

# SYLLABUS

## IR519: People Power in Global Politics

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Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University  
Spring 2020: Tue/Thur 9:30-10:45pm, CAS 223  
Office Hours: Tue 2:00pm-3:30pm, Wed 2:30-4:00pm, 156 BSR #403

“I need not remind you that poverty, the gaps in our society, the gulfs between superfluous wealth and deadening poverty have brought about a great deal of despair, a great deal of tension, and a great deal of bitterness. And we’ve seen this bitterness over the last few summers in the violent explosions in our cities. And the great tragedy is that the nation continues in its national policy to ignore the conditions that brought the riots or the rebellions into being. For in the final analysis, the riot is the language of the unheard. . . . The fact is that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. That’s the long, sometimes tragic and turbulent story of history.”  
——Dr. Martin Luther King, “The Other America,” March 10, 1968

**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 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? What practices and problems accompany digital politics? 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:

- Knowledge of core concepts in political anthropology and international relations.
- A broad understanding of the social practices that underpin important political outcomes including democratization, authoritarianism, social revolutions, and mass mobilization.
- An 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 60% 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. 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.
- 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*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Zeynep Tufekci, 2017. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Activism*. Yale University Press.

### **Recommended Texts:**

- 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.
- Doug McAdam, 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press.
- Frances Fox Piven, 2006. *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*. Rowman and Littlefield.

### **Required Film:**

- Mary Dore, 2014. *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*. Cinema Guild. Students may watch the film through Netflix or Krasker Film & Video Services in the basement of Mugar Library.

### **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 (4 x 5% = 20%): Student will write four short (2-3 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 **1/30, 3/3, 3/19, 4/16**. An optional makeup paper is due **4/28**. RP's should respond to the readings assigned for the due date. 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 (5-7 pages), students will a) describe an issue-area in global politics, b) map the most important network of individuals and organizations that are working on this issue, c) describe the network's strategies for advancing social and political change. **Due 3/5**. Students must meet with me the week of **3/16** to discuss their projects.

Presentation (1 x 10% = 10%): Each student will be responsible for a ten-minute presentation on his or her research project, with another ten minutes devoted to questions. Each presentation should follow the same basic structure as their research project, while focusing only on key highlights, e.g., a) describe an issue-area in global politics, b) describe 1-2 individuals or organizations that are working on this issue, c) describe their strategies for advancing social and political change, d) describe major accomplishments and failures of the activists, e) drawing on contentious politics theory and other cases, strategize ways to improve activists' efforts.

Students using PowerPoint or other presentation software must email their presentation to the instructor at least 2 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 + 5% = 35%): One long essay (15-20 pages) building on the midterm while 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. Students are also required to summarize their analysis into a concise, one-page policy memo that will be circulated to key actors or activists. **Due 5/7 by noon**.

**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 or final paper 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:

### Jan 21: Introduction

- No reading

## Part I: Domestic Activism

### Jan 23: Introduction

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” April 16, 1963.
- PODCAST: “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>

### Jan 28: The Origins of Contentious Politics

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [Introduction and ch. 1]
- Jim Scott, 1986. “Everyday forms of peasant resistance,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13:2, 5-9 [READ ONLY TO p. 9]

### Jan 30: The Birth of the Social Movement [RP1 due]

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [ch. 2- 4]
- SKIM: 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.

### Feb 4: The Birth of the Social Movement

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [ch. 5- 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>
  - PODCAST: “Black Lives Matter Founders Describe ‘Paradigm Shift’ in the Movement,” *NPR’s Code Switch* July 2016. <http://n.pr/2jnd6Gx>
  - NYT Editorial Board, “Voters Tell Prosecutors, Black Lives Matter,” *NYT* March 18, 2016. <https://nyti.ms/2lNRqoe>

### Feb 6: The Power of Social Movements

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* [ch. 10]
- 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.

- Andreas Madestam, Daniel Shoag, Stan Veuger, David Yanagizawa-Drott. 2013. “Do Political Protests Matter? Evidence from the Tea Party Movement,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128:4, 1633–1669 [READ ONLY TO p. 1669]

**Feb 11: Rural Politics**

- Kathy Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* [ch. 1, 2, 3]

**Feb 13: Rural Politics**

- Kathy Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* [ch. 4, 5]

\*\*\* Feb 18: NO CLASS (BU Monday) \*\*\*

**Feb 20: Rural Politics (Feb 20)**

- Kathy Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* [ch. 6, 7, 8]
- Various authors. 2017. “A Discussion of Katherine J. Cramer's *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 15(2), 529-530.

**Feb 25: People Power in Nondemocracies**

- Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections* [Introduction, ch. 1, 2, 3]

**Feb 27: People Power in Nondemocracies**

- Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections* [ch. 4 or 5; 6]

**March 3: The Power of Social Movements [RP2 due]**

- FILM: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*
- CASE STUDY: The Women's Movement and #MeToo
  - Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey. Oct 5, 2017. “Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades.” *NYT* <https://nyti.ms/2yKx98H>
  - Jia Tolentino. Nov 9, 2017. “Listening to What Trump's Accusers Have Told Us.” *The New Yorker* <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/listening-to-what-trumps-accusers-have-told-us>
  - Sarah Almukhtar, Michael Gold, and Larry Buchanan. Dec 22, 2017. “After Weinstein: 50 Men Accused of Sexual: Misconduct and Their Fall From Power.” *NYT* <https://nyti.ms/2hqfMXM>
  - Thomas B. Edsall, Dec 14, 2017. “The Politics of #HimToo.” *NYT* <https://nyti.ms/2jTFjGK>
  - VIDEO: Oprah Winfrey Receives Cecil B. de Mille Award at the 2018 Golden Globes. [https://youtu.be/fN5HV79\\_8B8?t=2s](https://youtu.be/fN5HV79_8B8?t=2s)

**March 5: Midterm Papers Due**

- No reading

\*\*\* Spring Break \*\*\*

## Part II: Transnational Activism

### March 17: Theories of Transnational People Power

- Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 1999. "Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics." *International Social Science Journal*, 51: 89–101.
- Richard Price, 1998. "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization*. 52:3, 613-644.

### March 19: Theories of Transnational People Power [RP3 due]

- 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 & Florence Palpacuer, 2012. "From Varieties of Capitalism to Varieties of Activism: The Antisweatshop Movement in Comparative Perspective." *SP* 59:4, 522-43.

### March 24: The Global Right Wing

- Clifford Bob, *Global Right Wing* [read ch. 1, 2, 3]

### March 26: The Global Right Wing

- Clifford Bob, *Global Right Wing* [read ch. 4, 5, 6, 7]

## Part III: Digital Activism

### March 31: Liberation Technology?

- Larry Diamond, 2010. "Liberation Technology." *Journal of Democracy* 21:3, 69-83.
- Jeffrey S. Juris, 2011. "Cyber-Activism." *Green Culture: An A-Z Guide*, Kevin Wehr (Ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, pp. 96-100.
- Ronald Deibert and Rafal Rohozinski, 2010. "Liberation Vs. Control: The Future of Cyberspace." *Journal of Democracy* 21:4, 43-57.

### April 2: Pathologies of Digital Activism I

- Seva Gunitsky, 2015. "Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 42–54.
- 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.

### April 7: Connective Action

- Marc Lynch, 2011. "After Egypt: The Limits and Promise of Online Challenges to the Authoritarian Arab State," *Perspectives on Politics* 9:2, 301-10.
- W. Lance Bennett & Alexandra Segerberg. 2012. "The Logic Of Connective Action." *Information, Communication & Society*, 15:5, 739-768

### April 9: Pathologies of Digital Activism II [Guest Speaker Tim Longman]

- CASE STUDY: #Kony2012 (<http://youtu.be/Y4MnpzG5Sqc>)
  - Outreach Council of the African Studies Association, "[React and Respond: The Phenomenon of Kony 2012.](#)"

- 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.
- 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>

#### **April 14: Pathologies of Digital Activism III**

- Stephan Lewandowsky, Ullrich K.H. Ecker, John Cook, 2017. “Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the “Post-Truth” Era.” *JARMC* 6: 4, 353-369.
- McNamee, Roger. 2018. “How to Fix Facebook—Before It Fixes Us.” *Washington Monthly*. <http://bit.ly/2IXVKIA>
- SKIM: Gabriel Weimann. 2016. “Going Dark: Terrorism on the Dark Web,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 39:3, 195-206
- CASE STUDY: 2016 U.S. presidential election
  - U.S. Intelligence Community, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections,” January 6, 2017.
  - Michael Barbaro, 2016. “Pithy, Mean and Powerful: How Donald Trump Mastered Twitter for 2016.” *NYT* October 5, 2015. <https://nyti.ms/1L1ePHJ>
  - Jonathan Kirshner, “America, America.” Jan 15, 2017. *Los Angeles York Review of Books* <http://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/essays/america-america/>

#### **April 16: Hybrid Activism [RP4 due]**

- 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.
- Robert M. Bond, Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle & James H. Fowler. 2012, “A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization.” *Nature* 489, 295–298.

#### **April 21: Innovation and Entrepreneurship [Guest Speaker Blake Sims]**

- Grayson Brulte, 2018. “Political innovation.” <https://executive.mit.edu/blog/political-innovation-developing-an-innovative-political-organization>
- Paula Newton, 2014. “12 Innovative Technologies That Foster Social Change.” <https://www.intelligenthq.com/innovation-management/12-innovative-technologies-that-foster-social-change/>

#### **April 23: Connective Action**

- Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* [pp. ix-112]

#### **April 28: Connective Action [RPx]**

- Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* [pp. 115-277]

#### **April 30: Closing Remarks**

- No reading

\*\*\* Final Papers Due by noon on May 7 \*\*\*

## 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