

People Power: How and Why Civil Resistance Works

SIS-639-006 / American University Skills Institute

February 10-12, 2012

<http://civilresistancestudies.org>

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Dates: Friday, February 10 / 4:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday, February 11 / 9:00am - 5:00pm
Sunday, February 12 / 9:00am - 5:00pm

Location: TBD

Course Description:

This participatory short course is designed to provide a multi-disciplinary perspective on nonviolent, civilian-based movements and campaigns that defend and obtain basic rights and justice around the world - from Zimbabwe to West Papua, Mexico to China, and throughout the Middle East-North Africa region. Historically, political change in countries that curtail freedom and ignore international human rights norms has been difficult to achieve. Violent revolution or the use of armed force by external actors is typically seen as the primary means of overcoming oppression. Yet people power, relying on a variety of methods of nonviolent action, has been used for this purpose for well over a century in different parts of the world, by different peoples and societies, in different cultures and political systems, and with some impressive results as well as some apparent failures. Furthermore, countries that experience bottom-up, civilian-based resistance are known to have a better track record of successful democratic transitions than the states that initiated their systemic transformation after a protracted civil war, or due to top-down, elite-to-elite negotiations or external military interventions.

Course Objectives:

In this course participants will be able to:

- Define civil resistance;
- Debate the role of civil resistance in generating political, social, and economic change;
- List several nonviolent, civil resistance movements throughout history;
- Identify strategic principles that help civil resistance movements succeed;
- Analyze conflicts from a nonviolent conflict perspective;
- Explore theories of power, violence, and nonviolence;
- Research and present on current case studies of civil resistance;
- Have fun!

Course Requirements:

Participants are required to:

- Attend all sessions of the course;
- Participate in course exercises;
- Be respectful to others in the course and tolerant of diverse viewpoints;
- Complete the reading and watching assignments.

Course Schedule:

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10 / 4:00pm – 9:00pm

4:00pm	Welcome and Introductions Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn
4:05pm	Icebreaker/Community Builder Facilitator: Daryn
4:30pm	Small Group Discussion on People Power Game Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn
4:45pm	Large Group Sharing about People Power Game Facilitator: Maciej
5:00pm	What Is Civil Resistance and Why Has It Been Ignored for so Long? Presenter: Maciej This talk will bring forward main concepts behind civilian-based, strategic nonviolent resistance. It will offer a comprehensive definition of civil resistance while referring to a number of historical and contemporary civil resistance struggles. We will also talk about why nonviolent resistance - despite its impressive record of challenging oppression and injustice -- has either been denied or forgotten in historical and contemporary annals.
5:15pm	Conceptions of Power (exercise) Facilitator: Daryn <u>Objectives:</u> Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kinesthetically explore different ways of viewing power• Define monolithic and pluralistic conceptions of power• Reflect on Starhawk's three conceptions of power
5:45pm	Civil Resistance Timeline (exercise) Facilitator: Daryn <u>Objectives:</u> Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify different nonviolent campaigns and movements throughout history• Map out civil resistance struggles on a timeline• Learn about new nonviolent struggles
6:05pm	BREAK
6:20pm	How Is Civil Resistance Formed and Why Does It Work? Presenter: Maciej Why do people join nonviolent movements despite a high degree of risk and uncertainty about

	positive outcomes? How are people awakened from apathy and how do they move away from the paralysis of fear to self-organization and participation? In general, how are people aroused to action? All these questions will be linked with the investigation about how civil resistance movements build their case for change. This will open a more general discussion about how movement reaches out to people and what makes civil resistance effective in challenging oppressive powers.
7:05pm	Pillars of Support (exercise) Facilitator: Daryn <u>Objectives:</u> Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify different pillars of support that prop up oppressive structures • Discuss various tactics that can dismantle specific pillars • Apply pillars of support analysis to a specific case study
7:50pm	Concluding Comments Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn
8:20pm	END

Assignment (links to articles and videos will be provided):

- Read - Gene Sharp's 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action and Categorization

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 / 9am – 5pm

9:00am	Welcome/Icebreaker Facilitator: Daryn
9:10am	Film Screening: Nashville Segment from A Force More Powerful Facilitators: Maciej (worksheet 1) and Daryn (worksheet 2)
9:35am	Small Group Discussion about Nashville Segment Facilitator: Daryn
9:45am	Small Group Report Backs Facilitator: Maciej and Daryn
10:05am	BREAK
10:20am	Violent vs. Nonviolent Actions (exercise) Facilitator: Daryn <u>Objectives:</u> Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate the violent or nonviolent aspects of various tactics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on their own interpretations and those of others about what constitutes a violent or nonviolent act • Create an individual and group spectrum of violent and nonviolent actions • Compare and contrast various conceptions of violent and nonviolent tactics
11:20am	<p>Tactical Innovation (presentation) Presenter: Maciej</p> <p>The civil resistance movement relies on rich repertoires of nonviolent strategies and tactics in order to promote their cause, undermine the adversary's legitimacy, and increase the cost of oppression. Effectiveness of tactics varies and depends on how well they are devised, sequenced and planned out strategically. The talk will, among others, touch upon the Free South Africa campaign to illustrate tactical innovation.</p>
12:00pm	LUNCH
1:30pm	<p>Backfire Presentation Presenter: Maciej</p> <p>Nonviolent resistance movements usually have to operate in repressive environments. A regime's' repression is designed to hinder and eventually destroy the movement. However, repression can also "backfire" either increasing a movement's mobilization, thus facilitating domestic and international sympathy. The movement is interested in augmenting the impact of backfire while the government wants to suppress it. And it remains to be seen which side is more skillful in doing so. This talk will highlight strategies used by the movement and the regime respectively to take advantage or eliminate backfire effect.</p>
2:00pm	<p>Backfire Exercise Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn</p>
3:00pm	BREAK
3:15pm	<p>Dilemma Action Presentation Presenter: Maciej</p> <p>The movement that faces ruthless opponent can engage in various forms of activities in order to place the government in a lose-lose situation where, regardless of the response, governments' actions benefit the movement and harm the regime. The talk will present cases and examples to illustrate the phenomenon of dilemma actions.</p>
3:45pm	<p>Dilemma Action Exercise Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn</p>
4:45pm	<p>Concluding Comments Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn</p>
5:00pm	END

Assignment (links to articles and videos will be provided):

- Read - Common Misconceptions about Nonviolent Action by Kurt Schock
- Watch - Pay Attention to Nonviolence presented by Julia Bacha (TED Talk)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 / 9:00am – 5:00pm

9:00am	Welcome/Icebreaker Facilitator: Daryn
9:15am	The Role of Media in Civil Resistance + Common Misconceptions Facilitator: Maciej The discussion will focus on common misconceptions about civil resistance, including structural fallacies about the possibility for the emergence and feasibility of achieving desired outcomes from civil resistance, influence of foreign entities, and the role and impact of new media - the latter will be addressed while looking at the case study of the 'fair election movement' that emerged in Russia after the December 4, 2011 rigged parliamentary elections.
9:45am	Small Group Discussions on Mary King's Article and Julia Bacha's TED Talk Facilitator: Daryn
10:25am	BREAK
10:40am	New Media and Civil Resistance (presentation) Presenter: Daryn This presentation explores the role of digital media in civil resistance. We will discuss the evolution of information sharing, the emergence of social media platforms that challenge the traditional, top-down media structure, how social media is increasingly feeding mainstream media and how this changes the kind of information we get and how we get it. Specific case studies from Colombia, Ukraine, and Egypt will be referenced.
11:10am	Screening: Otpor Branding Film
11:30am	New Media Exercise Facilitator: Daryn <u>Objectives:</u> Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the use of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogging in waging nonviolent struggle• Develop a new media strategy to resist an oppressive regime• Analyze the pros and cons of utilizing new media tools in struggle

12:00pm	LUNCH
1:30pm	Case Studies (Part One) Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn
3:00pm	BREAK
3:15pm	Case Studies (Part Two) Facilitators: Maciej and Daryn
4:45pm	Final Evaluations
5:00pm	END