William A., and Kirsten Mullen. From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century. 2022.

Denick, Linda. Critical Perspectives on Social Media and Protest. 2015.

Ginsberg, Allen. Howl. 1956.

Holiday, Billie, and Abel Meeropol. Strange Fruit (song). 1939.

John Brown Anti-Klan Committee. Take a Stand against the Klan. 1980.

Jordan, June. The Female and the Silence of a Man. 1989.

Kobabe, Maia. Gender Queer: A Memoir. 2019.

Kushner, Tony. Angels in America. 2013.

Lee, Spike. Do the Right Thing (film). 1989.

Lorde, Audre. Poetry Is Not a Luxury. 1977.

McKay, Claude. The Lynching. 1920.

Neihardt, John G.. Black Elk Speaks. 2008.

New Black Panther Party. Ten Point Program. 2001.

Shakur, Tupac. Panther Power (song). 1989.

Rankine, Claudia. Citizen: An American Lyric. 2014.

Slate, Michael. AmeriKKKa 1998: The Lynching of James Byrd. 1998.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. Solitude of Self. 1892.

Treuner, David. The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present. 2019.

Trodd, Zoe. American Protest Literature. 2008.

Although some of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Ferguson, Renee. "Women's Liberation Has Different Meaning for Blacks." Washington Post. October 3, 1970.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Analyze the role of lyrics in a film's soundtrack, forging connections between music, words, and visual images as they relate to a type of protest
2. Create a social media protest campaign utilizing tested protest strategies with a targeted audience

Discipline(s)

English