



PEDAGOGY AND THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

2018 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE 23RD ANNUAL
PEDAGOGY & THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED
CONFERENCE

JUNE 7-10, 2018

*INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
INDIANA, PA*

DISRUPTING THE POLITICS OF PLACE: BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed (PTO) supports people whose work challenges oppressive systems by promoting critical thinking and social justice through liberatory theatre and popular education. Our approaches stem from the theories and practices of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. We foster collaborative connections to share, develop, promote, and document liberatory theatre, popular education, and other revolutionary actions. PTO serves as a resource for oppressed peoples and their allies in diverse communities, contexts, and traditions around the world.

The 23rd Annual Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference will be held in Indiana, Pennsylvania—a rural borough located an hour outside of the city of Pittsburgh, PA. This region is characterized by its distinctive landscape of both urban and rural communities extending from the city of Pittsburgh to the surrounding boroughs of Northern Appalachia. This unique composition of the Western Pennsylvania region offers a microcosm for examining the larger politics of place that shape and divide our local, regional, and global communities.

Around the globe, communities face many of the same challenges surrounding the politics of place. Whose stories do we tell in the bid to transform and adapt to changing circumstances? What happens to notions of national identity when the gap between the experiences of rural and urban areas continues to widen? How can we ensure that communities gain access to economic opportunities while maintaining their sense of self and identity? Can we envision a future built on inclusion and equity rather than on the success of the few at the expense of the many?

Our conference takes place at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, located in Indiana Borough, which has a population of approximately 14,000. Sixty miles southwest of Indiana, separated by farm lands and gas industry, is the city of Pittsburgh, PA, known as the “Steel City” from early industrial days and the “City of Bridges” for its 446 bridges. Those living in the Western Pennsylvania region, between these two cities, experience high rates of poverty, rural food deserts, opioid dependency, and the environmental legacy of coal/gas industry. There are also vibrant attempts to redefine place, re-imagine community, and engage in dialogue about identity, belonging, and sustainability towards a goal of just communities for the future.

Following the collapse of the steel industry, Pittsburgh has been re-invented from a city of steel to a city built on education, healthcare, and technology – a global city, to some, by its selection to host the G20 summit in 2009. The city’s revitalization did not transfer to all of Pittsburgh’s residents, nor has it reached the surrounding region in Western Pennsylvania, which includes the borough of Indiana, PA. Challenges to health, income, affordable housing, equity, and education remain for many of the urban, rural, immigrant and indigenous communities within the region, who often find their stories left out of the official narrative. The politics of place continue to revolve around issues of inclusion and exclusion and of who belongs.

Our 2018 PTO conference site presents a unique opportunity to engage in larger dialogue and action centered on the divides arising, not only from geography, but also from the allocation of resources, population identity, ideology, and politics in the Western Pennsylvania region as well as within our global communities. We focus this year on disrupting these politics of place and dismantling the “us/them” divide towards the building of inclusive communities for the future.

NOTE: This conference emphasizes community-building across diverse groups, many of whom are unfamiliar with Pedagogy or Theater of the Oppressed and the work of Boal and Freire. We welcome introductory and exploratory sessions novice participants whose work fulfills PTO's mission by not only promoting the opportunity for oppressed people to speak in their own voices, but listening to, amplifying, and disseminating what those voices say, the stories they tell, and the demands they make through liberatory theatre, popular education, and other methodologies. We ask that those submitting proposals consider their work or group's work against these questions:

- How does the work challenge oppressive systems?*
- How does the work promote critical thinking?*
- How does the work exemplify, promote or document liberatory*

OTHER QUESTIONS (RELATED TO THIS YEAR'S THEME)

- ◆ How are the politics of place visible in your community (immigration, homelessness, food insecurity, basic rights, etc.) and what strategies do you use to disrupt narratives and policies of exclusion and division?
- ◆ What binaries are embedded in our communities and practice through language, culture, citizenship, politics, ideology, etc.?
- ◆ How are oppressed communities utilizing Pedagogy of the Oppressed (PO), Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) and other approaches to liberatory arts and education to preserve and share their stories?
- ◆ How do liberatory theatre and education support immigrant and refugee populations in their desire to simultaneously maintain cultural traditions and integrate into new communities?
- ◆ How have liberatory practices been employed and evolved since the 2016 U. S. presidential election to align diverse groups in solving social problems and struggling against oppression—and to embrace or account for the varied perspectives and experiences of heterogeneous groups?
- ◆ In what ways can PO/TO communities align with other forms of liberatory practices (i.e. Anti-Oppression work, interactive storytelling, Interplay, and Playback Theatre)?

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Submit a proposal of your work and ideas with people from around the world!
- Register to attend as a participant, whether you want to present or not. (Registration coming soon! Check out our website for updates www.PTOweb.org)
- If you're local to Pittsburgh and Indiana, PA, volunteer with us. Email conference@ptoweb.org to let us know you want to volunteer.
- [Sponsor a local student](#) or community member to attend the conference by providing funds for their registration or travel fees! (This option is available on our registration page and may be used to invite a participant from your own community or from the host region).

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

We support and welcome varying abilities and seek to provide an inclusive space that will meet the needs of all members of our PTO community. Please contact us at conference@ptoweb.org for questions on accessibility for presentations.

- Check out the earlier questions related to the theme to get your ideas flowing.
- Read the list of session formats at the bottom of the page, and choose one that fits your work.
- Submit a proposal at this [link](#) by our deadline of January 5, 2018.

PRESENTATION FORMATS

Single Session: 90 minutes

Double Session: Two back-to-back 90 minute sessions totaling three hours (not available for Paper Presentations)

- Anti-Oppression Dialogues:** Specific interactive trainings for conference participants in various aspects of anti-oppression work, including language/terminology, specific communities and populations, challenges and ethics, and working methodologies rooted in liberatory education and/or TO techniques. Sessions might engage Paulo Freire's basic ideas of dialogue.
- Workshops—The Techniques:** Interactive workshops that focus on exploring, explaining, and experiencing techniques of PO/TO or liberatory practices. Workshops may also present adaptations, expansions, and permutations of the work developed for changing situations, circumstances, and populations.
- Workshops—The Applications:** Interactive workshops that explore the multitude of ways PO/TO or liberatory practices can be (and is) used for social justice, transformation, and liberatory work. Workshops and case studies may also highlight convergences other liberatory artistic and educational techniques.
- Performances:** Interactive performative events that promote and problematize transformation, liberation, social justice, and/or political engagement. The conference should not be seen merely as a showcase, but rather as an opportunity to engage in interactive exploration of the performance itself, the topics about which it was created, or both.
- Debates or Dialogues:** Discussions or debates between activists, artists, organizers, and/or popular educators. Sessions may also ask attendees to participate in dialogue around specific concepts, techniques, or case studies related to PO/TO or liberatory practices work. All presenters must have agreed to participate and be part of the proposal.
- Panel:** Pre-formed group of 3-4 presentations addressing a specific area of PO/TO or liberatory work. All presenters must have agreed to participate and be part of the proposal. Sessions should also include dialogue or other interaction with attendees.
- Paper Presentation:** Summary of research or issue in PO/TO or liberatory practices work and theory, delivered from notes. Papers should NOT be read, but rather presented. Each presentation should last approximately 10-12 minutes, excluding discussion. We will cluster papers in groups of 3-4 with time for dialogue. Not available for double session.