



2019 Call for Proposals

The 24th Annual

Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed Conference

June 13-16, 2019

with a Pre-Conference Workshop led by Julian Boal, June 11-13

Colorado State University-Pueblo

Pueblo, CO

El Pueblo Unido!

The People United

Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed (PTO) is an international organization that 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. Our annual conference seeks to provide an accessible, inclusive, and educational space. We actively seek both introductory sessions for those new to Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed practices, as well as advanced sessions for long-time practitioners.

The 24th Annual Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference invites artists, educators, organizers, and activists from around the world to join us in Pueblo, Colorado, to explore together the power of the people. “Pueblo” refers to both people and town, inviting us to think of the power of the collective. ¡El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido! can be heard at nearly every progressive protest moving through the streets today. The song was popularized as the anthem of the Chilean resistance against the Pinochet regime

in the 1970s, and has since moved across borders as a call to unite people in popular struggles for liberation. Locally, this chant was adopted by the Chicano Movement, which still continues today.

Pueblo is also the location of the 2019 conference. Pueblo is in southern Colorado, a beautiful locale 1.5 hours south of Denver, rich with cultural traditions and challenges. Located on the Arkansas river, Pueblo is a gateway to the U.S. Southwest. Historically, the river marked the US - Mexico border, providing an essential resource and gathering place for the Ute, Apache, Comanche, and Shoshone peoples. Local Mexican American families who have lived in Pueblo for generations declare, “we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us.” And, we recognize the implications of these geographic borders, especially for our southern neighbors in Latin and southern America. Pueblo’s steel mill provided 100 years of economic opportunity to both long-time residents and more recent immigrants (primarily Italian and Eastern European), until the plant all but shut down in the 1980s. Agriculture still thrives in Pueblo County, which is home to over 900 farms producing Pueblo’s famous green chilies, and is newly embarking on cannabis cultivation. Despite its economic and social struggles, this High Plains desert community flows with a generous and vibrant spirit.

The story of Pueblo is both unique and familiar to others around the nation. Once a border town, but no more; once a thriving industrial steel city, but no more. Like many places, Pueblo is plagued by a failing education system, an opioid crisis, declining property values, and housing and food instability. Additionally, the condensation of local unions into large urban chapters has diminished leadership development opportunities in smaller towns and cities like Pueblo. Globally, communities are engaged in related struggles for local control of resources, economic opportunities for the most marginalized, and the mobilization of people power against repressive governments. But around the world and here in Pueblo, la gente are rising up.

Recently, Pueblo Education Association, the local teachers union, won a long-sought wage increase through an organized strike in 2017, building upon Colorado’s vibrant history of labor organizing. Educators and advocates continue to develop a transformative community school movement, one grounded in culturally sustaining principles. In addition to dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, Indigenous organizers and allies convene annually beneath a Pueblo statue that serves as the nation’s birthplace of Columbus Day. These protests directly call on the state to abolish the holiday.

Colorado, and Pueblo County in particular, is at the forefront of marijuana legalization. Established in 2016, the Institute of Cannabis Research at Colorado State University-Pueblo conducts much-needed research on the social, public health, and economic impact of cannabis. Unfortunately, restorative justice efforts around cannabis are fledgling at best in Colorado. Advocates of marijuana, harm reduction, and social and restorative

justice must join forces to raise awareness of continued racial inequities in both drug policy and enforcement, and to promote social equity programs nationwide.

We hope you will join us in southern Colorado where we will explore creative pathways toward liberation from oppressive forces of colonization and other institutionalized social and economic injustices.

We welcome proposals inspired by (but not limited to) the following questions:

1. How might a legacy of colonization be dismantled by land and language justice movements?
2. What innovative ways is your community reclaiming and reimagining public education? How can communities promote lifelong learners and intervene in the prison system?
3. What exactly is harm reduction and how might this approach address issues of substance use, homelessness and housing insecurity, and other community challenges?
4. How can people unite across differences, without erasing difference, to build stronger movements for collective liberation?
5. How can we teach and practice solidarity in our communities?
6. How can liberatory theatre and education support labor organizing and movement building in communities?
7. How are communities facing oppression 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?

NOTE: This conference emphasizes community-building across diverse groups, many of whom may be unfamiliar with Pedagogy or Theatre of the Oppressed and the work of Boal and Freire. We welcome introductory and exploratory sessions by 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 practices?

SESSION FORMATS

- Single Session:** 90 minutes
- Double Session:** Two back-to-back 90 minute sessions totaling three hours
- 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 performances 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.
- Youth-Led Session:** Any session by, for, and about youth-led initiatives. We broadly define “youth-led” as projects and sessions with significant leadership from young people up to age 24, although we recognize meaningful support from elder collaborators may also be integral to the success of such projects and conference sessions. *Financial opportunities available through scholarships and volunteer opportunities.*
- Roundtable Discussions:** 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. These are proposals to host a conversation with others about a topic of interest, rather than a fully formed presentation of your own ideas or conclusions.
- 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, under a proposed theme, with time for dialogue. *Not eligible for a double session.*
- Anti-Oppression Trainings:** Specific interactive trainings 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.
- Self and Community Care:** In addition to self-care, we advocate for community care. These sessions may address such topics as health and well-being for activists, embodied healing for practitioners, and other practices of self and community care for folks directly engaged in movement-based or other social justice work.

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

We seek to provide an accessible, inclusive, and educational space that will meet the needs of all members of our PTO community. We actively seek both introductory sessions for those new to PO and TO practices, as well as advanced sessions for long-time practitioners. We prioritize proposals for collaborative and interactive sessions, and highly encourage youth-led proposals. Please contact us at conference@ptoweb.org for any questions about submitting your proposal.

- Check out the earlier questions related to the theme to get your ideas flowing.
- Read the list of session formats above and choose one that fits your work.
- Submit a proposal by the **deadline of January 11, 2019.**

OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- 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). Email us at conference@ptoweb.org if you have questions or concerns about conference affordability.
- If you're local to Pueblo, Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, or other areas in the region, you can sign up to 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).