CIVIL RESISTANCE & SOCIAL JUSTICE: 
Theory, Practice, Technology & Media

Topical Issues in Sociology / 920:393
Honors Living-Learning Community / Rutgers University, Newark
Thursdays 2:30 p.m. to 5:20 p.m. / Fall Semester 2016
Conklin Hall 424

INSTRUCTORS

Kurt Schock, Associate Professor of Sociology, Director of International Institute for Peace, Rutgers University, Newark [http://iip.rutgers.edu]
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OVERVIEW
We will examine the theory and practice of civil resistance (nonviolent resistance) in struggles for social justice. We will examine the history of nonviolent resistance with a particular emphasis on struggles in the US from the Civil Rights Movement onward, including struggles for housing, struggles against war and militarism, student activism, immigrant rights, environmental justice, Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, and the LGBT movement. We will focus on the impact of new Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) on mobilizing nonviolent resistance, as well as the role of the mass media in shaping nonviolent struggles, media biases in the coverage of nonviolent resistance, and recent innovations in the digital coverage of nonviolent struggles.

LEARNING GOALS
• Understand the history and dynamics of nonviolent struggles for social justice
• Understand the role of the mass media, film and ICTs in covering and shaping nonviolent struggles
• Learn about local campaigns for social justice in Newark and the NYC metropolitan area
• Forge connections with local community groups struggling for social justice
GRADING

Grades will be calculated based on a combination of the following:

- **class participation** (10%): attendance and informed verbal discussion of readings and issues.

- **participation in online discussions** (10%): informed written discussion of readings and issues. Questions related to the readings will be posted on Blackboard.

- **short writing assignments** (30%): a number of short writing assignments (4-5 page) will be given. Details will provide in subsequent handouts.

- **individual or group project** (25%): an individual or collaborative paper and presentation on a campaign of civil resistance. Details will provide in subsequent handouts.

- **final examination** (25%): an in-class final examination composed of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. A study guide will be distributed prior to the exam.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1) All of the readings are available on Blackboard. See the “readings” tab on Blackboard.

2) All handouts distributed in class will be placed on Blackboard under the “course documents” tab.

3) Please read the university regulations concerning academic integrity. See the “academic integrity” tab on Blackboard.

4) Do not hesitate to contact any of the instructors with questions or problems.

5) We encourage class discussion. Please feel free to ask questions or express your relevant thoughts at any time.

6) Excessive unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.
SCHEDULE

1. Thursday, September 8: Introduction to Civil Resistance

Readings:
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1963) “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

Video:

Supplementary Material:
- A Force More Powerful: Study Guide

2. Thursday, September 15: Civil Resistance: Theory

Readings:
3. Thursday, September 22: Media, Technology and Civil Resistance

Readings:


• King, Mary Elizabeth (2011) “How We Made the Media Pay Attention.” Waging Nonviolence, September 16.


• metaActivism (2012) “The 6 Activist Functions of Technology.”


Video:

• Pressing Your Case: Nonviolent Movements and the Media (2015)
Speaker:

Supplementary Material:

4. **Thursday, September 29: Civil Resistance: History**

Readings:

Video:
- *Bringing Down a Dictator* (2002)

Supplementary Material:
- *Bringing Down a Dictator: A Discussion Guide*

5. **Thursday, October 6: Housing Justice & Land Rights**

Readings:
Video:
- *Homes for the Homeless* (June 26, 2009) NOW, PBS.

Speaker
- **Rob Robinson**, member of the Leadership Committee of the Take Back the Land movement; staff volunteer at the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI).

6. Thursday, October 13: *Conflict Resolution: Local, Interpersonal*

Readings:
- Baez, Joan “What Would You Do If?” *Solutions to Violence*, pp. 197-99.

Video:
- Excerpt from *The Interrupters* (2011)

7. Thursday, October 20: *Antiwar/Antimilitarism*

Readings:
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1967. “Beyond Vietnam.”
• Cortright, David (2012) “From the Streets to the Ballot Box: Ending the War in Iraq.” Mobilizing Ideas, July 2.

Speakers:
• Claude Copeland Jr., Iraq Veterans Against the War
• Ramesh Sharma, National Convener, Ekta Parishad, India

8. Thursday, October 27: Student and Youth Activism

Readings:
Speaker:

• **Kate Aronoff**, Brooklyn-based freelance writer, Communications Coordinator for the New Economy Coalition, and co-founder of the Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network. Her writing has appeared in *The Nation, The American Prospect, Dissent, The New York Times* and *Waging Nonviolence*.

9. Thursday, November 3: *Immigrant Rights*

Readings:

• Abello, Oscar Perry (2016) “In Newark, Immigrant Entrepreneurs Put Their Own Spin on Starting a Business” *Next City*, July 29.

Speaker:

• **Thaís Marques**, Cosecha.
10. Thursday, November 10: Environmental Justice

Readings:

• Rivlin-Nadler, Max (2016) “After a Voice Investigation, Newark is Looking to Make the Port Authority Pay.” The Village Voice, July 12.

Video:

• A Fierce Green Fire (2012)

Speaker:

• Maria-Lopez Nunez, Ironbound Community Corporation.

11. Thursday, November 17: 2011: Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, etc.

Readings:

• Gottesdiener, Laura (2013) “What Does It Take To Organize a Workplace?” Waging Nonviolence, April 1.

Video:
• Another World (2014)

Speaker:
• Priscilla Grim, digital media strategist, Occupy Wall Street activist.

12. Tuesday, November 22: Black Lives Matter and Racial Justice

Readings:

Speaker:
• Nyle Fort, Master’s of Divinity candidate, Princeton Theological Seminary, youth pastor, freelance writer, and grassroots community organizer based in Newark.
13. Thursday, December 1: Women & Civil Resistance; LGBT Movement

Readings:

Video:
- Pray the Devil Back to Hell (2008)

14. Thursday, December 8: Presentations

15. Thursday, December 22, 11:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.: Final examination.