

SYLLABUS

IR519: People Power in Global Politics

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Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University
Fall 2022: Mon/Wed 2:30-3:45pm in IRB 102 (154 Bay State Rd.)
Office Hours: M 3:45-5pm; T 3:15-5pm (156 Bay State Rd. #201)

“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:

- Kathleen Below. 2019. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Harvard University Press. [[Free via BU Library](#)]
- Clifford Bob, 2019. *Rights as Weapons: Instruments of Conflict, Tools of Power*. Princeton University Press. [[Free via BU Library](#)]
- David S. Meyer. 2021. *How Social Movements (Sometimes) Matter*. Polity.
- Kurt Schock, 2004. *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*. University of Minnesota Press. [[Free via BU Library](#)]
- Zeynep Tufekci, 2017. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Activism*. Yale University Press. [[Free via BU Library](#)]

Recommended Texts:

- Ta-Nahisi Coates, 2015. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau.
- Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn 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.
- Sidney G. Tarrow, 2011. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition. Cambridge University Press. [[Free via BU Library](#)]

Required Film:

- Mary Dore, 2014. *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*. Cinema Guild. [Via [BU 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. If a student missed class due to an unexcused absence, their absence may be reflected in their participation grade. Active participation also requires students to engage with social movements beyond the assigned readings. To help do so, students will craft a weekly email newsletter collecting stories related to the course material. Each student will be responsible for writing one issue of the newsletter, sent to the class listserv on Sunday or Tuesday night and titled "This Week in People Power." The

newsletter editor will be expected to begin the seminar with a short (1-2 min) description of relevant news.

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 **9/14, 10/5, 10/24, 11/16**. An optional makeup is due **12/5**. RP's should respond to the readings assigned for the due date and be submitted before class. 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 context in which they work and their strategies for advancing social and political change. **Due 11/9 before class**. Students must meet with me the week of **11/14** to discuss their projects.

Presentation (1 x 10% = 10%): Each student will be responsible for a ten-minute presentation on his/her/their 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 the context in which they work and 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 must email their presentation to the instructor at least 1 hour prior to class. A grade rubric for the presentations is at the end of the syllabus. Students will sign up for presentation dates on the first week of class.

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 (5%) that will be circulated to key actors or activists. **Due 12/16 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/>

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. If there is a religious holy day that will require your absence, please notify me no later than the first two weeks of class so that we can make arrangements for your absence. If a student misses class due to an unexcused absence, their absence may be reflected in their participation grade

Academic Integrity: All members of the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, and the CAS Academic Conduct Code will be strictly enforced. The online environment does not change your responsibility to follow the Academic Conduct Code. The work you submit must be your own, with clear and accurate citations for the source of any quotations, data, or ideas. Collaboration among students on assignments is not allowed except where for presentations and when collaboration is explicitly required. The Conduct Code can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

Dates and Readings:

Sep 7: Introduction

- No reading

Part I: Domestic Activism

Sep 12: 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:

- Ta-Nahisi Coates, 2015. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau.

Sep 14: The Origins of Social Movements [RP1 due]

- Meyer, *How Social Movements (Sometimes) Matter* [Introduction – Ch.1]
- Jim Scott, 1986. “Everyday forms of peasant resistance,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13:2, 5-9 [READ ONLY TO p. 9]

Sep 19: Revolutions

- Meyer, *How Social Movements (Sometimes) Matter* [Ch. 2-3]

Sep 21: The Power of Social Movements

- Meyer, *How Social Movements (Sometimes) Matter* [Ch. 4-5]
- 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.

Sep 26: The Power of Social Movements

- Meyer, *How Social Movements (Sometimes) Matter* [Ch. 6-7]
- 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]

Sep 28: White Power

- Belew, *Bring the War Home* [Introduction- ch 4]

Oct 3: White Power

- Belew, *Bring the War Home* [ch 5-7]

Oct 5: White Power [RP2 due]

- Belew, *Bring the War Home* [ch 8-Epilogue]
- FILM: PBS NewsHour, [American Reckoning](#)

***** Oct 10: NO CLASS (Indigenous Peoples' Day) *****

Oct 11: People Power in Nondemocracies (BU Monday)

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

Oct 12: People Power in Nondemocracies

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

Oct 17: The Women's Movement

- 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>
 - 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>
 - VIDEO: Oprah Winfrey Receives Cecil B. de Mille Award at the 2018 Golden Globes. https://youtu.be/fN5HV79_8B8?t=2s
 - Mariel Padilla, Jan 19, 2021. "Biden will form a council dedicated to policy that affects women and girls" *The 19th*. <https://19thnews.org/2021/01/white-house-gender-policy-council-jennifer-klein-julissa-reynoso/>

Part II: Transnational Activism

Oct 19: 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.

Oct 24: Transnational People Power [RP3 due]

- Audie Klotz, 2002. "Transnational Activism and Global Transformations: The Anti-Apartheid and Abolitionist Experiences," *European Journal of International Relations* 8:1, 49-76.
- Jelena Cupać, Irem Ebetürk, 2021. "Backlash advocacy and NGO polarization over women's rights in the United Nations," *International Affairs*, 97:4, 1183–1201.

Oct 26: Rights as Weapons

- Bob, *Rights as Weapons* [Ch. 1-3]
- Rebecca J. Kreitzer, Abigail A. Matthews and Emily U. Schilling, May 3, 2022. "Conservative Republican women have led the fight to restrict abortion." *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/09/09/texas-beyond-conservative-republican-women-are-helping-lead-fight-restrict-abortion/>

Oct 31: Rights as Weapons

- Bob, *Rights as Weapons* [Ch. 4-6]

- Allison Gash, May 31, 2022. “Trans advocates work locally. Conservatives fight back nationally.” *The Washington Post*
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/05/31/trans-youth-medical-conservatives-lgbtq-states/>

Nov 2: Rights as Weapons

- Bob, *Rights as Weapons* [Ch. 7-9]
- Susan Roberts, May 31, 2019. *The Washington Post* “Surprised by all these abortion bans? Meet Americans United for Life — the most significant antiabortion group you’ve never heard of.” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/05/31/surprised-by-all-these-abortion-bans-meet-americans-united-life-most-significant-pro-life-group-youve-never-heard/>

Part III: Digital Activism

Nov 7: Liberation Technology?

- Larry Diamond, 2010. “Liberation Technology.” *Journal of Democracy* 21:3, 69-83.
- Shibani Mahtani, 2019. “Masks, cash and apps: How Hong Kong’s protesters find ways to outwit the surveillance state” *The Washington Post*
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/masks-cash-and-apps-how-hong-kongs-protesters-find-ways-to-outwit-the-surveillance-state/2019/06/15/8229169c-8ea0-11e9-b6f4-033356502dce_story.html

Nov 9: Pathologies of Digital Activism I [Midterm Due]

- Seva Gunitsky, 2015. “Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 42–54.
- Tucker, J.A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M.E., & Barberá, P. (2017). “From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media And Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy* 28(4), 46-59.

Nov 14: Connective Action

- W. Lance Bennett & Alexandra Segerberg. 2012. “The Logic of Connective Action.” *Information, Communication & Society*, 15:5, 739-768.
- Lorenz, Taylor, Kellen Browning and Sheera Frenkel. 2020: “TikTok Teens and K-Pop Stans Say They Sank Trump Rally” *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/style/tiktok-trump-rally-tulsa.html>

Nov 16: Pathologies of Digital Activism II

- Anita R. Gohdes, 2020. “Repression technology: Internet accessibility and state violence,” *American Journal of Political Science* 64: 488-503.
- 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 Arttime, 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>

Nov 21: Hybrid Activism [RP 4 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.
- McNamee, Roger. 2018. “How to Fix Facebook—Before It Fixes Us.” *Washington Monthly*. <http://bit.ly/2IXVKIA>

***** Nov 23: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving) *****

Nov 28: Connective Action

- Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* [Intro-Ch.4]

Nov 30: Connective Action

- Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* [Ch. 5-7]

Dec 5: Connective Action [RPx]

- Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas* [Ch.8-Epilogue]

Dec 7: The Future of Activism

- Alperstein, N. (2021). “The Present and Future of Performing Media Activism,” in *Performing Media Activism in the Digital Age*. Palgrave Macmillan https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73804-4_7
- Abbas, Laila, Fahmy, Shahira S., Ayad, Sherry, Ibrahim, Mirna and Ali, Abdelmoneim Hany. "TikTok Intifada: Analyzing Social Media Activism Among Youth" *Online Media and Global Communication*, 1: 2, 2022, pp. 287-314. <https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2022-0014>

Dec 12: The Future of Activism

No readings

***** Final papers due by noon on Dec 16 *****

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