

our salt march?**thinking about change**

ESP198 Spring 2008

Questions? Contact Tobias Joel (thjoel@ucdavis.edu)

<Guidingquestions>

What does social change mean?

How can we create change?

What are we really reacting against? What are the real problems?

As a group promoting sustainability, What are we actually trying to do?

What will our salt march be?

<Description>

Our overarching purpose is to consider the meaning of social/environmental change and our role in the process. To approach these questions, we will first identify the fundamental problems against which we work and the modes of thought upholding those issues. This gives us context to discuss the necessity and meaning of resistance, as well as the possibility of change. It gives us the context to take responsibility for the shift we aim to enact.

From that point, we will consider specific forms of resistance. BUT ABOVE ALL, we will avoid the empty cynicism which all too often accompanies similar discussions. The emphasis will not be on sharpening our corporation-bashing vocabulary, but instead on thinking about where we stand as individuals and as a collective in a society at odds with its own long-term survival.

<Format>

The ART is a simple reading/discussion group. We will meet for an hour once a week to discuss one short (but rich) text. Participation is open to all interested students; students interested in experimenting with ideas in an open but intimate format. Absolutely NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE is necessary. Indeed a lack of experience with the thinkers we will be reading may be all the more appropriate, as we shall see.

<Assignments>

Each participant will produce a brief reflection on these issues by the end of the quarter (an essay, poem, drawing, performance piece—whatever you like!). Plus, the group will organize a public demonstration in which all of ESLEP can participate.

<Weeklyschedule>

Week1: no meeting

Week2: What is wrong with society? Why does un-sustainability continue?

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

- "Introduction to the First Edition: The Paralysis of Criticism—Society Without Opposition." Pg. xli – xlix (9 pages).
- Pg. 192 - 194

Week3: What is wrong? (cont.)

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

- Chapter 1 "New Forms of Control." Pg. 1 – 18.
- Pg. 226 – 227

Week4: Seriously, What is wrong? (cont.)

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

- "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception."

Week4: How can we create change?

Kracauer, Sigfried. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Trans. and Ed. by Thomas Levin. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.

- "Bordeom." Pg. 331 – 334.
- "Those Who Wait." Pg. 129 – 140.

Week5: Demonstration planning

Week6: Demonstration replaces meeting

Week7: How can we create change? What constitutes resistance? (cont.)

Adorno, Theodor. *Notes to Literature: Volume One*. Trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

- "The Essay as Form." Pg. 3 – 23.

Week8: Reflection inspiration

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1968.

- "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Pg. 253 – 264.
- "Unpacking My Library."

Week9 & 10: No meeting.