

SYLLABUS

IR519: People Power in Global Politics

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Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University
Spring 2017: Thursday 12:30-3:15pm, CAS 318

Office Hours: Wednesday 1pm-2pm, Thursday 10am-noon, in 156 Bay State Rd., #403
Sign up for office hours: <https://jeremymenchik.youcanbook.me/>. Final 30 min are drop-in hrs.

“Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do the multiple acts of peasant insubordination and evasion create political and economic barrier reefs of their own. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such reefs, attention is usually directed to the shipwreck itself and not to the vast aggregation of petty acts that make it possible. For these reasons alone, it seems important to understand this quiet and anonymous welter of peasant action.”

—James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (1985)

Course Description: While most international relations courses focus on the 1 percent of elites who hold power in formal political institutions, this course explores politics at the level of everyday people. How are power relations structured in a Malaysian village and how do the villagers affect economic development? How are social movements and digital activists transforming politics in Egypt? How have ordinary people exercised power in American politics? How do digital technologies alter the strategies that people use to effect political change? What strategies remain the same, even in our digital age? Drawing on classic works of political anthropology, as well as more recent examples of transnational and digital activism, this course seeks to understand the deployment of power by everyday people.

Course Objectives: By the end of course students should possess a new perspective from which to theorize the mechanisms of political and social change and a practical understanding of how transnational networks are influencing world politics. Specifically, students will obtain:

- A broad understanding of the social practices that underpin important political outcomes including democratization, authoritarianism, social revolutions, and mass mobilization.
- A theoretical and empirical understanding of how global activist networks can effect political change.
- In-depth understanding of a single activist network, its accomplishments, and the ability to articulate strategies to increase the effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

A more general objective is to demonstrate that large-scale social and political forces can be productively analyzed from the bottom up.

Anatomy of the Class: A core component of the class (and making up a total of 55% of the grade) is student research on an advocacy network in global politics. In the initial part of the course, students will be exposed to examples of issue areas where individuals have built networks to disseminate information, mobilize political campaigns, raise funds, shape state

policies, build alliances, or engage in other types of activism. Students will learn to map these networks, describe their strategies for advancing social and political change, and assess their influence. Students will then choose an issue area for their research project. In this project, students will a) describe an issue-area in global politics, b) map the network of individuals and organizations that are working on this issue, c) describe the network's strategies for advancing social and political change, d) describe major accomplishments and failures of the activists in this network, e) drawing on theories of contentious politics and other cases, strategize ways to improve activists' efforts. Students will be expected to share their research with their classmates through individual presentations during the final two weeks of class. In effect, the projects are a way for you to learn about people power through your own research as well as that of other students.

Required Texts (on reserve at Mugar Library):

- Clifford Bob, 2012. *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gabriella Coleman, 2014. *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The Many Faces of Anonymous*. Verso.
- Katherine J Cramer, 2016. *The Politics Of Resentment: Rural Consciousness In Wisconsin And The Rise Of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kurt Schock, 2004. *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Sidney G. Tarrow, 2011. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition. Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Texts:

- Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press.
- Deborah Gould, 2009. *Moving Politics: Emotion And Act Up's Fight Against Aids*. University of Chicago Press.
- Margaret E. Keck and Katheryn Sikkink, 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Frances Fox Piven, 2006. *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Course Requirements:

Participation (20%): The course will be run as a seminar. This format requires students to attend regularly, read diligently, and participate actively in class discussions.

Response Papers (3 x 5% = 15%): Student will write three short (1-2 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) analytical response papers (RP) over the course of the semester. I will provide the paper prompts one week before the papers are due on **1/26, 2/23, 3/30**. An optional makeup paper is due **4/13**. All papers are due through Turnitin. A grade rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Midterm Paper (1 x 15% = 15%): In a short essay (5-6 pages), students will a) describe an issue-area in global politics, b) map the network of individuals and organizations that are working on this issue, c) describe the network's strategies for advancing social and political change. **Due 3/23.** Students must meet with me the week of **3/27** to discuss their projects.

Presentations (2 x 10% = 20%): Each student will be assigned to a two-person group, which will be responsible for one 10 minute presentation on a social movement, NGO, or advocacy network of their choosing. Students will choose presentation dates on the first day of class. Each presentation should follow the same basic structure as their research project: a) describe individuals and organizations that are working on an issue in global politics, b) describe their strategies for advancing social and political change.

Then, in the final two weeks of class, each student will be responsible for one 10-minute presentation on his or her research project, with another five minutes devoted to questions. Final presentations are on **4/20** and **4/27**. Students using PowerPoint or other presentation software must email their presentation to the instructor at least 3 hours prior to class, or bring the file to class on a flash drive. A grade rubric for the presentations is at the end of the syllabus.

Final Paper (30%): One long essay (15-20 pages) building on the midterm, but extending the analysis to d) describe major accomplishments and failures of the activists in this network, e) drawing on contentious politics theory and other cases, strategize ways to improve activists' efforts. **Due 5/10 by 5pm.**

Late Work: Late submission of response papers will result in your grade incurring an automatic 1-point deduction per day beginning with the assignment deadline. Late submissions of the midterm paper and final papers will incur an automatic 3-point deduction per day, beginning with the assignment deadline.

Explanation of Letter Grades: <http://www.bu.edu/reg/grades/explanation-of-grades/>

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences and will be punished in accordance with BU's Academic Conduct Code for undergraduate students: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/> and for graduate students: <http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>

Electronic Communications in Class: Please close all email accounts, cell phones, instant messaging programs, homing pigeons, and any other communication devices for the duration of class. These are serious distractions to the instructor and your fellow students.

Special Needs: If you have any special needs or circumstances, such as a learning disability or health concern, please do not hesitate to speak with me and we can discuss suitable accommodations and assistance.

Dates and Readings:

Week One Introduction (Jan 19)

- Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." April 16, 1963.
- George Wallace, "1963 Inaugural Address as Governor of Alabama," January 14, 1964.
- "John Lewis Talks to David Remnick About Nonviolent Activism," *The New Yorker Podcast* <http://bit.ly/2jFMCA8>

Recommended:

- Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," July 5, 1852. <http://bit.ly/2j4kJ4Y>

Part I: Domestic Activism

Week Two Theories of People Power (Jan 26) [RP1]

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [Introduction and ch. 1]
- Jim Scott, 1986. "Everyday forms of peasant resistance," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13:2, 5-35.
- Kenneth T Andrews, Michael Biggs, 2006. "The Dynamics of Protest Diffusion: Movement Organizations, Social Networks, and News Media in the 1960 Sit-Ins." *ASR* 71, 752-777.
- Case Study: Standing Rock
 - Rebecca Bengal, "Standing Rock Rising: Inside the Movement to Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline," *Vogue Magazine* November 22, 2016. <http://bit.ly/2ijKrk4>
 - Kim Bellware and Damon Dahlen, "This Is What Victory Over The Dakota Access Pipeline At Standing Rock Looks Like," *Huffington Post* December 6, 2016. <http://huff.to/2igsEPs>

Recommended:

- Theda Skocpol, 1976. "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18:2, 175-210.

Week Three The Birth of the Social Movement (Feb 2)

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [ch. 2- 8]
- Case Study: #BlackLivesMatter
 - BlackLivesMatter Statement: "About Us," <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/> and "Guiding Principles" <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>
 - Janell Ross, "How Black Lives Matter moved from a hashtag to a real political force," August 19, 2015. <http://wpo.st/Hq1S2>
 - Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, Opal Tometti, "Black Lives Matter Founders Describe 'Paradigm Shift' In The Movement," *NPR* July 2016. <http://n.pr/2jnd6Gx>

Week Four People Power in Nondemocracies (Feb 9)

- Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections* [Introduction, ch. 1, 2, 3, and 6 / skim ch. 4 or ch. 5]

Week Five Discrimination, Identities, Polarization (Feb 16)

- Amanda Murdie and Dursun Peksen, 2015. “Women and Contentious Politics: A Global Event-Data Approach to Understanding Women's Protest.” *PSQ*, 68:1, 2015, 180–192.
- Gwyneth McClendon, 2014. “Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics: A Field Experiment at an LGBT Pride Rally, *AJPS* 58: 2, 279-90.
- Rory McVeigh, David Cunningham, and Justin Farrell. 2014, “Political Polarization as a Social Movement Outcome: 1960s Klan Activism and Its Enduring Impact on Political Realignment in Southern Counties, 1960 to 2000.” *ASR* 79:6, 1144-1171.

Recommended:

- Millie Thayer, 1997. “Identity, Revolution, and Democracy: Lesbian Movements in Central America.” *Social Problems*. 44:3, 386-407.

Part II: Transnational Activism

Week Six Theories of Transnational People Power (Feb 23) [RP2]

- Richard Price, 1998. “Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines,” *International Organization*. 52:3, 613-644.
- Margaret. E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 1999. “Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics.” *International Social Science Journal*, 51: 89–101.
- Brad Simpson, 2004. “Solidarity in an Age of Globalization: The Transnational Movement for East Timor and U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Peace & Change*, 29, 453–482.
- Jennifer Bair and Florence Palpacuer, 2012. “From Varieties of Capitalism to Varieties of Activism: The Antisweatshop Movement in Comparative Perspective.” *Social Problems* 59:4, 522-43.

Week Seven The Global Right Wing (March 2)

- Clifford Bob, *Global Right Wing* [read ch. 1, 2, 7, and either 3 + 4, or 5 + 6]

***** Spring Break *****

Week Eight Rural Politics (March 16)

- Kathy Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* [ch. 1, 3-7]

Week Nine Public Health (March 23) *Midterm Paper Due*

- Joe Harris, *Achieving Access: Professional Movements, Politics, and the Struggle for Health Universalism in Thailand, Brazil and South Africa* [Introduction, ch. 2, 4]

Part III: Digital Activism

Week Ten Liberation Technology? (March 30) [RP3] *Project Meetings*

- Larry Diamond, 2010. “Liberation Technology.” *Journal of Democracy* 21:3, 69-83.
- Ronald Deibert and Rafal Rohozinski, 2010. “Liberation Vs. Control: The Future Of Cyberspace.” *Journal of Democracy* 21:4, 43-57.

- Jeffrey S. Juris, 2011. “Cyber-Activism.” *Green Culture: An A-Z Guide*, Kevin Wehr (Ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, pp. 96-100.
- Marc Lynch, 2011. “After Egypt: The Limits and Promise of Online Challenges to the Authoritarian Arab State,” *Perspectives on Politics* 9:2, 301-10.
- Leticia Bode, 2016. “Political News in the News Feed: Learning Politics from Social Media.” *Mass Communication And Society* 19:1, 24-48.

Week Eleven Hackers (April 6)

- Coleman, *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy* [specific chapters TBD]
- Case Study: 2016 U.S. presidential election
 - U.S. Intelligence Community, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections,” January 6, 2017.
 - Brian L. Ott, 2017. “The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34:1, 59-68.
 - Michael Barbaro, 2016. “Pithy, Mean and Powerful: How Donald Trump Mastered Twitter for 2016.” *The New York Times* October 5, 2015. <https://nyti.ms/1L1ePHJ>
 - Jonathan Kirshner, “America, America.” *Los Angeles York Review of Books* Jan 15, 2017. <http://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/essays/america-america/>

Week Twelve Promise and Pathologies of Digital Activism (April 13) [RPX]

- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, 2013. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *APSR* 107:2, 1-18.
- Yuen Yuen Ang, 2014. “Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why “I-Paid-A-Bribe” Worked in India but Failed in China.” *Comparative Politics* 47:1, 21-40.
- Seva Gunitsky, 2015. “Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 42–54.
- Espen Geelmuyden Rød, Nils B Weidmann, 2015. “Empowering activists or autocrats? The Internet in authoritarian regimes,” *Journal of Peace Research* 52:3, 338 – 351.
- Case Study: #Kony2012 (<http://youtu.be/Y4MnpzG5Sqc>) and some responses:
 - Teju Cole, “The White-Savoir Industrial Complex” *Atlantic Monthly*, March 21, 2012. <http://theatlntc/2k1qa84>
 - Kate Cronin-Furman and Amanda Taub, “Solving War Crimes With Wristbands: The Arrogance of 'Kony 2012',” *Atlantic Monthly*, March 8, 2012. <http://theatlntc/2jVmh0i>
 - Megan Hershey and Michael Artime, 2014. “Narratives of Africa in a Digital World: Kony 2012 and Student Perceptions of Conflict and Agency in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47, 636-641.

Week Thirteen Closing Remarks and Student Presentations (April 20)

Week Fourteen Student Presentations (April 27)

Final Exam Week Tentative: Additional Student Presentations (3–5pm on May 9)

*** Final Papers Due by 5pm on May 10 ***

Grading Rubric – Response Papers

5 Answers the prompt in a coherent manner. Makes creative *links* between the reading, authors and concepts. Goes *beyond* the assigned content to draw fresh insights and analysis. Demonstrates *mastery* of the material and engages in independent thinking. Avoids making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment, or making fallacious claims including equivocation. Writing is exceptionally lucid.

4.5 Answers the prompt in a coherent way. Makes *links* between the cases, concepts or authors. Demonstrates a *solid* understanding of the material and goes beyond simple regurgitation, even if all claims are not convincingly established. Avoids being vague, making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is clear and concise.

4 Answers the prompt in a coherent way although lacks creativity and depth. Demonstrates more than cursory understanding of the material. Tends toward vagueness but does not make claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is good.

3.5 Answers the prompt. Provides examples of cases, concepts or authors but fails to effectively connect evidence to the prompt. Makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is acceptable but needs improvement.

3 Unclear answer to the prompt. Fails to lay out the answer with evidence from the cases concepts, and/or fails effectively connect evidence to the argument. Tends toward vagueness, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is poor.

2.5 - States an unclear claim. Fails to lay out the argument with evidence from the texts and fails to demonstrate knowledge of the material itself. Vague, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is unacceptable or incoherent.

Grading Rubric –Presentations

2 pt. Clear and concise

2 pt. Relevant to course material

2 pt. Accurate

2 pt. Uses scholarly sources

2 pt. Engaging

10 pt. Total