Leading Nonviolent Movements for Social Progress

October 15 – November 16, 2018

This distance learning course contains five 2-part learning modules. Each module is designed with a specific learning and/or project outcome in mind. Below, you will find a list of key readings, videos, and a general overview of the course. Instructions for how to complete the discussion questions and written assignments are provided in each module of the website.

This is a lot to do in a short amount of time! We recommend that you start by reading the module overview first. Then complete the readings starting with “required readings.” If you have additional time, also download and read the recommended readings. Then, watch all of the videos associated with the module.

The live classes give all of us a chance to reflect on the lessons we want to take away from the module. The class is enhanced by the participants not only asking questions, but also by those who are willing to share their insights about their own experiences. We will ask for volunteers to share their insights and pose further questions to the whole class. Our participants always have years of valuable experience to share with each other!

After the live classes, there will be short exercises where you will be asked to reflect on what you have learned so far. These might take the form of a survey, a post to our discussion board, or a paper that is handed in. We will also coordinate group work that you will do with other participants.

Objectives

This course brings together theory and practice of strategic nonviolence to evaluate the nature of nonviolent social change. Students will analyze historical and contemporary
cases of civilian-led struggles, including movements for civil and political rights, struggles against dictatorships and authoritarian regimes, and movements for self-determination against foreign occupations. More specifically, the course will address the following questions:

- What have been the impacts of nonviolent movements throughout history?
- What are the main misconceptions concerning nonviolent movements?
- Why do certain civilian-led struggles succeed while others fail?
- What are key tactical and strategic considerations for groups that choose nonviolent struggle?
- How do authoritarian regimes respond to civilian-led challenges and how can nonviolent actors be prepared for, and exploit, regime crackdowns?
- What role will new media and communication technologies play in strategic nonviolence?
- How have external actors (e.g. foreign governments, NGOs, organizations etc.) influenced movements—positively or negatively?

Finally, the course seeks to raise awareness on the effectiveness of strategic nonviolence in contrast to armed struggle, as a tool of social and political change. A 2008 study (Stephan, Maria J., and Erica Chenoweth. “Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict.” *International Security* 33 (1):7-44. 2008) found that nonviolence was nearly twice as effective as violent struggle in achieving stated objectives. The instructors seek to empower students with tools and skills for future use in social and political ventures.

**Pedagogy**

The course will take place online, covering five major themes as modules, each of which will include two 90-minute live conversations. The three faculty will rotate primary responsibility for each session. Students should prepare for each class by reading the required texts and watching the movies in advance. The discussions in class will be more meaningful to those students who have prepared for them. Recommended reading has been added for those with more time now or as reading to pursue in the future. In addition to a conceptual lecture by the faculty, sessions will also include the following approaches to active learning:

- Worksheets and exercises
- Interactive discussions
Of crucial importance to success in strategic nonviolence is a collaborative environment enabling dialogue, debate, and knowledge transfer. As such, education in the theory and practice of nonviolent action must follow these same principles. To that end, students are expected to show up on time, ready to engage actively and critically.

Module 1: Course Overview / Leadership and the Role of Vision in Effective Nonviolent Movements

October 15 – October 21

Part 1: Principles of Nonviolent Movements - What have we learned?

Instructor: Douglas A. Johnson

Topics to be covered: History of nonviolent social movements and key principles: unity, planning, and nonviolent discipline

Outline

Nonviolent resistance is an ongoing aspect of human history, yet it is Gandhi who is often credited with systematizing nonviolent tactics into a coherent strategy and discipline applied to a campaign. Martin Luther King, Jr. continued the tradition of moral language as the basis for disciplined action, yet also showed the need for highly strategic thinking in the civil rights campaign. Since the fall of Marcos to the “people power” campaign in the Philippines, global realization of the power of nonviolence has inspired campaigns in every part of the world and in multiple issues. What have we
learned from these campaigns as to their effectiveness and impact on creating social change?

Using cases from the history of nonviolent struggle, you will learn about the power you can wield through nonviolence. This module will establish that nonviolence is a viable alternative to violence for effecting real and lasting change.

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Objectives

1. Welcome and introduction to the class and faculty.
2. Introduce some key case studies of nonviolent struggle, provide an overview of key principles upon which we will elaborate during the course.
3. Understand new empirical research behind the proposition that nonviolent struggle is both possible and more effective than the use of violence for achieving social change.
4. Survey and discussion.

Readings

*Required Readings*


*Recommended Readings*


Videos

1. A Force More Powerful, Steven York (1999), *Section 1: Episode on India, Short Explanation:* Introduction to NVS: Salt March case study Minutes 4:53-16:00 (or all the way to 26:13)

Videos Shown in Class


Exercises

1. Understanding Social Movements

Part 2: Building Unity Through Articulating a Strong Vision of Tomorrow

*Instructor:* Srdja Popović

*Topics to be covered:* Creating a shared vision to maintain unity

Outline
If “divide and conquer” is a common approach of the powerful, creating sources and bonds of unity within movements and across alliances is an essential countermeasure. A shared vision of a better tomorrow provides the hope to act and guidance for the difficult path to come. Creating that vision with others is the basis for strong alliances and shared struggle. Successful campaigns have created broadly appealing visions that energize the numbers needed to win.

In this lesson, you will see the importance of setting goals that establish a strong sense of unity for your movement. You will learn the steps necessary for creating a vision that appeals to broad numbers within your spectrum of allies and reflects the needs of the people.

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<td>Saturday, October 20</td>
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Objectives

1. Understand the role of “vision of tomorrow” in creating effective nonviolent struggles.
2. Given that a number of people are in the middle of the political spectrum, understand the power of appealing to broader numbers.
3. Develop leadership skills to create a powerful vision, including:
   ➢ Listening to the needs of people versus telling people what to do
   ➢ Identifying the steps of designing an effective process and following them.

Readings

**Required Readings**

2. Freedom Charter of South Africa

**Recommended Readings**

2. Satell, Greg, “Why Some Movements Succeed while others fail?” DigitalTonto:  
4. The Master Plan to Stop Brexit, article by Charlie Cooper, Politico (2018)  

**Videos**

1. Bringing Down a Dictator, Steve York (2002) *Entire Film*  
   [https://vimeo.com/143379353](https://vimeo.com/143379353)
3. CANVAS Animated Video – Vision of Tomorrow, Unity  
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBw1NL30fJ8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBw1NL30fJ8&feature=youtu.be)
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrNz0dZqqN8 Minutes: 1:33-4:23 ; 21:56-22:40](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrNz0dZqqN8)

**Videos Shown in Class**

1. ‘I Have a Dream’, Martin Luther King  
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDWWy4CMhE Minutes: 0:44 - 1:45](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDWWy4CMhE)
   [http://amzn.to/1lfGFgy Minutes: 1:10:07-1:12:27](http://amzn.to/1lfGFgy)

**Exercises**

1. Vision of Tomorrow – discussion board
2. Mapping the battleground
Module 2: Understanding the Terrain and the Adversaries - Choosing Appropriate Strategic Targets to Impact Allies and Adversaries

October 22 – October 28

Sun Tzu taught that the effective leader should know thyself, know the adversary, and know the terrain, or where the battle is to be fought. Social justice campaigns recognize that the achievement of their objectives will be conditioned by the actions and responses of their adversary and will work to understand them fully: their goals, purposes, and sources of power, just as the adversary will study the strengths and weaknesses of the social movements they encounter. Our terrain is the hearts and minds of our communities, who must overcome apathy and fear to engage in the struggle needed for the power to change society.

Part 1: Power in Society and Pillars of Support

Instructor: Slobodan Djinović

Topics to be covered: The nature of power and methods to analyze the power base of the adversary through what Gene Sharp termed the “pillars of support”

Outline

Powerful leaders and institutions have multiple streams of support that provide both authority and the capacity to act. Yet these streams are not equal in their importance, nor immutable in their acquiescence or enthusiasm for the leader. For authoritarian leaders, the support of sectors of society may be grudging and coerced; it may be based on shared interests or wealth. This class will focus on methods to disaggregate the streams of power within society and track their changes as a tool for strategic thinking about targets, tactics, and timing.

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Objectives

1. Understand the concept of “pillars of support” and be able to apply it to your situation.
2. Understand methods to disaggregate and analyze the power base of a target of analysis, be it an adversary or ally you wish to influence.
3. Prepare students for the exercise “Ranking the Pillars,” to be completed and shared with peers.

Readings

Required Readings

3. 50 Crucial Points: Ch. 3 "Pillars of Support": How Power is Expressed" pp. 34-40

Readings for the exercise (Case study: Nicaragua)


**Recommended Readings**

1. *50 Crucial Points*: Ch. 2 "The Nature, Models and Sources of Political Power" pp. 26-31
2. *Blueprint for Revolution*: Ch. 4 "The Almighty Pillars of Power" pp. 77-95
4. "Origins of the movement's strategy: The case of the Serbian youth movement Otpor" - Olena Nikolayenko

**Videos Shown in Class**

1. CANVAS Animated Video – Obedience, Power and Pillars
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsQOYbvrPAc&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsQOYbvrPAc&feature=youtu.be)

**Exercises**

1. Sources of Power and Pillars of Support – students will be analyzing the pillars of support, and making a list of the most important pillars that should be addressed by strategy and tactics, and eventually swayed toward positive social change. In order to rank various pillars of support, students will decide whether to use a case study of their own or the case study on Nicaragua (see the readings section - Nicaragua Case Study). The exercise will be performed in a small groups. Groups will be organized with the assistance of the TAs.

**Part 2: Understanding your Adversary**

*Instructor: Douglas Johnson*

**Outline**

To what degree do we really understand our adversary? Taking off from the notions of “pillars of support,” this session will explore how the changing nature of what we know about our adversary will affect our campaign’s goals, strategies, and tactics. We want to understand where they are today, but more importantly, where they want to go in the future. How best do we understand the strategy of the adversary, and from there, how to disrupt it?
**Due Dates**

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**Objectives**

1. Develop the concept of the “spectrum of allies” and the importance of distinguishing between hardcore adversaries (and allies) and those who can be moved to inactive or neutral positions.
2. With case studies, underscore that adversaries can learn and adjust their methods for the benefit or detriment to your social movement’s campaign.

**Readings**

*Required Readings*


*Recommended Readings*


**Videos**

1. Selma, Ava DuVernay (2014) [http://amzn.to/1KUzex0](http://amzn.to/1KUzex0)

October 29 – November 4

The tactics and strategies of your movement should be highly considered before you start planning your campaign. The use of a specific tactic will determine the direction your movement will go; different tactics and strategies have diverse impacts. The potential costs and benefits of several strategies should also be regarded in order to be best prepared.

Part 1: Introductions to Strategies and Tactics of Nonviolence

Instructor: Srdja Popović

Topics to be covered: General knowledge and principles on strategy and tactics

Outline

This session will explain how the purpose of each tactic employed by nonviolent movements should fulfill one of the following three purposes:

1. Disrupting your opponent/their pillars of support
2. Mobilization of your own movement, or
3. Influencing the neutral audience in your spectrum of allies.
The session will also address the three possible groups of tactics:

2. Protest and persuasion
3. Non-cooperation, and
4. Intervention.

Additionally, the class will focus on how tactics should be planned and prepared regarding several aspects like targeting, costs and benefits, and potential risks for the movement.

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Objectives

1. Introduce and understand the relationship of tactics to strategy.
2. Understand key concepts used in the formation of strategy and how they are useful to planning and conducting a campaign.
3. Develop skills needed to understand the costs and benefits of tactics selected for a campaign.

Readings

Required Readings

Recommended Readings


Videos


Videos Shown in Class

1. Hong Kong Protesters Sing in the Rain https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePehKiUuKK4
2. Spain: See World’s First Hologram Protest Against Gag Law https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvoutHP1tAQ
3. Pots and Pans (in Turkey) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBp1tiR2F00

Exercises

1. Cost-Benefit Analysis Disruption Tactic
Part 2: Tactics of Mobilizing Supporters

*Instructor: Slobodan Djinovic*

*Topics to be covered:* Going into the specifics of tactics (concentration vs dispersion; low risk vs high risk; push and pull…) and their impact on the campaign’s capacity to mobilize supporters.

**Outline**

This session will go into detail about mobilization tactics. We will discuss what these tactics are, as well as go into certain elements like “laughology” and the “cool” factor and how they relate to mobilizing support. We will also look at successful examples of mobilization tactics and use them to conduct cost/benefit analyses of tactics you will come up with.

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<td>Sunday, November 4</td>
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**Objectives**

1. Develop alternative frames for understanding tactics based on the characteristics of timing within the campaign and appropriate targets.
2. Through case studies, show examples of effective tactical deployment as well as failures, and understand the differences.
3. Discuss “laughology” and the tactics of humor.

**Readings**

*Required Readings*


**Readings for the exercise (Case study: Nicaragua)**


**Recommended Readings**


**Videos**


**Videos Shown in Class**


**Exercises**

1. Cost-Benefit Analysis for Mobilization Tactics – Exercise will be performed in small groups. Students will decide whether to use a case study of their own or use the case study on Nicaragua in order to examine cost and evaluation of various tactics
2. Small group discussion/online
Module 4: The Disciplined Imagination of Planning

November 5 – November 11

This module will be focused on the many benefits of horizontal learning through student presentations and the exchange of ideas, new possibilities, and feedback. Students will experience personal coaching with the professors and instructors in order to generate feedback and improve their own plans of action. This will help the process of planning backwards and organizing the movement successfully.

Part 1: Presentation from Participants on Strategies and Tactics

Instructor: Slobodan Djinović

Topics to be covered: Student presentations on strategies and tactics, and introduction to the role of planning

Outline

In this session, participants will get a chance to present the strategies and tactics which they have been working on to the class. They will then receive feedback from both the professor and other participants.

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<td>Monday, November 5</td>
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Objectives

1. While students are presenting tactics, professors will be coaching them. Other students will be involved by chat and will be invited to ask specific questions to contribute to the class.

Part 2: Planning Forward and Planning Backward

Instructor: Srdja Popović

Topics to be covered: Introduction to the art of planning backward
Planning is essential to effective action; the discipline of investing resources into planning is an essential leadership skill. There are many methods of planning, which are often taught as orthodoxy: first this step, then this step. Yet in a contested struggle, planning is an iterative process that both projects where we want to go, but also subjects the plan to reality checks of the availability of resources, the most precious of which is time. This is the art of both planning forward and backward.

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Objectives

1. Build student capacity to develop tactical plans and consider their articulation into strategy.
2. Demonstrate a planning format students may apply to their efforts.
3. Through case studies, show the importance of planning for the unanticipated as well as the expected.

Readings

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**

1. Popovic, Srdja; Porell, Tori. "Make Oppression Backfire", “Phase I: Prepare for Oppression”, pp. 09-14

**Videos**

1. CANVAS Animated Video – Planning
5. Milk, Gus Van Sant (2008) http://amzn.to/1IfGFqv, Minutes:1:20:00-1:22:00

**Exercises**

1. Planning Backwards

**Module 5: Finish What You Start - Managing the End Game, Understanding the Process of Consolidating Victory, Maintaining Unity, and Planning for Effective Transitions**

**November 12 – November 16**

One of the most important aspects of a successful nonviolent movement is not only the beginning and the middle, but also the end of the movement, and specifically, what happens AFTER your campaign. The goal should be to create a sustainable future; this requires a realistic plan of action and a lot of patience, but it is the only possibility in order to ensure success.
Part 1: Why Do Movements Fail?

Instructor: Srdja Popović

Topics to be covered: Factors that lead to failure of campaigns

Outline

Although nonviolent movements have been proven to be much more successful than violent insurgencies, many still fail. In this session, we will identify the factors that lead to failure. We will do this by using what we have learned in previous sessions to analyze both successful and unsuccessful movements in different stages of their development and compare them to highlight what elements are different between the two.

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<td>Wednesday, November 14</td>
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Objectives

1. Using the framework of “vision of tomorrow,” maintaining unity, disciplined nonviolence and tactical flexibility, we will analyze several cases where movements did not achieve their objectives.
2. Compare these factors to campaigns that achieved their objectives.
3. Reiterate key leadership concepts of effective nonviolent struggle.

Readings

Required Readings

**Recommended Readings**


**Videos**

1. The Square, Noujaim (2013) [http://amzn.to/1Va4Iqv](http://amzn.to/1Va4Iqv)
2. CANVAS Animated Video - Finish What You Start [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Ypixif1gU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Ypixif1gU&feature=youtu.be)
3. Yulia Tymoshenko on the failure of the Orange Revolution [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Mmd1kti0VY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Mmd1kti0VY)

**Videos Shown in Class**


**Exercises**

1. Why do movements fail?

**Part 2: Surviving and Sustaining Victory**

*Instructor: Douglas Johnson*

**Topics to be covered**: Factors and pressures that must be anticipated so that a movement survives a victory and protects its gains
Outline

Coalitions often come together for short-term purpose, but disappear when that goal is reached and each organizational member reverts to its own long-term vision. Plans must be made, even in the height of a consuming campaign, to understand the alternatives that will take place after a victory. The creation of alternative institutions can be a source of vision as well as an experience of problem resolution and self-governance for its members, helping them prepare for the long term.

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Objectives

1. The importance of planning for after victory.
2. Understand the importance and opportunity of building alternative institutions to prepare for governance.
3. Review the principles of nonviolence as they apply to long-term governance.

Readings

Required Readings


Recommended Readings

1. Braley, Alia; Popovic, Srdja. 2015. "Nonviolent Struggle vs. the Islamic State: A Strategic Perspective". In: Fletcher Security Review. 02(02)

Videos
2. Superheroes against extremism, Suleiman Bakhit (2014)  
   [https://oslofreedomforum.com/speakers/suleiman-bakhit]