

Protest and Dissent

Political Science 394DI
GenEd Integrative Experience
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Office Hours:
Mondays by appointment
Wednesdays 1-2:30

Course Description

Protest and dissent may appear intensified or “on the rise” at this moment. But just how unique are these times? How much *do* we know about the history of protest and dissent? How was protest and dissent practiced, studied, policed, and recorded in the past; how is it done so today? Why, how, under which conditions and to what effects, do people protest and express their dissent? What are the different forms, strategies, tactics, and ethics of protest and dissent; why and how do they change over time? While marches, riots, strikes, occupations, and boycotts, among other forms of protest are easily recognizable, what are the other ways in which individuals and groups express political dissent and engage in protest? Protest and dissent are variously and often simultaneously accompanied by conflict, solidarity, violence, internal power struggles and police repression; what explains that variation?

There are highly variable and hotly contested ways that protest and dissent are categorized and conceptualized by protesters and dissenters, journalists, academic researchers, government agencies, journalism, public and private foundations, police, think tanks, social media, and so on. Course materials and required readings are selected because they are well written or exemplary, and because they illuminate key questions, challenge our comprehension, or expose us to the breadths and depths of protest and dissent. Cases of protest and dissent are countless. We will utilize a wide range of sources—including historical, interdisciplinary, and comparative research, memoirs, films, music, art, and more—to examine protest and dissent in a wide range of contexts. While it is impossible to cover the innumerable cases of protest and dissent in one semester or in ten, students will have the option to select and conduct independent research on a topic according to their own interest.

Objectives

The principle objective of the course is to familiarize students with the history and political analysis of protest and dissent. The course takes an integrative approach with respect to content matter, drawing on a range of areas not only in political science (including the major subfields of political theory, American politics, comparative politics, and international relations) but also across the social sciences (including history, sociology, and philosophy). Additionally, the course pursues several objectives related specifically to the Integrative Experience (IE) requirements, and more broadly to building on students' critical thinking, writing, research, and communication skills. Class discussions and small group activities provide shared learning experiences and opportunities to practice oral communication, collaboration, and to experiment with new perspectives. Written assignments will prompt you to consider the complexities of protest and dissent from different and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Our objectives also include:

- *To reflect upon your education, how it shapes, constrains, challenges, confounds or changes how you understand protest and dissent.
- *To critically examine both instances and accounts of protest and dissent.
- *To become more familiar with and practice using analytical, theoretical, and historical methods of political analysis; and, to become more experienced in finding and using scholarly sources and research tools.
- *To practice and improve your oral and written presentation of complex ideas, evidence, and arguments.
- *To practice and improve your thinking skills: creative, interpretive, critical, analytical, and reflective thinking.

Goals

As an Integrative Experience (IE) course, a main goal of this course is to provide structure for students to reflect on the materials they have learned in previous courses and to connect that material both to this course and to their experiences beyond the classroom. This goal requires reflection not only on the topic of protest and dissent, but also reflection on your education; not only reflecting on the assigned material, but on how you will carry that learning through a life-long practice of thoughtful, critical engagement in every aspect of life. Many elements of the course will provide opportunities for such reflection. Class discussions and assignments will call on you to engage in reflection upon your previous General Education classes, applying or relating prior learning across diverse fields to the topic of protest and dissent.

In addition to reflecting on how the course material relates to your prior learning and life experiences, this course also addresses the IE criteria by 1) providing students with the opportunity to practice General Education learning objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspective-taking at an advanced level; and 2) offering students a shared learning experience for applying their prior learning to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.

Commented [A1]: Before the course is named explicitly as an IE course, the syllabus explains that students will be asked to draw upon prior learning experiences from different disciplines and majors.

Throughout this section, and the following "Goals" section, the instructor demonstrates how IE objectives are woven into the class, conveying the value of integrative and reflective thinking.

Commented [A2]: Here, the instructor directly ties the course theme to students' prior learning experiences, asking students to reflect on these experiences and consider how they might use them going forward.

Requirements

Reading is a vital part of this course. Students will be recognized and rewarded for contributions that reflect their reading comprehension to class discussions as well as in oral and written assignments. **All required reading must be completed before the class date for which it is scheduled.** We will revisit and review course readings paired with new material and current events throughout the semester, so it is essential to become familiar with the authors and retain their arguments. If for any reason you have any difficulties at all comprehending the required reading, you are invited to raise them in class and/or discuss them with the instructor. If you fall behind on the required reading, you are strongly encouraged to alert and seek guidance from the instructor.

Thinking, particularly students' creative, interpretive, critical, analytical, and reflective thinking will be evaluated in class discussions, oral presentations, and on written assignments. We will strive to think **creatively** about protest and dissent now underway. We will learn to interpret protest and dissent from different perspectives in part to gain more knowledge about, and possibly more command of, our own **interpretive** perspectives (i.e., thinking about how we perceive things). We will compare histories, social and political theories, films and more to survey and **critically** examine different accounts, evaluations, and explanations of protest and dissent. We will compare and assess the limits, advantages, variations, and different uses of **analytical** categories and conceptual frameworks in the conduct of protest and dissent and in academic research, in policing, news production, slogans, data collection, and more. **Reflective** thinking will focus on your education prior to and over the course of this semester.

Class Discussions and activities are vital to this course. Students will be recognized and rewarded for their contributions to class discussions and activities, as well as for improving the quality and quantity of their contributions over the course of the semester. **Class attendance is required.** In-class writing, small group exercises, and discussions will be focused on the assigned material and current events. Across the variety of formats used to structure discussions and activities in class, we will practice oral communication for collaborative learning, critical deliberation, and respectful disagreement.

Code of Honesty: Students are expected to adhere to the University's Academic Code of Honesty; suspected violations will be immediately reported for investigation. If you are unfamiliar with this code of conduct please review it immediately:
http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

Written and Oral Assignments

The Electronic Journal Assignment does *not* ask you to record your judgments or opinions. The assignment is to reflect on the course materials in relation to what you already know and to reflect upon what you are learning now about protest and dissent. As part of fulfilling IE requirements, the journal is intended to encourage students to practice self-reflection, especially reflection on how your previous experiences and education inform your interpretations of, and reactions to, the course topics, readings, class discussions, and, possibly, your own independent research. The journal is also the place to comment on any aspect of the class and where you should feel free to register your insights, reflections, and reactions. For example, you might have been particularly touched or frustrated by something you heard or read in class. Questions to address in your journal should include:

- *How do you know/not know about protest and dissent? Where do you get information?
- *How does what we are learning – in general and in reference to particular course readings, discussions, and materials - impact your own thinking, vocabulary, or your own political life?
- *How has my education so far, and in this class, prepared me to interpret political events such as protest or changed my interpretation of events?
- *How do I relate to the protest and dissent we are studying? In which do I find causes to hope or to fear, and why?
- *Report on any insights you gain. Insight can come from anywhere, but those related to the course readings, materials, and discussions are essential.

Written and Oral Assignment Options are available and will be explained in detail. Students must choose one of three prior to **February 27**.

Research Option: Ten minute Midterm Oral Presentation of Preliminary Research to class (including key elements of research design) and a Final Independent Research Paper.

Exam & Essay Option: Take-home Midterm Examination on the required reading and a Final Essay based primarily on the required reading, emphasizing reading comprehension, analytical and critical thinking.

Oral Presentation & Essay Option: Ten minute Midterm Presentation to class on an instance of protest and dissent to expose the gaps between what happened and what is said to have happened. (If U.S. based, select an instance prior to 1900.) Final Essay based primarily on the required reading, emphasizing reading comprehension, analytical and critical thinking.

Commented [A3]: This assignment is an ongoing opportunity for students to reflect on and integrate their previous GenEd learning experiences. With entries due throughout the semester, the assignment offers an opportunity for students to make connections between their major, General Education courses, and the course material. **See specific prompts throughout the calendar below for specific examples of the connections students are asked to make.

Grades

25% In Class Contributions: Grades will be based on your attendance, preparation assignments, reading comprehension, contributions to class discussions and small group work, short in-class writing, and any improvements demonstrated over the course of the semester. **No make-ups.** In sum, keep up with the Course Assignment and Reading Schedule, show up and make an effort to contribute to the class.

25% Electronic Journal: Students are required to keep a cumulative journal for the duration of the class. **All entries must be dated.** Over the course of the semester, you must make a **minimum of 20 entries, each 200 words or more.** Grades will be based on the quality and depth of your reflections. A few **required journal entry topics** are listed on the course schedule below and more may be added during the semester. **Additional entries should be made regularly on topics or themes of your choice** (see list of prompts above).

20% Take-Home Examination or Class Presentation: Examination grades will be based on evidence of reading comprehension, critical, analytical, and creative thinking. Presentation grades will be based on criteria specific to each option.

30% Final Paper Assignment will be graded on evidence of reading comprehension, critical, analytical, and creative thinking. Grading criteria for the research paper option will be explained in detail.

Late Assignments will be marked down one letter grade for each day late. Exceptions will be made for documented illness or serious events (such as the death of family members); students should be prepared to present documentation to support any request to submit assignments late without penalty.

Required Course Materials

Books (purchase your own copy)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*
(Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the rise of Black Power*
(Vintage Books, 2010).

Additional required readings and materials are available on Moodle.

Course and Assignment Schedule

Changes to this schedule will be announced in class and posted on Moodle, if necessary or preferable.

1/23 Introductions

Required Journal Entry #1 Start your journal today by recalling and briefly recording what you have studied and learned about protest and dissent so far in your experience and, specifically, in your education and classes at UMass. Be as specific, descriptive, and detailed as possible. What do you hope, fear, or expect to learn in this course?

[You are encouraged to revisit this prompt again in future journal entries. You may recall additional instances in your education related to protest and dissent; add new reflections on your education as they occur to you over the semester; report insights that will come to you later and again recall your education before this class. Record any change in your own thinking and explain to yourself why it sticks; draw new insights and course materials in contrast or in relation to your previous education; record any changes in your thinking and any changes in your expectations along the way.]

Commented [A4]: The course and journal assignment begin with students reflecting upon their education and courses at UMass. This prompt also encourages students to return to this opening prompt as they move through the course, encouraging students to engage with consistent reflection and integration throughout.

1/28 Protest and Dissent in the News

On Moodle, you will find **Recent News** articles in the first section. Look over the news articles, **select and read SEVEN**. There are an overwhelming number of protests underway. Is this moment in time unique or is the reporting on protest unique? Are protest and dissent changing hands? Are there new actors, strategies, tactics, purposes, ethics, modes of repression, or anything else that distinguishes protest and dissent today? What distinctions or commonalities, do you perceive in protest and dissent underway? What does/does not count as protest and dissent? Why is there so little news coverage of some protest and dissent and so much of others, where and who are those others? We will discuss the news articles and conduct an exercise related to your preparation assignment in class.

Preparation Assignment: Prepare lists of the nouns or noun phrases (names, designations, categories, values) **and verbs** (e.g., march, riot, protest, hack, terrorism, occupation, rally, petition, campaign, etc., etc.) **used to denominate protest and dissent in seven news articles. Indicate the source of each denomination, who** used that word or phrase (e.g., the author, those in protest, counter-protesters, commentators, or those quoted). Organize your lists to leave room on the page for writing notations, additions, and corrections in-class. Turn in your list at the end of class.

Required Journal Entry #2 In response to our class discussion of recent protests, note and reflect upon *one or more of the following*: What stands out to you as most important to study and understand about protest and dissent underway? What is most clear and what is most confusing? What are the gaps in your own education about protest & dissent (and we ALL have gaps)? What concerns and questions are raised for you by

reading the news articles? *What should we expect to learn from, or do we expect to be misled by, news stories about protest and dissent?*

1/30 Protest & Dissent at UMass

On Moodle, read 1) the UMass Code of Student Conduct, 2) UMass Demonstration Guidelines, and 3) UMass Picketing Code. Also read 4) "UMass Lawsuit," *The Daily Hampshire Gazette* (1.1.2018), and 5) "UMass Rescinds Rally Policy," *The Daily Hampshire Gazette* (6.26.2018).

Discussion will be on the limits and constraints imposed upon protest and dissent by the UMass Code of Student Conduct, Picketing Code, and Demonstration Guidelines; free speech movement emerging from the Right alongside the resurgence of white supremacy.

Optional: Read ahead Mitchell and Staeheli, "Permitting Protest." Could you write a final research paper on the administration of justice and rights in cases of protest and dissent? On regulating or policing protest on campuses or elsewhere (e.g., abortion clinics, Zuccatti Park, Wall Street, Gezi Park in Istanbul, prisons, courts, sites of industrial agriculture or pipelines, etc.)?

Preparation Assignment: Prior to class, review this syllabus and plan ahead. Raise any questions or concerns about the course - including but not limited to the requirements, grading, and the reading and assignment schedule - in class.

2/4 On the value of conflict for political life

Read: Friedrich Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest"

Preparation Assignment: Be prepared to answer and discuss these questions: What are the differences between good and bad Eris? Why and what is Nietzsche implying when he suggests we are unable to comprehend the value of envy, the lust for victory, and resentment as the Greeks did because we cannot understand them "in Greek"? What is the function of ostracism? He describes "modern ambition" as "unmeasured and immeasurable." In contrast, how was Greek ambition limited and measured? He suggests that "individuals were freer in antiquity;" why and how are we moderns less free? Are there examples of contests today that are comparable to the ancient contests? Obviously, the Olympics, but what about professional sports? Awards such as the Nobel Prize may be comparable, but are there others? There are science contests and debate teams, but what about in the many forms of protest and dissent? Can you think of protest songs that exemplify good or bad Eris?

2/6 On the dangers of conflict for political life

Read: 1) David Whitehouse, "Origins of the Police," worxsintheory.wordpress.com. January 23, 2017.

2) Mitch Smith and Michael Wines, "Across the Country, Republicans Push to Rein in Protesters," *NYT* March 2, 2017.

3) Zoë Carpenter and Tracie Williams, "Since Standing Rock, 56 Bills Have Been Introduced in 30 States to Restrict Protests," *The Nation* February 16, 2018.

- 4) Sheera Frenkel and Daisuke Wakabayashi, "After Florida School Shooting, Russian 'Bot' Army Pounced," *NYT* February 19, 2018.
- 5) Khaled Beydoun and Justin Hansford, "The FBI's Dangerous Crackdown on 'Black Identity Extremists,'" *NYT* November 15, 2017.
- 6) Boots Riley's review of Spike Lee's *Black Klansman* (if we can find it and post on moodle).

Preparation Assignment: Make a list of the dangers identified, exemplified, or implied in each of the five readings. Also, list any other dangers of protest and dissent that occur to you and/or which you hope to discuss. Bring a hard copy of your list and be prepared to amend it in class. Turn it in at the end of class.

2/11 On the perception and policing of disorder and conflict

- Read 1) David Graeber, "On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture," from *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire* (AK Press, 2007).
- 2) Kimberle Crenshaw and Gary Peller, "Reel Time/Real Justice," in Robert Gooding-Williams, ed., *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* (Routledge, 1993).
- 3) Don Mitchell and Lynn Staeheli, "Permitting Protest: Parsing the Fine Geography of Dissent in America," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29:4 (2005): 796-813.

Required Journal Entry #3 Articulate and reflect upon how your education, experience, and/or political commitments shape your own perceptions of disorder and conflict, their value and their dangers.

Commented [A5]: This prompt offers students another opportunity to reflect upon and integrate their own experiences with disorder/conflict.

Part One: Research and Reporting on Protest and Dissent

2/13 Misinterpreting protest and dissent in the past and in the present

- Read 1) Erin Pineda, "Civil Disobedience and Punishment: (Mis)reading Justification and Strategy from SNCC to Snowden," *History of the Present* 5:1 (Spring 2015): 1-30.
- 2) Review Graeber, Crenshaw & Peller.

Preparation Assignment: Be prepared to discuss *how* we get things wrong and *how* we can get them right. *How* does Pineda expose the historical gaps and conceptual pitfalls of "civil disobedience"? What gaps and pitfalls do Graeber and Crenshaw & Peller expose and how do they do it?

Required Journal Entry #4: What have you learned in previous classes and elsewhere about SNCC and Snowden? Does it confirm, contradict, illuminate or confound your understanding of the arguments made by Pineda?

Commented [A6]: This required prompt is another opportunity for students to make connections and draw links between their prior General Education courses and their major.

2/18 No classes

2/20 In class documentary film: *The Square*, Jehane Noujaim (2013)

Required Journal Entry #5: Write a review of the documentary with a hook of your choice, as if you are writing it for *The Daily Collegian*. Your hook may be how the documentary makes the viewer feel, what the viewer can expect to learn, how it compares or contrasts with other documentaries, how it stands up in relation to events in Egypt today, and so on; your choice.

2/25 Minding the gaps and discerning the pitfalls of identifying, interpreting, describing, forecasting, researching, and analyzing protest and dissent

- Read 1) Christopher Alexander, "Tunisia's Protest Wave: where it comes from and what it means," *Middle East Channel of Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2011.
2) Meagan Day, "This Violent Clash in 1974 Over Textbooks in West Virginia Prepped the Nation for a New Right Movement," *Timeline.com*, January 23, 2017.
3) Jennifer Mendelsohn and Peter Shulman, "How Social Media Spread a Historical Lie," *WP* March 15, 2018.
4) Review Pineda

Preparation Assignment: Be prepared to discuss these questions. What historical gaps and conceptual pitfalls do Alexander (who gives an account of the threat posed by widespread protests and is proven wrong by events) and Day (who misidentifies the origins of the New Right in grass roots mobilization) succumb to? How are the gaps and pitfalls in these news stories similar to or different from the historical gaps and pitfalls of "civil disobedience" according to Pineda? Who is their audience? What are the authors' own stakes in their reports? How can we discern mistakes, errors in judgment, and conceptual confusion from lies?

Submit your journal electronically

2/27 Hard lessons on protest and dissent from social science

- Read 1) Asef Bayat, "The 'Street' and the Politics of Dissent in the Arab World," *Middle East Report* 226 (Spring 2003).
2) Janice Irvine, "Born Again Sexual Politics," in *Talk About Sex: The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (UC Press 2002).
3) Kathleen Belew, "The History of White Power," *NYT* April 18, 2018.
4) Juliet Hooker, "How We Misunderstand the History of Black Protest," *Truthout* 1.18.2016.

Preparation Assignment: Review readings from 2/25 and identify at least one interesting point of contrast or one insight you draw about each from the readings for today.

Submit your assignment option selection: details of the submission will be clarified in class.

3/4 Overview on social science research

1) Read Pamela Oliver, Jorge Cadena-Roa and Kelley Strawn, "Emerging Trends in the Study of Protest and Social Movements," *Research in Political Sociology* 12 (2003): 213-244.

2) Watch *Stay Woke: the Black lives Matter Movement* documentary (2016) before class on You Tube.

Preparation Assignment: 1. List the topics and research questions about protest and dissent that are most important in social science research according to the essay.
2. Think of something you are interested in, related to protest and dissent, to track **before** watching the video, such as – but not limited to - protest tactics, slogans and catchphrases, policing of protest, arrests, places, names, dates, and so on. *Briefly* explain your choice of what you chose to track and what you found. Then, *briefly* explain how social science research (specifically as it is represented in the essay) might illuminate or obscure whatever it is you tracked in the video. Bring a printed copy of this assignment to class.

Part Two: In the Gaps Between What Happened and What Is Said to Have Happened

3/6 Read Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. xvii-69.

3/11 Spring Break (Read ahead Trouillot and McGuire. You will be glad you did.)

3/13 Spring Break (Read ahead Trouillot and McGuire. You will be glad you did.)

3/18 Read Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. 70-108.

3/20 Read Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. 108-156.

Submit your journal electronically

3/25 Read Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*, pp. x-83.

Required Journal Assignment #5: Note any challenges McGuire poses – so far - to what you learned in the past about the Civil Rights and/or feminist movements. Be as specific as possible.

3/27 Read Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*, pp. 84-159.

4/1 Read Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street* pp. 160-278.

4/3 **Take-Home examination due in class and student presentations**

Commented [A7]: This required prompt also asks students to connect prior learning with new learning from the course.

**Part Three:
(Some of the Innumerable) Forms, Tactics
and Strategies of Protest and Dissent**

- 4/8 The People's Foundations: Grass Roots, Astroturf, NGOs, Non-Profits, and Advocacy
Read 1) Andrea Smith, "The Revolution Will Not Be Funded," from INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, eds., *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* Boston: South End Press, 2007).
2) David Weigel, "In Echoes of 2009, Republicans See 'Astroturf' in Democratic Protests," *WP* February 6, 2017.
3) Watch "Astroturfing," *Last Week Tonight With Jon Oliver* on You Tube before class.
- 4/10 ACT UP: Changing Tactics of Grassroots Activism
Watch before class: David France, *How to Survive A Plague* (2012)
- 4/15 No classes
- 4/17 (UMass Monday schedule) Urban Insurgency and Self-Defense
Watch before class: Goran Hugo Olssen, *Black Power Mixtape* (2011)
- 4/22 Violence and Nonviolence
Read: 1) Albert Einstein Institution [Gene Sharp], "198 Methods of Nonviolent Action."
2) Charles E. Cobb, Jr. "Guns Made Civil Rights Possible: Breaking Down the Myth of Non-violent Change," Salon.com (June 14, 2014).
3) Maria Stephen and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," *International Security* 33:1 (Summer 2008): 7-44.
4) Maya Oppenheim, "Noam Chomsky: Antifa is a Gift to the Far Right and U.S. State Repression," *The Independent* (December 10, 2017).
5) Wes Enzinna, "Inside the Underground Anti-Racist Movement that Brings the Fight to White Supremacists," *Mother Jones* (May/June 2017).
- 4/24 Intersectionality
1) Before class, watch Sabaah Folyan and Damon Davis, *Whose Streets?* (2017).
2) Read "What We Believe," [go to the main website of Black Lives Matter, click About, click on What We Believe, and then click on each heading.

4/29 Direct Action, Leaderless and Prefigurative Protest, Conduct and Counter-Conduct

Read 1) Voltairine de Cleyre, "Direct Action" (1912) reprint.

2) Chris Rossdale and Maurice Stierl, "Everything is Dangerous: Conduct and Counter-Conduct in the Occupy movement," *Global Society* 30:2 (2016): 157-178.

OPTIONAL: Students particularly interested examining the scope of protest and dissent are invited to join an optional discussion of Arnold Davidson's essay, "In Praise of Counter-Conduct." Discussion of Davidson's essay may include: Do the categories of conduct and counter-conduct reflect that perhaps the scope of freedom is wildly underestimated? Would any form or instance of protest and dissent qualify as both conduct and counter-conduct, as only one or the other, or neither? Do these categories indicate something important that was previously overlooked or do they crush and package in the singular things that are, in fact plural, disparate, and contested?

5/1 (UMass last day of classes) Review and celebration

Submit your journal

5/6 All final papers due at 10:00 a.m. in Thompson 534