

POLS 382 — The Power of Protest in Global Politics (Topics in Contemporary Security)

Dr. Ches Thurber

Spring 2021

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Office Hours: M/T 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Office: <https://calendly.com/chesthurber/officehours>

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Class Hours: Online

Class Room: Online

Teaching Assistants

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Course Description

From colonial America to colonial India, the Berlin Wall to Tahrir Square, nonviolent resistance movements have proven capable of toppling regimes and recasting the geopolitical landscape. But what exactly constitutes “nonviolent” resistance? Why do some groups employ it while others turn to arms? Why and when is it effective? What, if anything, can the international community do to help nonviolent movements succeed? This seminar is intended to provide a broad, interdisciplinary overview of the study of what has been interchangeably called civil resistance, nonviolent direct action, and strategic nonviolence. It will explore questions surrounding the ethics of nonviolent action, when and where civil resistance is used, the conditions under which it is more or less effective, and its consequences for local communities, state polities, and the international system. The course will draw from seminal philosophical texts, historical accounts, and cutting-edge social science research. Students will gain an understanding of both the normative and empirical debates surrounding the practice of civil resistance and a familiarity with key cases in which it has been used.

Mode of Delivery

This will be a fully online class. It is primarily asynchronous (i.e. no required online meeting times). Content for each week will be made available on Blackboard on Fridays at 5pm and assignments will generally be due the following Friday at 5pm. You *MUST* stay up to date with the class. It will not be possible either to work ahead or to catch-up later.

There will be a few opportunities for synchronous activities that are scheduled in the syllabus. Alternative arrangements will be made in all cases so that students who are not available at those times are given an equal learning opportunity.

A Note on Learning Amidst Pandemic

These are crazy times. We will be proceeding with this class the best we can and to some degree I hope the process of reading, writing, and talking about topics we are all passionate about helps provide you with some sense of normalcy. But sometimes that can feel like absurdity. Please know that you are not alone in feeling it and that we are all in this together. I will be as accommodating as I can this semester in light of these circumstances and I hope that we can all agree to engage each other in a spirit of mutual patience, empathy, and understanding. If you or somebody you know is struggling with anxiety or other issues, do not hesitate to reach out. Resources available include the DRC, Student Counseling Services or call 815-306-2777.

Office Hours

I will be holding office hours on Mondays and Tuesdays between 9:30 and 11:00. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this; since we don't have class in person, this is the best chance I have to get to know you! Sign up for an appointment at [this link](#). Enter your NIU email address and Calendly will automatically set up a Teams meeting for the two of us at the time that you selected.

Texts

The required textbooks for the course are:

- Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Non-violent Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. (You will need to buy this book)
- Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton-Ash, eds. *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. (Available Electronically through NIU library)

Evaluation

Discussion Board Posts (20%): For each week of the course, there will be an online discussion board. Students are expected to contribute at least one post of 200 words in length each week, by 5pm on Friday.

Reading Quizzes (10%): For each week of the course, there will be an online multiple choice quiz on the readings and video lectures. Students will be able to re-take the quiz one time. Quizzes must be complete by Friday at 5pm.

Writing Assignments: (3 x 15%) You will complete three short writing assignments over the course of the semester. Each assignment should be between 600 and 800 words in length. You will pick a case of a civil resistance from around the world and become an expert on that case. The first assignment will be as for a brief overview of the case, while the second and third will analyze key

concepts introduced in the course. The writing assignments are due at 5pm on Friday afternoons as indicated in the course schedule below.

Final Video: (20%) During the last week of class, you will create a 5-10 minute video presentation describing the case you studied over the semester and the lessons you drew from it. Alternative modes of presentation are welcome with approval of instructor.

Video Comments: (5%) During the exam week, you will write comments on the videos of 4-6 classmates.

Week-Off Policy

For good reasons, the university has canceled spring break this semester. But that makes this course a bit of a long haul. Combined with the difficulties and sometimes drudgery of taking so many online classes, we all need a break every now and then. So every student in this class will be allowed to “pick your own Spring Break!” That is, you may choose to take one week off at any point *other than the paper weeks*. Just let me know you are taking that week off and I will enter you for full credit for the reading quiz and for the discussion board post for that week.

Course Policies

- If you think you need to delay submitting a written assignment, please talk to me in advance and I will try to be accommodating. Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization will incur a penalty. (Seriously, in all cases please reach out and let me know an assignment is going to be late. And do not feel obligated to go into details of your personal life. In these times it’s totally fine to write to me saying “Some stuff’s come up, is there any way I can have an extension?”)
- All students are expected to adhere to the highest levels of academic integrity. Violations of university, departmental, and disciplinary standards will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the assignment and automatic reporting through institutional procedures. Information on University-wide definitions and policies regarding academic integrity can be found [here](#). (Again, seriously! There is NO circumstance in which you are better off plagiarizing than submitting a paper late.)
- If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu. Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
- I ask that my undergraduate students refer to me as either Dr. or Professor Thurber. I’m just old-school that way. Please let me know how you prefer to be addressed, both in name and pronoun, especially if it differs from what is in the college directory. I will make every effort to address you in the way you wish to be addressed. Please try and do the same for your fellow classmates, as well as for other faculty in the department.

- I am committed to your success in this class – if you feel that you are not performing to your expectations, please come and see me. (Seriously!) I am available to answer any questions you may have about course assignments, requirements or content. I generally answer e-mails within 24 hrs on weekdays, and would be happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you if you are unavailable during my posted office hours.
- You may have noticed like a dozen “Seriously!” in the points above. Especially in these times, you are all going through lots of adversity. I put the points above on my syllabus because in my experience they make the biggest different in terms of students’ ability to get through my classes successfully, even when facing a lot of external life pressures.

Class Schedule

Students are expected to read the listed readings before the indicated class session.

Week 1: What is Civil Resistance? (Monday 01/11 - Friday 01/15)

Case Study: The American Revolution

- *Civil Resistance and Power Politics*, Ch. 1
- Conser Jr., "The United States: Reconsidering the Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775" (BB)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Monday 01/18 (This is a departure from our normal routine which will be a Friday due date)

Week 2: Nonviolence as a Moral Philosophy (Monday 01/18 - Friday 01/22)

Case Study: The Movements for Indian Home Rule

- Carter, "People Power and Protest: the Literature on Civil Resistance in Historical Context" (CRPP Ch. 2)
- Brown, "Gandhi and Civil Resistance in India" (CRPP Ch. 3)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 01/22

Week 3: Nonviolence as a Strategy (Monday 01/25 - Friday 01/29)

Case Study: The Philippine People Power Movement

- Chenoweth and Stephen, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Chs. 1 and 6

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 01/29

Week 4: Paper Week #1 (Monday 02/01 - Friday 02/05)

- Optional Online Discussion Session A: Monday 11:00-12:15
- Optional Online Discussion Session B: Tuesday 2:00-3:15

Paper #1 Due by 5PM on Friday 02/05

Week 5: The Primacy of Mass Participation (Monday 02/08 - Friday 02/12)

Case Study: The Iranian Revolution

- Chenoweth and Stephen, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Chs. 2 and 4

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 02/12

Week 6: The Problem of Repression (Monday 02/15 - Friday 02/19)

- Chenoweth et al, “State Repression and Civil Resistance” (BB)
- Goldman, “The 1989 Demonstrations in Tianenman Square and Beyond” (CRPP Ch. 15)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 02/19

Week 7: The Dynamics of Backfire (Monday 02/22 - Friday 02/26)

Case Study: Chile

- Martin, *Justice Reignited* (BB)
- Popovic and Joksic, “The Secret of Political Jiu-Jitsu” (BB)
- Huneeus, “Mass Mobilization in Pinochet’s Chile, 1983-88” (CRPP, Ch. 12)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 02/26

Week 8: Paper Week #2 (Monday 03/01 - Friday 03/05)

- Optional Online Discussion Session A: Monday 11:00-12:15
- Optional Online Discussion Session B: Tuesday 2:00-3:15

Paper #2 Due by 5PM on Friday 03/05

Week 9: Choosing or Rejecting Civil Resistance (Monday 03/08 - Friday 03/12)

Case Study: Nepal’s Maoists

- Thurber, *Between Mao and Gandhi*, Chs. 1 and 4 (BB)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 03/12

Week 10: Nonviolent Discipline and Radical Flanks (Monday 03/15 - Friday 03/19)

Case Study: The First Palestinian Intifada

- Pinckney, “Making or Breaking Nonviolent Discipline” (BB)
- Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Ch. 5

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5pm on Friday 03/19

Week 11: Race and Civil Resistance (Monday 03/22 - Friday 03/26)

Case Study: The South African anti-Apartheid Movement

- Gelderloos, “Nonviolence is Racist” (BB)
- Thurber, “Ethnic Barriers to Civil Resistance” (BB, skim)
- Lodge, “The Interplay of Violent and Nonviolent Action in the Movement Against Apartheid in South Africa” (CRPP, Ch. 13)

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 03/26

Week 12: Paper Week #3 (Monday 03/29 - Friday 04/02)

- Optional Online Discussion Session A: Monday 11:00-12:15
- Optional Online Discussion Session B: Tuesday 2:00-3:15

Paper #3 Due by 5PM on Friday 04/02

Week 13: Student Choice Week! (Monday 04/05 - Friday 04/09)

- TBD: Options Include:
 - The Chicano Movement
 - Black Lives Matter
 - Protests in Sudan
 - Protests in Venezuela
 - The Arab Spring

Reading Quiz and Discussion Board Post Due by 5PM on Friday 04/09

Week 14: Student Choice Week! (Monday 04/12 - Friday 04/16)

- TBD

Week 15: Final Video Project Week (Monday 04/19 - Friday 04/23)

- Optional Online Discussion Session A: Monday 11:00-12:15
- Optional Online Discussion Session B: Tuesday 2:00-3:15

Final Exam Week ; (Monday 04/26 - Friday 04/30)

Post comments on colleagues videos by 5pm on Friday 04/30