

Activism in Contemporary Society

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| Lecturer | Melissa Munn, Ph.D. |
| Institution | Okanagan College |
| Email | mmunn@okanagan.bc.ca |
| Class time | Morning |

Course Description:

"The duty of youth is to challenge corruption" – Kurt Cobain

"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things." – Leonardo da Vinci

"Without resistance there will be no justice" – Suzanna Arundhati Roy

"Protest is when I say I don't like this. Resistance is when I put an end to what I don't like. Protest is when I say I refuse to go along with this anymore. Resistance is when I make sure everybody else stops going along too" – Ulrike Meinhof

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." – Elie Wiesel

There has never been a time when activism took more forms, for more purposes and with more awareness. Given this, part of the sociological project is to examine the reasons that people come together as activists, to consider the tactics and strategies they employ to create or resist change and to evaluate the merits of each movement. In this course, we will consider these questions with a particular focus on contemporary activism across the globe.

Materials/Text:

Students should have access to a computer with Internet access. All required readings and materials will be provided electronically to students.

Requirements

This class requires no pre-requisite course, but students are expected to be active participants in their own education. This means that students should come with assigned readings completed and with a willingness to engage in lively, passionate and informed discussion and debate.

Schedule:

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| Week 1 (Classes 1-3) | “Get up. Stand up! Don’t Give Up the Fight” – Understanding the desire to resist and take action |
| Week 2 (Classes 4-7) | “We set out to join the picket line. For together we cannot fail” – Examining tactics and strategies of activism |
| Week 3 (Classes 8-11) | “I Can’t Keep Quiet. Oh.Oh.Oh. A One Woman Riot” – From Consumer Boycotts to Punk to #hashtag activism: Examining moderate forms of activism |
| Week 4 (Classes 12-15) | “We’ve Got to Fight The Powers that Be” – From Arrest to Revolution: Examining radical forms of activism |

Assignments:

Because this course is offered in a condensed timeframe, students will be required to complete several small assignments. Grades will be calculated based on the following assignments:

1. **QUIZZES:** Each Monday (classes 4, 8 & 12) students will complete a short quiz on the material covered the previous week.
2. **ENGAGEMENT:** Students are required to participate in class discussion and will be assigned one mark for each class in which they engage verbally in the conversation.
3. **TRACING A MOVEMENT:** Students can work alone or with a partner to examine a particular act of activism. Students may elect to write a paper or give a class presentation. In either case, students will be required to:
 - a. Pick a social movement or campaign
 - b. Identify the goals of the movement
 - c. Discuss how the movement was built
 - d. Discuss the strategies and tactics used by the activists
 - e. Evaluate the success of the movement

Evaluation:

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| Engagement | /10 | Quiz #1 | /15 |
| Tracing a Movement | /15 | Quiz #2 | /15 |
| Final In-Class Reflection | /30 | Quiz #3 | /15 |

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

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| A+ | A | B+ | B | C+ | C | D+ | D | F |
| 95-100 | 90-94.99 | 85-89.99 | 80-84.99 | 75-79.99 | 70-74.99 | 65-69.99 | 60-64.99 | 0-59.99 |