FROM GANDHI TO THE ARAB SPRING:
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

Fall Semester 2014
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
From colonial India to the Berlin Wall to Tahrir Square, nonviolent resistance movements have proven capable of toppling regimes and recasting the geopolitical landscape. In other cases they have sparked brutal repression or even civil wars. But what exactly constitutes “nonviolent resistance”? Why do some groups employ it while others turn to arms? Why and when is it effective? Can the international community help promote adherence to nonviolent techniques? 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 it 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, as well as cutting-edge social science research. Students will gain an understanding of both the normative and empirical debates surrounding the practice of civil resistance as well as familiarity with key cases in which it has been used.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTORS
CHES THURBER: I am a Ph.D. candidate in international relations at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a Research Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center. My dissertation, Between Mao and Gandhi: Strategies of Violence and Nonviolence in Revolutionary Movements, examines how and why some groups seeking to overthrow the state adopt a strategy of civil resistance while others choose armed insurgency. I draw upon my own field research in Nepal where I interviewed leaders of violent and nonviolent movements. I have taught courses in international relations and research methodology as a lecturer at the University of Alaska and as a teaching assistant in Tufts University’s Department of Political Science. Before coming to Tufts, I worked as a foreign and defense policy aide in the in the U.S. House of Representatives.

BEN NAIMARK-ROWSE: I am a Ph.D. candidate in international relations at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a Truman National Security Fellow. My dissertation research examines the relationship between mixed methods of resistance and repression. During the summer of 2012, I participated in the Fletcher Summer Institute for the Advanced Study of Nonviolent Conflict; and during the summer of 2011, I conducted field research in Egypt about the Egyptian Revolution. Prior to enrolling at Fletcher, I spent three years co-directing Darfuri Voices, the first public opinion survey of Darfuran refugees on issues of peace, justice, and reconciliation, which entailed interviewing 2,152 refugees along the Chad/Sudan border. I also served for three years as a Program Officer with the Open Society Justice Initiative managing human rights-based security sector reform projects in new democracies. And I’ve served as an electoral observer with The Carter Center, an Assistant Editor of the Journal of Public and International Affairs, and an expert review group member for U.N. Office on Drugs and Crimes.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION
1. Writing Assignment #1 (20%)
Your first writing assignment is to write a memo in which you 1) attempt to convince a regular citizen to join a civil resistance movement; or 2) attempt to convince the leader of a political movement to pursue a different strategy. You should draw upon the literature you have read to date to include assessments of both moral as well as pragmatic considerations, though you need not weight both equally. If you decide to write about #2, there are multiple possibilities: you may try to encourage the leader of an insurgency to switch to nonviolent resistance, the leader of a nonviolent movement to take up arms, the leader of a movement engaged in civil resistance to return to institutionalized politics, etc. The memo should not exceed 1000 words.
2. Writing Assignment #2 (20%)
For this writing assignment, you should either 1) participate in a local nonviolent action; or 2) interview someone who has participated in a nonviolent resistance campaign. Write a response paper (of no more than 1000 words) in which you discuss your experience or interview. Pay specific attention to participant motivations, the organizational structure of the movement, and the response of local authorities.

3. Final Paper (40%)
The final assignment is a research paper (8000 words maximum). Your paper should evaluate an important theoretical aspect of nonviolent resistance (either normative or empirical) through an analysis of two resistance movements. Do these cases shed light on a relevant debate about the ethics or efficacy of nonviolent resistance? Or do they raise some new, previously unaddressed questions? Students with a quantitative inclination who wish to tackle a theoretical topic through the analysis of relevant datasets may do so with the instructor's permission.

4. Class attendance, preparation and participation: (15%)
This class is structured as a discussion-oriented seminar. Students are expected to come to every class having completed the readings and to actively contribute to class discussion. In addition, students will pick one week in which they will circulate to the professors and fellow students a one-page memo of discussion questions and reflections on that week's readings. The memo must be circulated 24 hours before class and discuss all of that week's assigned readings.

5. People Power: The Game of Civil Resistance: (5%)
Over the course of the semester we will play the simulated game, People Power: The Game of Civil Resistance. We will introduce the game during week three. Students will be expected to play it at home and with each other throughout the semester. A portion of each class will be dedication to updates and reflections on the game. At the end of the semester we will dedicate time to discuss lessons drawn from this interactive learning experience. Students will be asked to draw connections between concepts studied in class and the virtual learning in the game.

6. Extra Credit
Extra credit may be awarded for participation in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation seminar on violence/non-violence at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard, or related talks/presentations.

CLASS SCHEDULE

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<th>Week 1: Conceptualizing Resistance</th>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>Key Questions:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2: Philosophy of Nonviolent Action</th>
<th>Gandhi and Indian Self-Determination</th>
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<td>Class to take place at Walden Pond in Concord, MA.</td>
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<td>Logistics to be discussed in the first class.</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Plato, Gorgias</td>
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<td>Thoreau, Civil Disobedience</td>
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<td>Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Ch. 6</td>
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<td>Gandhi, “Satyagraha” and Hind Swaraj (pp. 1-38)</td>
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<td>King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail</td>
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<td>Howes, Toward a Credible Pacifism, Ch. 1</td>
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<td>Ackerman and Duvall, A Force More Powerful, Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Brown, “Gandhi and Civil Resistance in India” in Roberts and Ash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Questions:</td>
<td>Is nonviolent resistance morally superior to its alternative(s)? (What is its alternative(s)?)</td>
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<td>Are there conditions under which civil resistance is just or unjust?</td>
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<td>Is the moral basis for nonviolent resistance predicated on its effectiveness?</td>
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<td>Is violence justifiable if nonviolent resistance is ineffective?</td>
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<td>Was Gandhi’s practice consistent with his philosophy?</td>
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Week 3: The Strategic Logic of Civil Resistance

Introduction to People Power: The Game of Civil Resistance

Readings:
• Stephan and Chenoweth, “Why Civil Resistance Works”
• Sharp, The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Vol. 1
• Gelderloos, How Nonviolence Protects the State

Key Questions:
• What are the key points of leverage through which civil resistance movements challenge the state?
• How is this strategically different from alternative strategies?
• Is nonviolent resistance more effective than violent resistance? Under what conditions?

Week 4: Bringing Down a Dictator: Mobilization and Organization in Serbia

In Class Guest Speaker: Ivan Marovic, former member of “Otpor!” movement, or Slobodan Djinovic, former member of “Otpor!” movement, Chairman, Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies

Readings:
• Vejvoda, “Civil Society Against Slobodan Milosevic,” in CRPP
• Bringing Down a Dictator (film, watch at home)
  Film trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfE_KO8hug

Key Questions:
• Who participates in civil resistance campaigns? Why do they do so?
• How does the organization of a resistance movement affect its behavior, effectiveness, and resilience?
• How were Serb youths able to mobilize an organization strong enough to topple one of Eastern Europe’s “strongest” dictators?
• How much credit does Otpor! deserve for overthrowing Milosevic versus NATO intervention?

Week 5: Repression and Backfire | The Arab Spring

In Class Film: The Square
  Film Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twB2zAOz8aE

Week 6: Civil Resistance and a Ruthless Opponent | Nonviolent Resistance Against Hitler?

Readings:
• Goodwin, No Other Way Out, Ch. 1
• Martin, Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire, Ch. 1
• Madrigal, “The Egyptian Activists’ Action Plan: Translated,” The Atlantic (January 2013),

Key Questions:
• When does repression deter protest and when does it spark backfire?
• Does repression make nonviolent movements turn violent?
• Are there bounds on the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance?
• What role did social media and other communication technologies play in facilitating the Arab Spring movements?

Week 7: Nonviolent Resistance, Democracy, and Race | The Civil Rights Movement

Readings:
• McAdam: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement
• Gelderloos: “Nonviolence is Racist”
• Cobb: This Nonviolent Stuff’ll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible
Key Questions:

• Is nonviolent resistance possible when the actors and target come from different racial, ethnic, religious, societal groups?
• Have we rewritten the history of nonviolent movements in a way that papers over their use of arms?
• How are the dynamics of civil resistance different when carried out in a state with functioning democratic institutions?

Week 8: Mixed Strategies and Radical Flanks | Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress

In Class Guest Speaker: Nick Kenney, PhD Candidate, The Fletcher School

Readings:

- Schock, “Radical Flank Effect”
- Ackerman and Duvall, AFMP, Ch. 9
- Lodge: “The Interplay of Violent and Nonviolent Action in the Movement Against Apartheid in South Africa,” in CRPP

Key Questions:

• How does the simultaneous use of violent and nonviolent tactics helped and/or harmed the movements that have attempted it?

Week 9: Transnational Dimensions of Nonviolent Conflict | Palestine

In-class Film: Budrus

Film Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjKVACxq1Y

In Class Guest Speaker: Maria Stephan, Senior Policy Fellow, United States Institute of Peace, Senior Nonresident Fellow, The Atlantic Council

Readings:

- Nepstad, Nonviolent Revolutions, Ch. 8
- Pearlman, Violence, Nonviolence and the Palestinian National Movement, Selected chapters
- Newton, “The Changing Face of Palestinian Resistance”
- Al-Saafin, “How Obsession with Nonviolence Harms the Palestinian Cause”

Key Questions:

• How do international actors influence civil resistance campaigns?
• Can international assistance “backfire”?
• How has the simultaneous employment of violent and nonviolent tactics helped and/or harmed the Palestinian cause?
• How have international actors supported and/or harmed the Palestinian movement?

Week 10: Transformations from Violent to Nonviolent Resistance | Nepal’s Maoists

Readings:

- Thapa: “From Revolution to Political Evolution: Political Transformation of Maoists Rebels of Nepal”
- Muni, “Bringing the Maoists Down from the Hills: India’s Role” in Nepal in Transition, Ch. 12.

Key Questions:

• Why did the Maoists switch from violent to nonviolent resistance?
• Others TBD


In Class Film: Eyes on the Prize, Boston Bussing Excerpt

Film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhOaat1m1E

Readings:

- Lukas, Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families
- Others TBD

Key Questions:

• What caused the protests about bussing in Boston?
• What social and political dynamics have you read about in the newspaper or witnessed walking around Boston that you think might be a legacy of the bussing protests?
• Others TBD
**Week 12: Post-Conflict Dynamics**

Readings:

- Bartkowski and Kurtz, “Egypt: How to Negotiate the Transition. Lessons from Poland and China”

Key Questions:

- What are the long-term consequences of civil resistance campaigns in terms of return to conflict and democratization?
- What “commitment problem” challenges to nonviolent movements face when negotiating with a regime?
- How does political engagement in a nonviolent resistance movement differ from political engagement in institutionalized politics such as elections?

**Week 13: Nonviolent Resistance Against Non-State Actors**

Readings:

- Beyerle, “Civil Resistance and the Corruption/Violence Nexus” in *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* (June 2011)
- Kaplan, “Protecting Civilians in Civil War: The Institution of the ATCC in Colombia” in *Journal of Peace Research* (May 2013)
- Italy: Taking on the Mafia (Frontline Documentary, watch at: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/italy801/)

Key Questions:

- How do the dynamics of civil resistance change when taking on a non-state actor as compared to a state regime?
- How did these movements overcome the “collective action problem”?