

CIVIL RESISTANCE AND THE DYNAMICS OF NONVIOLENT CONFLICT

A professional-level course offered jointly by the United States Institute of Peace and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The world is witnessing a surge in people powered movements in places such as Iran, the Niger Delta, Honduras, and the West Bank. As a result, the foreign policy community is carefully following the courageous acts of civil disobedience utilized by people facing various forms of repression. But do we fully realize the strategic thinking and the methods of nonviolent action that civilian-based movements employ to combat injustice? Civil resistance and the dynamics of nonviolent conflict have been instrumental in political transitions from authoritarian or oppressive rule for many decades. Organized civic pressure has been used to fight colonialism and foreign occupation, advance women's and minority rights, and improve transparency and good governance. This course is designed to provide an in-depth and multi-disciplinary perspective on civilian-based movements and campaigns that defend and obtain basic rights and justice around the world, and in so doing transform the global security environment. The course will examine such questions as: What is civil resistance? What determines the success or failure of a civil resistance movement? How can professionals in the field better understand and analyze what elements are at work when civilians use nonviolent tactics? How and when should external agents – governments, NGOs, media, business – act or not act when civil resistance is gaining momentum? How can the dynamics and history of civil resistance better inform the fields of conflict management, development, diplomacy, and peacemaking?

COURSE SCHEDULE

October 20

Welcome and Course Overview

(For participants in Washington, DC, an on-site class will be held at USIP's headquarters building. For all students who cannot attend in person, course materials will be available online.)

Learning objectives:

- Set up account on the Moodle site.
- Become familiar with Moodle navigation and functionality.
- Review learning objectives, requirements, and deadlines.
- Upload bio and relevant information to the Moodle site.
- Share interests and reasons for participating in this course.
- Gain access to videos and readings for the course.
- Understand partnership between USIP and ICNC.

Video(s):

- Civil Resistance: A First Look.

Reading(s):

- Civil Resistance: A First Look Booklet.

Activity/Exercise:

- Set up Moodle account
- Upload picture and bio to Moodle site
- Quiz reviewing course requirements

From: October 20

To: October 26

Theoretical Foundations of Civil Resistance**Learning objectives:**

- Define civil resistance and related terminology.
- Identify common characteristics of civil resistance movements.
- Understand how civil resistance relates to the fields of conflict management and conflict resolution.
- Understand the pluralistic theory of political power as a core concept underlying civil resistance.

Video(s):

- Cambridge, Daryn. Intro to Nonviolent Conflict and Civil Resistance.
- Rev. James Lawson - Gandhi and Nonviolence
- Hardy Merriman - Foundational Ideas of Civil Resistance

Reading(s):

- Schock, Kurt. Unarmed Insurrections. (chapter 1)

Activity/Exercise:

- Participant-led online forum discussion - participants share 2 new things they learned about the theoretical foundations of civil resistance.

From: October 27

To: November 2

Historical Record of Civil Resistance**Learning Objectives:**

- Review historical and contemporary cases where nonviolent civic action has been utilized.
- Analyze the diversity of cases and causes for which civil resistance can be applied.

Video(s):

- DuVall, Jack. Core Dynamics of Civil Resistance.
- Zunes, Stephen. Nonviolent Action in the Islamic World.

Reading(s):

- Choose any one conflict summary from ICNC's website to read.
- Ackerman, Peter & DuVall, Jack. *A Force More Powerful; A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (Introduction).

Activity/Exercise:

- Participant-led Forum Discussion - participants read one nonviolent conflict summary from ICNC's library with which they are not familiar. They then share through the forum how they see different theoretical concepts at play in that struggle.

From: November 3
To: November 9

Tools of Conflict Analysis**Learning Objectives:**

- Introduce the "life cycle" of conflict from pre-crisis tensions to post-conflict peace-building and democracy-building, and the characteristics of each of these stages of the conflict cycle.
- Identify the various sources of institutional support that sustain political stability and power.
- Learn to identify various "pillars of support" that can be targeted by nonviolent movements within different scenarios and case studies.
- Compare and contrast various civil resistance and conflict management tools for analyzing power struggles within a conflict
- Be able to analyze a conflict, identifying its causes, drivers and key stakeholders, and learn to think about criteria for assessing the possible future trajectory of a conflict.
- Identify and understand the reasons that individuals and groups decide to wage nonviolent struggle (as opposed to relying on other means of contention) for rights or against abuses.
- Understand the four ways in which civil resistance movements can influence the behavior of their opponents, through persuasion, accommodation, coercion, or disintegration

Video(s):

- A Force More Powerful, Nashville Segment.

Reading(s):

- Helvey, Robert. (U.S. Army, Ret.). *On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking About the Fundamentals*. Boston: The Albert

Einstein Institution, 2004. Chapter 2 (Pillars of Support) pp. 9-18.

- New Tactics. Spectrum of Allies.

Activity/Exercise:

- Participants fill out pillars of support and spectrum of allies for the Nashville (AFMP) case and share those with their learning sets.
- Participant-led forum discussion - participants compare and contrast their analysis of different nonviolent struggles.

From: November 10
To: November 16

Strategy and Tactics of Civil Resistance

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the difference between strategy and tactics and how specific civil resistance campaigns are organized and conducted.
- Analyze strategic and tactical choices by civil resistance movements
- Learn how nonviolent movements have developed strategies to appeal to large segments of the general public, enjoin their active participation and reduce the power of the movement's opponent or oppressor.

Video(s):

- Merriman, Hardy. Strategic Planning and Tactical Choices (FSI 2010).
- On the Ground Interview with Ayed Morrar.
- On the Ground Interview with Nadine Bloch.
- Peter Ackerman - Key Elements of Civil Resistance (FSI 2009)

Reading(s):

- Ackerman, Peter. *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict* (chapter 2).
- Sharp, Gene. *Methods of Nonviolent Action* (pp. 68-77).
- Johnson, Douglas A. "The Need for New Tactics". *New Tactics in Human Rights. Tactical Mapping.*

Activity/Exercise:

- Choice exercise - participants do a choice exercise allowing them to explore stories about how specific methods of nonviolent action were used in different struggles.
- Participants write a short essay on a nonviolent campaign's

strategy. What was the campaign's target and why? What nonviolent tactic(s) were part of the campaign and why? What impact did the tactics have on the conflict? What are some general lessons that can be learned from this?

From: November 17
To: November 23

Skills vs. Conditions in Nonviolent Conflict

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the importance of unity, planning and nonviolent discipline in developing and sustaining a movement.
- Explore how a movement's strategic and tactical choices can transform or overcome adverse conditions or structural variables that it faces.

Video(s):

- Ackerman. Peter. Skills vs. Conditions in Nonviolent Struggle (FSI 2011).

Reading(s):

- Ackerman, Peter. "Skills or Conditions: What Key Factors Shape the Success or Failure of Civil Resistance?" Conference on Civil Resistance and Power Politics, Oxford University, March 15-18, 2007.
- Enabling Environments for Civic Movements and the Dynamics of Democratic Transition. Freedom House. 2008.
- King, Mary Elizabeth. 2007. *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance* (pp. 11-24)

Activity/Exercise:

- Playing People Power: The Game of Civil Resistance
- Participant-led forum discussion - participants play the Brybury Coast scenario for one hour and then share their reflections on what tactics they chose, why they chose them, what happened, and what they learned from the experience.

From: November 24
To: November 30

Dealing with Violent Actors

**Participants choose either option (a) radical flank or option (b) backfire

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how agitators or provocateurs can sabotage a nonviolent movement by introducing violence, thereby

weakening a movement's appeal and legitimacy with the larger population.

- Explore nonviolent movement strategies and tactics for dealing with violent repression.
- Explore principles of how repression can backfire against its perpetrators.
- Compare the impact of violent and nonviolent movements in generating movement success.

Video(s):

- Option A - Kurtz, Les. When Repression Backfires.
- Option A - Janet Cherry - End Conscription Campaign.
- Option B - Chenoweth, Erica. Civil Resistance Quantified (USIP 2010).
- Option B - Peter Neumann - Violent vs. Nonviolent Resistance.

Reading(s):

- Option A – Martin, Brian. Backfire Basics.
- Option B – Chenoweth, Erica & Stephan, Maria. Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. *International Security*, volume 33, issue 1

Activity/Exercise:

- Live Webinar w/ Dr. Lee Smithey - participants log on to a live webinar with Dr. Lee Smithey who will elaborate of backfire and specific cases where it has come into play. Participants, through text or audio, can ask questions in real time.

**From: December 1
To: December 7**

The Role of Media in Civil Resistance

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how different communications tools and strategies have been used by nonviolent movements to spread their message and build movement capacity.
- Examine how media is being created and utilized in current struggles.
- Examine how traditional media coverage can positively and/or negatively impact civil resistance campaigns.
- Discuss how the contest for legitimacy with an oppressor, the raising of costs of repression, and division of loyalties among an oppressor's supporters can be influenced by a campaign's use of media.

- Consider how past or contemporaneous violent groups and their actions may affect media coverage and perceptions of the prospects for nonviolent struggle as an alternative resistance strategy.

Video(s):

- Boaz, Cynthia Dr. Swallowing Camels: How the Media Misinterpret Nonviolent Struggle.
- Cambridge, Daryn. The Digital Duel: Resistance and Repression in an Online World.
- On the Ground Interview with Ahmed Salah
- Egypt: How We Did It When the Media Did Not

Reading(s):

- Reporters without Borders. Enemies of the Internet: Countries Under Surveillance.
- Aday, Sean & Henry Farrell, Marc Lynch, John Sides, John Kelly, Ethan Zuckerman. Blogs to Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics.
- Martin, Brian. "Communication Technology and Nonviolent Action," in Media Development, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1996, pp. 3-9.

Activity/Exercise:

- Wiki - participants are grouped up and asked to contribute to a wiki resource page providing links to examples of effective citizen journalism and/or media-making (i.e. mashups, artistic creation), and providing a short description of why they think it effectively captures some of the core dynamics of civil resistance.

December 8

Closing Dinner (For participants in Washington, DC)

(For participants in Washington, DC, an on-site class will be held at USIP's headquarters building. For all students who cannot attend in person, course materials will be available online.)