

Special Topics: Activism
POL 598/603
Tuesday 5-7:40pm; Dooley Memorial 201
Fall 2018

Professor Calla Hummel
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Course Description:

How can individuals affect change in political systems? What tactics and strategies mobilize others? When and how is activism effective? This course explores what activism is, the history and development of activism around the world, and which activist strategies work best. Students will learn about the social science research and theory on activism and how to be effective activists. The course covers theory and research in lectures and academic readings. Assignments will send students into the city to participate in local politics, work with local organizations, and try activist strategies themselves. Students will work together on a final activism project in the community.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn why and how people participate in activism.
- Students will learn and evaluate how effective activist strategies are at achieving political and social change.
- Students will engage in local political participation where they will contact their elected representatives, go to a city council meeting, volunteer with an activism campaign, and volunteer with a group they disagree with.
- Students will participate in civic engagement in their communities through field classes and the final project.

Readings:

Weekly readings are listed in the syllabus. PDFs will be posted to Blackboard where available; students are expected to go to the listed website for some online readings. All readings are available through the UM Library website or Google. **Every student is expected to read before class and come to class with a question or comment on the readings.** Recommended readings are extra resources for students who want to learn more about a given topic; they are not required. There is no book assigned for this class.

A subscription to a high quality daily newspaper like the New York Times is highly recommended (student subscriptions start at \$2 a week:
<http://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/edu/lp1474.html?campaignId=48U9F>).

Evaluation:

Evaluation occurs throughout the semester through written and hands-on assignments that build up to the final project. Additionally, students will be graded on class participation and their final project. Every assignment is worth points and grades are out of 100 possible points:

- Class Participation (20%): Every student is expected to show up to every class prepared to discuss the readings and current events. Students will also evaluate their group members on final project participation.
- Reading response papers (10%): Students must write one-paragraph summaries and one discussion question or comment for each reading.
- Short papers and field classes (30% total/10% each): Students submit three 3-page papers.
Volunteer with a group you disagree with 10%
Go to a city council meeting or meeting with your member of Congress 10%
Volunteer for an issue campaign or political campaign 10%
- Final Project Draft (15%): Students submit a draft of their final project two weeks before the final project reflection is due and give feedback on each other's projects and future plans.
- Final Project (25%): Students submit a final paper summarizing their activism project. The paper should introduce a problem or gap in the community, propose a way to address that problem or gap using activist skills and techniques, and then chronicle their work in the community during the semester, as well as future plans or steps. The paper should be 6-10 pages (including the bibliography, which must have at least 3 works cited). The document should be double-spaced, 12 point font, with one inch margins, black ink, and in Times New Roman, Arial, or Cambria font.

There are no make up papers. Papers are due **on Blackboard** at the beginning of class on the due date and late papers will be docked 20% for every day late.

Grades:

At the end of the semester, the instructor will convert points to a letter grade on the following scale:

97-100 = A+

93-96 = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59 or less = F

Grade disputes:

If a student believes a grade was issued in error, they must submit an explanation of the error in writing within two days of receiving a graded assignment. The student must then meet with the instructor to discuss the problem. If the instructor agrees to re-grade the assignment, the new, final grade may be higher or lower than the original.

Papers:

All papers must be double-spaced, 12 point font, with one inch margins, black ink, and in Times New Roman, Arial, or Cambria font.

Email policy:

I will only answer questions in person, not over email. If you email me in a non-emergency, I will not respond. You will get more help and attention if you talk to me in person. I will only respond to emails setting up a time to meet me or alerting me to an emergency that prevents you from talking to me in person. I have office hours twice a week and if you cannot make those, I am happy to set up an in-person meeting at another time.

Expectations:

- **Absolutely no phones during class and laptops are for note-taking only.**
- You are expected to take thorough notes.
- Show up to class on time and do not pack up or leave until class is over.
- Do the reading before the class.
- Come to every class. Students are graded on class participation.

Get help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting <https://library.miami.edu/learningcommons/> and <http://camnercenter.miami.edu>. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://www.as.miami.edu/writingcenter/> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <https://counseling.studentaffairs.miami.edu>.

Everything is free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help...** all you have to do is ask for it.

Self-identification, names, and pronouns:

I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your classmates.

Religious holidays and other excused absences:

You must notify me of your pending absence by the third class session. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day or other permitted absence, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within 7 days after the absence.

Students with disabilities:

If you have a disability concern and/or accommodation, talk to me the first week of class in office hours or over email. If you haven't already, familiarize yourself with the services available through the Camner Center: <http://camnercenter.miami.edu>

Plagiarism:

I will fail you if you plagiarize. Plagiarism refers to using of other peoples' written work (from books, articles, newspapers, web sources, etc.) or verbal ideas without attribution. You must cite all material that is not your own. For example, while I encourage you to discuss class readings with your peers, you must write reading summaries yourself. If you have doubts of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the student code, and/or talk to me. "I did not know" is not an acceptable defense after work has been handed in.

For any additional concerns, please do not hesitate to ask me. If you anticipate or begin to experience difficulties in the class, I recommend that you come talk to me as early as possible. My office hours are set up for you, and I encourage you to use them.

Schedule

Week 1 (8/21/18): Introduction, class goals, what is activism and why do people become activists?

- Brian Martin. "Activism, social and political." Published in Gary L. Anderson and Kathryn G. Herr (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), pp. 19-27. Available online: <http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/07Anderson.html>
- "Why doing good is good for the do-gooder." Nicole Karlis, *New York Times*. Oct. 26th 2017. <https://nyti.ms/2iAQ8Q4>

Week 2 (8/28/18): Activism and polarization: working with groups you disagree with

- Find a group you disagree with and go volunteer with them for two hours
- Write Paper #1

Week 3 (9/4/18): Student activism: what can you do on campus?

- **Paper #1 due**
- Van Dyke, Nella. "Hotbeds of activism: Locations of student protest." *Social Problems* 45.2 (1998): 205-220.
- "Stop Blaming Professors." Scott Jaschik, *Inside Higher Ed*. June 10th, 2014. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/10/study-finds-students-themselves-not-professors-lead-some-become-more-liberal-college>
- Recommended:
 - Disi Pavlic, Rodolfo. "Sentenced to Debt: Explaining Student Mobilization in Chile." *Latin American Research Review* 53.3 (2018).
 - Crossley, Nick. "Social networks and student activism: on the politicising effect of campus connections." *The Sociological Review* 56.1 (2008): 18-38.
- Separate into groups to start work on activist projects

Week 4 (9/11/18): Recruitment, engagement, and activist mental health

- McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92.1 (1986): 64-90.
- Granovetter, Mark S. "The strength of weak ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78.6 (1973): 1360-1380.
- In class, we will read:
 - "Activist Burnout is Real." Aliya Khan, May 27th, 2015. *Everyday Feminism*. <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/05/dealing-with-activist-burnout/>
- Recommended:
 - Robnett, Belinda. "African-American women in the civil rights movement, 1954-1965: Gender, leadership, and micromobilization." *American Journal of Sociology* 101.6 (1996): 1661-1693.

- Verba, Sidney, et al. "Citizen activity: Who participates? What do they say?." *American Political Science Review* 87.2 (1993): 303-318.

Week 5 (9/18/18): What is online activism? When is activism online effective?

- Malcolm Gladwell. "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted," *The New Yorker* October 4, 2010.
- Valenzuela, Sebastián, Teresa Correa, and Homero Gil de Zúñiga. "Ties, likes, and tweets: Using strong and weak ties to explain differences in protest participation across Facebook and Twitter use." *Political Communication* 35.1 (2018): 117-134.

Recommended:

- Valenzuela, Sebastián. "Unpacking the use of social media for protest behavior: The roles of information, opinion expression, and activism." *American Behavioral Scientist* 57.7 (2013): 920-942.
- Boulianne, Shelley. "Revolution in the making? Social media effects across the globe." *Information, Communication & Society* (2017): 1-16.
- Larry Diamond, 2010. "Liberation Technology." *Journal of Democracy* 21:3, 69-83.
- Jost, John T., et al. "How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks." *Political Psychology* 39 (2018): 85-118.
- Theocharis, Yannis, and Will Lowe. "Does Facebook increase political participation? Evidence from a field experiment." *Information, Communication & Society* 19.10 (2016): 1465-1486.
- Barberá, Pablo, et al. "Tweeting from left to right: Is online political communication more than an echo chamber?." *Psychological science* 26.10 (2015): 1531-1542.

Week 6 (9/25/18): How to contact your representatives and get them to pay attention (with a guest lecture from for U.S. House Representative Patrick Murphy)

- Leighley, Jan E., and Jennifer Oser. "Representation in an Era of Political and Economic Inequality: How and When Citizen Engagement Matters." *Perspectives on Politics* 16.2 (2018): 328-344.
- Indivisible Guide: <https://www.indivisible.org/guide/>
 - Note: the writing is partisan but it is about lessons from conservative activists applied to liberal causes, and the tactics work for anyone in the American system.
- Recommended:
 - Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. "Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation." *American Political Science Review* 89.2 (1995): 271-294.
 - Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

- Shields, Todd G., Kay Fletcher Schriener, and Ken Schriener. "The disability voice in American politics: Political participation of people with disabilities in the 1994 election." *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 9.2 (1998): 33-52.
- Bates, Vernon L. "Lobbying for the Lord: The new Christian right home-schooling movement and grassroots lobbying." *Review of Religious Research* (1991): 3-17.

Week 7 (10/2/18): Activism, local politics, and meeting your representatives.

- Go to a city council meeting or set up a meeting with any of your city, state, or national representatives
- Write Paper #2

Week 8 (10/9/18): How does the media affect activism? How can activists affect the media?

- **Paper #2 due**
- Lazer, D.M., Baum, M.A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A.J., Greenhill, K.M., Menczer, F., Metzger, M.J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G., Rothschild, D. and Schudson, M., 2018. "The science of fake news." *Science*, 359(6380), pp.1094-1096.
- Chris Rose. "12 Basic Guidelines for Campaign Strategy."
- Recommended:
 - Snow, David A., et al. "Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation." *American Sociological Review* (1986): 464-481.
 - King, Gary, Benjamin Schneer, and Ariel White. "How the news media activate public expression and influence national agendas." *Science* 358.6364 (2017): 776-780.
 - Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow. "Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26.1 (2000): 611-639.
 - Gadarian, Shana Kushner, and Bethany Albertson. "Anxiety, immigration, and the search for information." *Political Psychology* 35.2 (2014): 133-164.
 - McLeod, Jack M., Dietram A. Scheufele, and Patricia Moy. "Community, communication, and participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation." *Political Communication* 16.3 (1999): 315-336.

Week 9 (10/16/18): Activism and formal political institutions: working with political campaigns and issue campaigns

- Go find a local or national campaign to volunteer with and spend at least two hours working with them
- Write Paper #3

Week 10 (10/23/18): Protest and protest tactics

- **Paper #3 due**
- John Sides in WaPo: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/11/have-black-protests-helped-or-hurt-the-democratic-party/?utm_term=.130882a8e5eb
- Omar Wasow's working paper: "Do Protests Matter?"
http://www.omarwasow.com/Protests_on_Voting.pdf
- McClendon, Gwyneth H. "Social esteem and participation in contentious politics: A field experiment at an LGBT pride rally." *American Journal of Political Science* 58.2 (2014): 279-290.
- Recommended:
 - Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Marianne Dahl, and Anne Frugé. "Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion." *American Journal of Political Science* (2017).
 - Davenport, Christian, Sarah A. Soule, and David A. Armstrong. "Protesting while black? The differential policing of American activism, 1960 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 76.1 (2011): 152-178.
 - Meirowitz, Adam, and Joshua A. Tucker. "People Power or a One-Shot Deal? A Dynamic Model of Protest." *American Journal of Political Science* 57.2 (2013): 478-490.
 - Williamson, Vanessa, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein. "Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity." *Perspectives on Politics* 16.2 (2018): 400-415.

Week 11 (10/30/18): Activism in authoritarian regimes

- Fu, Diana. "Disguised collective action in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 50.4 (2017): 499-527.
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107:2, pp. 1-18.
- Recommended:
 - Ritter, Emily Hencken. "Policy disputes, political survival, and the onset and severity of state repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58.1 (2014): 143-168.
 - Everything that Margaret Roberts, Dana El-Kurd, and Julia Elyachar write.

Week 12 (11/6/18): Election night!!!

- Group work week: no readings, work with your group on your final project

Week 13 (11/13/18): International activism and the boomerang effect

- Stephan, Maria J., and Erica Chenoweth. "Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict." *International Security* 33.1 (2008): 7-44.

- Sikkink, Kathryn. "Human rights, principled issue-networks, and sovereignty in Latin America." *International Organization* 47.3 (1993): 411-441.
- Recommended:
 - (Book version) Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. *Why civil resistance works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press, 2011.
 - Richard Price, 1998. "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization*. 52:3, 613-644.
 - Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. TPB, 2004.
 - Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. "International norm dynamics and political change." *International Organization* 52.4 (1998): 887-917.

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 (11/27/18): Project workshop

- **Final project drafts due**

Week 15 (12/4/18): What we know about activism and how you can be an effective activist

Final exam date (12/7/18)

- **Final projects due**