

University of Florida  
College of Journalism and Communications – Department of Public Relations  
Global Activism and Social Change Communication

Instructor: Dr. Eric Castillo

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This syllabus is subject to change, as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

**Course description:**

Strategic methods of communication and community organizing are instrumental as communities across the world engage in practices of autonomy, social justice, and self-affirmation. Effective strategies for creating change arise from a myriad of communicative devices that have shaped twenty-first century community organizing as well as responses (or lack thereof) by media, corporations, and government agencies. Grassroots movements have historically been the roots of cataclysmic change because of their innate ability to galvanize a critical mass of marginalized populations. This online graduate course will delve into activism and social change from a local and global perspective in order to enhance students' perspectives of social change as it manifests via popular media and community action. As part of the course, students will critically analyze the political histories around national and global issues in order to better understand the depth of community organizing and breadth of human rights activism. This course will also introduce and analyze activist rhetoric, strategies for social justice, and methods for inter-movement organizing. Students will leave this course with the tools necessary to engage in strategic communication from a global activist framework.

**This course has the following overall objectives:**

- To describe historical forces that created social movements in various historical moments;
- To explain community organizing models and the relationship between strategic communication and social change;
- To apply cultural theory and critical pedagogy as lenses for understanding global activism from a pragmatic and holistic perspective.

**Method of instruction:** The online site in eLearning includes an Introduction to the course and 10 modules. The content will be delivered through audio lectures, outline notes as PowerPoint presentations, assigned readings, assignment guidelines, peer commentaries, and/or discussion rooms. Your participation is essential and required, with online posts and peer commentaries comprising a portion of your final grade. The quality of your participation in online discussions and assignments will affect your grade; therefore, active engagement is crucial. Not all of the materials that you read will be included in audio presentations or topical outlines, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please consult with the instructor.

**Required readings:** Sets of required readings are available on Sakai. Three books will need to be purchased online or checked out via local libraries. Please see the course schedule for the complete list of readings. There may be additional readings in the form of handouts or Sakai postings at various times during the term.

**Required Books:**

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. [1970] 1993.

Dutta, Mohan J. *Communicating Social Change: Structure, Culture, and Agency*, 2011.

John D. H. Downing *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*, 2000.

**Online course administration - Canvas:** Canvas will be used to administer the course communication, materials (i.e., PowerPoint files, reaction comments / discussions, readings, assignment guidelines, peer commentaries) and grades.

**Course evaluation:** The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's overall performance in five areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. The area and grade allocations for each component of the online class' evaluation are as follows:

	Points
10 discussion posts	30
5 peer commentaries	20
1 critical analysis of article	15
1 self-analysis of social change model	15
1 Essay on a historical event involving activism and social change	20
Total	100

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

Grading Scale:	A	95-100 points
	A-	90-94 points
	B+	85-89 points
	B	80-84 point
	B-	80-82 points
	C+	77-79 points
	C	72-76 points
	C-	70-71 points
	D+	67-69 points
	D	62-66 points
	D-	60-62 points
	E	below 60 points

FYI, University's Grading Policy:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Grades for this graduate course will be based on the total points earned over the term

## Assignments

### **Ten postings [30 points total, 3 points each]. See online class schedule for topics and due dates:**

Draft a written commentary based on the assigned prompt/question posed within each online module.

### **Five peer commentaries [20 points total, 4 points each]:**

The five (5) peer commentaries are designed to engage graduate students in online commentary among peers in the classroom. Students will have the opportunity to comment, critique, and provide feedback on peer online discussion posts. The goal is to create an online dialogue among students so that we help each other along in the process of understanding global activism and social change communication.

Students must comment on one student's post per assigned module. Be thoughtful and intentional with your commentary.

Avoid comments such as "I dis/agree" and please do not paraphrase what your peer wrote. Be original and provide your peer with engaged commentary.

### **Critical Review of Article (15 points):**

Students will read "Not Public Relations: Sustainable Communication" found in Module 6. Students will select four core components of "public communication" and give a detailed description and analysis of each core component. The description and analysis should be grounded on each student's understanding of "public communication" and if/how effective it can be in 21st century public relations and corporate responsibility vis-à-vis grassroots activism. The length of the critical review is five pages minimum and seven pages maximum. It should be double spaced and 12-point Times Roman font. It should closely follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).

### **Self-analysis of Social Change Model (15 points):**

Students will engage in a self-reflection exercise where they bridge the Social Change model in their own understanding of social justice.

Students will offer their perspective about how the Social Change model helps them understand leadership and change from a personal and global perspective.

All segments of the social change model will help students understand how positive change manifests on a personal, interpersonal, and community level and will help students engage in practical methods for understanding their role in social justice.

The length of the analysis is three pages minimum and five pages maximum. It should be double spaced and 12-point Times Roman font. It should closely follow the APA Publication Manual.

### **Essay on 2016 Presidential Elections and Social Change Communications (20 points):**

Students will select a presidential candidate to examine the rhetorical devices used to communicate their unique campaign platform. Students will assess how the visual narratives (logo, visual art, website) as well as the discursive narratives (social media, websites, interviews, town halls, debates, etc.) create the presidential identity of the candidate. The goal of this essay is to determine a student's ability to critically evaluate a political actor's usage of global strategic communication and social change communication in the public sphere.

The essay should underscore how a presidential candidate's election campaign leverages social change communication in their effort to win the primaries and election. Below are some parameters that must be addressed within the essay:

1. The rhetorical strategy the candidate uses to articulate their platform.
2. How the candidate shapes the national discourse surrounding social and economic justice.
3. How the candidate galvanizes support (and from which communities the candidate is most successful with).

The length of the essay is ten pages double spaced, and 12-point Times Roman font (with page numbers). It should closely follow the APA Publication Manual. The 10 pages do not include any abstract, bibliography, or title pages. The 10 pages are purely content. Be sure to incorporate course content into your final paper. You will need to incorporate at least 3 academic peer-reviewed sources into your paper.

## CLASS POLICIES

The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this online graduate course (see page 10). All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Students are expected to participate in online discussions. Assigned readings should be completed in addition to follow topical outlines and watching video class lectures. Any material discussed and/or covered in the assigned readings may be included on examinations. Students will not be allowed to make up assignments outside the timeline set for the online course. Exceptions to this policy will be limited to documented exceptional (as defined by the professor) circumstances and at the discretion of the professor.

The professor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class.

The professor may also be reached via e-mail and the telephone, but please be aware that the professor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 48 hours for a response. Therefore, barring an emergency situation, it is advisable to contact the instructor well in advance of a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond to you.

Each of you plays a role in shaping this course. I encourage you to be actively involved in class discussions and activities. Please also be respectful of the contributions of others, and help create an online class environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you contact me immediately. Please feel free to approach me about any concerns or comments you might have about this online class.

Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in an "E" for the course and possible disciplinary action.

Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both instructors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission. Do not adapt someone else's work and submit it as your own. This online graduate course requires original work, created at this time, for this purpose.

Spelling counts. So does grammar, punctuation and professional presentation techniques.

An assignment turned in passed the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday it is late. This is a business where deadlines count. You cannot make excuses to your boss or a client if your work is late.

**Student Services:** I am committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality. In order to address academic needs, I must be informed of the student's

circumstance at the beginning of the semester before performance becomes a factor. This is not to imply that standards of fairness will not be generally applied when evaluating student work; only that reasonable and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that officially recognized challenges do not become a hindrance to a student's ability to succeed in this course.

### **Online Class and reading schedule**

#### **Week 1 – Introduction**

- ï Why is global activism important/relevant to the field?
- ï Short Lecture: “What is social justice?”
- ï “Social Justice Is” video

#### **Week 2/Module 1– Theorizing Social Change Communication and Structures of Power** [First online posting due]

Objective: To articulate key theoretical components of social change communications as well as interdisciplinary theories that help shape students' understanding of power, social change, and communication.

Required reading:

“Theorizing Social Change Communication” in *Communicating Social Change: Structure, Culture, and Agency* Mohan J. Dutta, 2011.

Recommended readings:

“Introduction: Social Movements & Global Processes” by Jane Nash in *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader* 2005.

“Nonviolent Power & Revolutionary Change” in *Nonviolent Revolutions* by Sharon Erickson Nepstad, 2011.

#### **Week 3/Module 2 – Structures of Power, Structures of Marginality** [Second online posting due]

Objective: To summarize the machinations of structural power, privilege and oppression in several contexts (health, agriculture, socio-economic status, and identity politics)

Readings:

“Part 1: Structures and Marginalization” in *Communicating Social Change, Structure, Culture, and Agency* (65-166) Mohan J. Dutta, 2011.

#### **Week 4/Module 3 – Radical Media and Media Theory: A Discussion** [Third online posting due & first peer commentary due]

Objective: To discuss components of media theory and the practice of alternative media for social change; to explain the social change model and apply it to your understanding of social change communication.

“Part 1: Concepts: Radical Media Intersects Media Theory” in *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* John D. H. Downing 2000 (pages 1-100).

- Servant Leadership/Social Change Model
- Break down of the model and how it applies to social justice and activism
- <http://www.leadershipandservice.ufl.edu/leadership.php>
- <http://www.socialchangemodel.org/>

#### **Week 5/Module 4 – Methods of Communicative Organizing**

**[Fourth online posting due] [Analysis of Social Change Model Essay due]**

Objective: To discuss various methods of communicative activism and the practice of alternative visual media.

“Part 2: “Part 1: Radical Media Tapestry: Communicative Rebellion Historically and Globally” in *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* John D. H. Downing 2000 (pages 101-234).

#### **Week 6/Module 5– Online Organizing and Social Media Activism**

**[Fifth online posting due & second peer commentary due]**

Objective: To describe the rise of online advocacy and social justice communication.

“Part 1: Cyber-Social Movements Emerging Online” in *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*. Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers (eds.) (25-116)

#### **Week 7/Module 6 – Raising Community Consciousness. Pedagogies of the Oppressed**

**[Sixth online posting due & third peer commentary due]**

Objective: To explain the functions of power and privilege on a systemic level; to underscore the manifestation of intersectional oppression and the counter-act of activism from a pedagogical point of view.

Readings:

Chapter 1 Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire

Chapter 2 Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire

#### **Week 8/Module 7 – Education is a Tool towards Liberation**

**[Seventh online posting due] [Critical Analysis of Film Essay due]**

Objective: To demonstrate a working knowledge of the process of political education and how it applies in community organizing.

Readings:

“The Process of Political Literacy” in the Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation by Freire, Macedo, and Giroux.

“A Revolution of Values” and “Embracing Change” in Teaching Transgression: Education as the Practice of Freedom by bell hooks, 1994.

### **Week 9/Module 8 – Civil Resistance and Public Engagement**

**[Eighth online posting due & fourth peer commentary]**

Objective: To gain a critical and historical perspective about the foundations and processes of civil resistance through art.

Video:

“Dismaland: Inside Banksy's Dystopian Playground”

Readings:

“Banksy”

“Disneyland: A Utopian Urban Space”

### **Week 10/Module 9 – Raising Community Consciousness through Education and Engagement**

**[Ninth online posting due and fifth peer commentary]**

Objective: To explain the function of popular education for community consciousness; to discuss the impact of community education for social justice efforts; to summarize immigrant rights’ work as an exercise of critical pedagogy.

Readings:

“The DREAM Act is Still Just a Dream For Now: The Positive Effects of Creating a New Path to Lawful Status by Encouraging Military Enlistment and the Pursuit of Higher Education” Johnny Sinodis

“Hegemony, Ideology, and Oppositional Consciousness: Undocumented Youth and the Personal Struggle for Educational Justice” by Genevieve Negron-Gonzales.

ï Immigrant Rights Activism

ï Campaign for an American DREAM (OFA Colorado Action)

ï [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS74fS4r2u8&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS74fS4r2u8&feature=player_embedded#) (CAD CO)

ï [http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2012/7/31/dream\\_activist\\_speaks\\_from\\_broward\\_detention\\_center\\_listen\\_to\\_exclusive\\_audio](http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2012/7/31/dream_activist_speaks_from_broward_detention_center_listen_to_exclusive_audio)

ï <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPqEuTop41g&feature=youtu.be> Marco being arrested audio clip

ï <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeLkztxKfPI> DA in Florida infiltrating BTC



**Week 11/Module 10 – Civil Resistance and Public Engagement**

**[Tenth online posting due]**

Objective: To gain a critical and historical perspective about the foundations and processes of civil resistance.

Readings:

“Migrant Mobilization: Factors Contributing to the Success of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers” thesis by Jane M. Walsh. (<http://sfalliance.org/resources/Walsh2005.pdf>)

**Week 12 – Final Module**

**Final Paper Due**

**Recommended online resources:**

[www.colorlines.org](http://www.colorlines.org)

<http://www.socialjusticejournal.org/>

<http://www.teachersforjustice.org/>

<http://culturalpolitics.net/>

[www.schoolofunityandliberation.org](http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org)

[www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org)

<http://www.motherjones.com/>

**Recommended readings for further consultation:**

[https://www4.uwm.edu/soe/center\\_new\\_professional\\_educators/upload/Teaching-for-Social-Justice-Banks-2004.pdf](https://www4.uwm.edu/soe/center_new_professional_educators/upload/Teaching-for-Social-Justice-Banks-2004.pdf)

bell hooks *Teaching to Transgress*

Chela Sandoval *Methodology of the Oppressed*

**The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:**

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact, Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>