Staging Power: Political Ceremonies and Pageantry

Spring 2020
Prof. Benoît Bolduc, 19 University Pl, 606
W 11:00-13:30
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Room

Participants in this first-year seminar will investigate how displays of lavish ceremonies and pageantry have been used in history to legitimize political power. Sessions will focus on a series of events promoting political figures from the Western tradition such as Roman generals, medieval and modern European kings and queens, as well as 19th, 20th and 21st-century political leaders. For their research projects, students will be encouraged to choose political figures from other traditions as well as more recent ceremonial practices and political performances such as marches, rallies, parades, etc.

Before each session, participants will be required to read a selection of primary and secondary sources, study images, listen to recordings, and/or watch video-recordings. Two group visits to the Metropolitan Museum and the New York Public Library, as well as an evening at the Metropolitan Opera will supplement in-class activities.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the role artists and writers have played in the fabrication of political leaders
- Sharpen analytical skills, apply them to objects of different natures
- Conduct on-site academic research in libraries, museums and on-line
- Engage in productive, respectful, and intelligent arguments
- Improve the four core areas of reading, writing, research, and public speaking

Schedule and reading assignments

Most readings are available on NYU Class. Each week, students are required to bring in class an annotated printout of the texts listed below.

Week 1  Introduction
Be prepared to discuss your interest for political ceremonies and pageantry

CORONATIONS AND INAUGURATIONS

Week 2  The Coronation of Charles VI, King of France (1380)
Readings: Christine de Pizan, “On Princes” (55 p.); Froissart, “The Coronation of Charles VI, king of France” (2 p.); Giesey “Models of Rulership in French Royal Ceremonial” (20 p.);
Week 3  
**The Coronation of Napoleon, Emperor of the French (1804)**


*First written assignment due*

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Week 4  
**The Coronation of Elizabeth II, Queen of the UK (1953)**

*Viewings*: “Make Way for the Queen,” *March of Time on Television* (Home Box Office, 1953), 26 mins; BBC’s live coverage of the coronation narrated by Richard Dimbleby (excepts); Jamie Muir, *The Coronation Of Queen Elizabeth II*, (BBC Worldwide, 2012), 50 mins


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Week 5  
**The Inauguration of Barack Obama, President of the US (2009)**

*Viewing*: C-Span coverage of the ceremony (104 min)


**PROCessions**

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Week 6  
**The Triumphs of Pompey**

*Readings*: Plutarch, “Life of Pompey” (91 p.); Beard, “Pompey’s Finest Hour?” (34 p.)

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Week 7  
**The Entry of Henri II and Catherine, King and Queen of France, in Rouen (1550)**


*Second written assignment due*

***Spring break***

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Week 8  
**The 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg**

*Viewing*: Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (110 min.)

*Readings*: Niven, *Hitler and Film* (43 p.); Becker, “Celluloid Lies” (2 p.);

Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism” (12 p.)
Festivities

Week 9  The Feast or the Pheasant (1454)
Listening: Dominique Vellard, Le Banquet du Voeu, 1454, Music at the Court of Burgundy (Virgin Veritas)
Final project memo due

Week 10  The Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520)
Readings: Hall, Chronicles (17 p.); Marot, “De la vue des Roys de France et d’Angleterre entre Ardres et Guynes” (1 p.) “Du Triomphe d’Ardres et Guynes” (1 p.); Richardson, The Field of Cloth of Gold (75 p.)

Week 11  The Fêtes of the Sun King (1664-1674)
Viewing: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme by Dumestre and Lazar (2007)
Readings: Molière, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (1670) (65 p.); Mukerji, “Social choreography and the politics of place” (25 p.);
Third written assignment due

Week 12  The Inauguration of the Suez Canal (1869)
Viewing: Verdi, Aïda

Week 13  Student Presentations

Week 14  Student Presentations

Requirements and graded assignments

• Attendance and class participation (10%)
• Three short written assignments (3-4 pages, 10% each)
• Final project memo (1 page + bibliography) (10%)
• In-class team presentation of project (20%)
• Final paper (30%)
Getting help

NYU CLASSES: On the course website, you will find:

- a synopsis of each session summarizing its key concepts and definitions
- tips on writing, reading and presentations
- links to useful websites
- a discussion board to engage with the community on topics raised in class

Bobst Library: Find a book, watch a movie, listen to a recording, and more: take a library class! (http://nyu.libcal.com/calendar/classes)

Writing Center: Located on 411 Lafayette Street, the Writing Center offers individual consultation sessions for all NYU students (by appointment only).
(212) 998-8866; http://cas.nyu.edu/ewp/writing-center.html

Moses Center: Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu) for further information.

The University Learning Center: This center provides tutoring, academic skills workshops and help with specific classes, paper writing, study skills, as well as review for exams. All sessions are offered on a walk-in basis and feature tutoring by experienced upper-level students. https://www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/undergraduate-advisement/academic-resource-center/tutoring-and-learning.html

Wellness Exchange: Professionals can help you deal with personal and health-related issues. (212) 443-9999 (24/7 confidential calls); https://www.nyu.edu/students/health-and-wellness/wellness-exchange.html

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious offense and might jeopardize your career as a student at NYU. Please read the “Statement on Academic Integrity” attached to this syllabus. If you are in doubt, immediately ask me for advice.