

**Activism**  
**POL 566/696**  
**Online**  
**Fall 2020**

Professor Calla Hummel

She/her

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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. The class encourages students to engage in their communities. Students will work together on final activism projects.

**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 and attend local political meetings.

**Class format:**

- **The class will be online and largely asynchronous with materials and assignments posted on Blackboard.** All video lectures and material for each chapter will be posted on Blackboard on the day it is assigned. You will be able to access it at your convenience.
- **We will hold one synchronous online discussion session from 3:30-4:30 every Wednesday on Zoom via Blackboard. Come to class with questions.** This session will be recorded and posted to Blackboard for any student who cannot attend.
- **All online assignments are due at midnight Eastern Standard Time of the day assigned.**

**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.** Recommended readings are extra resources for students who want to learn more about a given topic; they are required for graduate

students taking this class but not undergraduates. There is no book assigned for this class. **Graduate students have additional assigned reading.**

A subscription to a high-quality daily newspaper like the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, or the Washington Post is highly recommended (a New York Times and WSJ subscription is free through the library). A free international alternative is the BBC.

#### Evaluation:

Evaluation occurs throughout the semester through written and hands-on assignments that build up to the final project. Every assignment is worth points and grades are out of 100 possible points:

- Weekly journals (20%): Students must write one-paragraph summaries and one discussion question or comment for each reading as well as reflections on the course and their experiences.
- Short papers and field classes (30% total/10% each): Students attend an event and submit three 3-page papers. Students can do these assignments in any order:
  - Attend a meeting of 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, attend a demonstration, or protest 10%
- Final Project Proposal (15%): Students should propose a group final project using the activist concepts in the class. The project can take any form and should benefit the students' community. Students already engaged in community activism can incorporate their existing work into their final project.
- Final Project (35%): Students submit a final report or product summarizing their activism project. The report 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 report should be at least 5 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 or assignments.** Papers are due **on Blackboard** by midnight EST on the due date and late papers will be docked 50%.

#### 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:

**Before emailing the professor about the class, look for the answer to your question in the syllabus.** If you do not find an answer, **ask a classmate.** Only email the professor about the class if you cannot find the answer to your question in the syllabus or by consulting a classmate. The professor does not respond to email on the weekends or holidays and will take up to two business days to respond.

#### Coronavirus, stress, and maintaining your mental and physical health:

**I will grant extensions on deadlines to help you manage your life during these exceptional times as long as you talk to me before, not after, the deadline.** You are working and learning during a pandemic and global unrest. Your top priority is your physical and mental health. If you need accommodations around workload and deadlines for any reason, talk to the professor as soon as possible.

#### Get help!

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>.

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. 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.

Copyright

I retain copyright to all class materials. **Students may not record, copy, or distribute class materials.** Students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Meetings of this course might be recorded by the University. Any recordings will be available to students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments. If the instructor or a University of Miami office plans any other uses for the recordings, beyond this class, students identifiable in the recordings will be notified to request consent prior to such use.

DATE	TOPIC	READING AND ASSIGNMENT DUE
August 19	Introduction	<p><i>Florida primary day is August 18th; vote!</i></p> <p>Read syllabus</p> <p>WATCH: How to Survive a Plague (Rent on YouTube or Amazon)</p> <p>Journal #1: tell me about yourself</p>
August 26	What is activism and why do people become activists?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal #2 on reading, doc, and what you think activism is</li> <li>Brian Martin. "Activism, social and political." Published in Gary L. Anderson and Kathryn G. Herr (eds.), <i>Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice</i> (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), pp. 19-27. Available online: <a href="http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/07Anderson.html">http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/07Anderson.html</a></li> <li>"Why doing good is good for the do-gooder." Nicole Karlis, <i>New York Times</i>. Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> 2017. <a href="https://nyti.ms/2iAQ8Q4">https://nyti.ms/2iAQ8Q4</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Last day to add this class and last day to drop.</i></p>
September 2	Field class #1	<p>No class meeting; attend an event and write Paper #1</p> <p>WATCH: Freedom Summer (every trigger warning)</p> <p><a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/freedomssummer/#part01">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/freedomssummer/#part01</a></p>
September 9	Start projects	<p>Paper #1 due</p> <p>Journal #3: Freedom Summer and reflection</p> <p>Think about possible final projects</p> <p>Separate into groups for projects</p>
September 16	Student activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal #4 due, readings and reflection</li> <li>Van Dyke, Nella. "Hotbeds of activism: Locations of student protest." <i>Social Problems</i> 45.2 (1998): 205-220.</li> <li>"Stop Blaming Professors." Scott Jaschik, <i>Inside Higher Ed</i>. June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. <a href="https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/10/study-finds-students-themselves-not-professors-lead-some-become-more-liberal-college">https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/10/study-finds-students-themselves-not-professors-lead-some-become-more-liberal-college</a></li> <li>Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disi Pavlic, Rodolfo. "Sentenced to Debt: Explaining Student Mobilization in Chile." <i>Latin American Research Review</i> 53.3 (2018).</li> <li>Crossley, Nick. "Social networks and student activism: on the politicising effect of campus connections." <i>The Sociological Review</i> 56.1 (2008): 18-38.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

September 23	Recruitment and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal #5, readings and reflect on your first experience with activism</li> <li>• McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of Freedom Summer." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 92.1 (1986): 64-90.</li> <li>• Robnett, Belinda. "African-American women in the civil rights movement, 1954-1965: Gender, leadership, and micromobilization." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 101.6 (1996): 1661-1693.</li> <li>• Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Granovetter, Mark S. "The strength of weak ties." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 78.6 (1973): 1360-1380.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
September 30	Field class #2	<p>No class meeting; attend an event and write Paper #2</p> <p>WATCH: Good Trouble <a href="https://www.johnlewisgoodtrouble.com/watch-at-home/">https://www.johnlewisgoodtrouble.com/watch-at-home/</a></p> <p><i>Last day to register as a Florida voter: October 5<sup>th</sup></i></p>
October 7	Protest	<p><i>Last day to request a mail-in ballot as a Florida voter: October 8<sup>th</sup></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper #2 due</li> <li>• Journal #6 due, readings and Good Trouble</li> <li>• McClendon, Gwyneth H. "Social esteem and participation in contentious politics: A field experiment at an LGBT pride rally." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 58.2 (2014): 279-290.</li> <li>• Williamson, Vanessa, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein. "Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 16.2 (2018): 400-415.</li> <li>• Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Marianne Dahl, and Anne Frugé. "Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> (2017).</li> <li>○ Davenport, Christian, Sarah A. Soule, and David A. Armstrong. "Protesting while black? The differential policing of American activism, 1960 to 1990." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 76.1 (2011): 152-178.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
October 14	Group project week	<p>Final project proposal due</p> <p>WATCH: Crip Camp (Netflix) or Lives Worth Living (PBS)</p>

October 21	Media and activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal #7 due, readings and documentary</li> <li>• Wasow, Omar. “Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion, and Voting.” <i>American Political Science Review</i>. 2020. <a href="http://omarwasow.com/APSR_protests3_1.pdf">http://omarwasow.com/APSR_protests3_1.pdf</a></li> <li>• 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.” <i>Science</i>, 359(6380), pp.1094-1096.</li> <li>• Chris Rose. “12 Basic Guidelines for Campaign Strategy.”</li> <li>• Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Snow, David A., et al. "Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation." <i>American Sociological Review</i> (1986): 464-481.</li> <li>○ King, Gary, Benjamin Schneer, and Ariel White. "How the news media activate public expression and influence national agendas." <i>Science</i> 358.6364 (2017): 776-780.</li> <li>○ Gadarian, Shana Kushner, and Bethany Albertson. "Anxiety, immigration, and the search for information." <i>Political Psychology</i> 35.2 (2014): 133-164.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
October 28	Activism online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal #8 due, readings and reflect on online activism</li> <li>• Malcolm Gladwell. “<a href="#">Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted</a>,” <i>The New Yorker</i> October 4, 2010.</li> <li>• 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." <i>Political Communication</i> 35.1 (2018): 117-134.</li> <li>• Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Valenzuela, Sebastián. "Unpacking the use of social media for protest behavior: The roles of information, opinion expression, and activism." <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> 57.7 (2013): 920-942.</li> <li>○ Boulianne, Shelley. "Revolution in the making? Social media effects across the globe." <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i> (2017): 1-16.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
November 4	Field class #3	No meeting, observe activism around the electoral process in your area and attend an event for Paper #3

November 11	Activism and authoritarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper #3 due</li> <li>• Journal #9 due, readings and reflect on elections</li> <li>• Fu, Diana. "Disguised collective action in China." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 50.4 (2017): 499-527.</li> <li>• Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 107:2, pp. 1-18.</li> <li>• Recommended (required for graduate students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ritter, Emily Hencken. "Policy disputes, political survival, and the onset and severity of state repression." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 58.1 (2014): 143-168.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
November 18	What do we know about activism?	<p style="text-align: center;">Journal #10: reflect on what you have learned in this class and what from this class you may use in the future</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Group project check in</p>
December 4	Final	<p style="text-align: center;">Project report due</p>