

# **Beyond Elections:**

## ***Obama and the Limits of Electoral Democracy***

### **A 6-week workshop**

In this new GRIID class we will deal with three major topics – the first 2 years of the Obama Administration, a critique of the US electoral system and other models for change throughout the world.

It has been two years since Barack Obama took office and many people have been disappointed or disillusioned by the policies the current administration have adopted. We will take a critical look at the Obama administration by using the book *The Empire's New Clothes: Barack Obama and the Real World of Power*, by Paul Street.

Next the class will take a close look at the current electoral system in the US and how it does not really promote democracy. We will look at campaign finance, electoral campaigns, the role of lobbying and failure of the two party system.

The class will end with an investigation into some of the more recent political movements around the world that put less emphasis on electoral politics and focus on movement building as a means to bring about more fundamental change.

Participants need to get a copy of Paul Street's book and we will also be using supplemental materials – print, online and documentary video for this class.

Classes will meet on Wednesdays from 7 – 9pm starting January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The class will meet at the Steepletown Neighborhood Center located on the westside of Grand Rapids at 671 Davis NW. Cost of the class is \$20.

To sign up you can contact Mike Saunders at [outobol@gmail.com](mailto:outobol@gmail.com) or Jeff Smith at [jsmith@griid.org](mailto:jsmith@griid.org).