

Resistance, Power and Movements

Period 1-2, Academic Year 2019-2020



Resistance, Power and Movements (SDC-50904)

Language	English
Credits	4
Period	1-2 2019-2020, Weeks 4 - 16
Venue	Clock House Generaal Foulkeslaan 351, Wageningen
Time	September 27-December 13, 2019. The kick – off of the course takes place in the weekend of 27-28 September with two full days of lectures and discussions. Subsequent sessions will take place on seven Friday afternoons from 14.00 - 18.00 spread out over period 1 and 2 (4 and 11 October, 1, 8, 15 and 22 November, 13 December).
Exam	No written exam. Final presentations group work: December 13, 2019
Contact person	Michiel Köhne; michiel.kohne@wur.nl
Lecturer(s)	Michiel Köhne, Elisabet Rasch
Examiner(s)	Michiel Köhne, Elisabet Rasch
Secretariat	SDC; Leeuwenborch 3rd floor; 3053

Profile of the course

What does 'activism' and 'being an activist' mean in today's political context? What are the different options that citizen groups and (activist) social movements have to organize around the topics they consider urgent? How to organize a sound and constructive movement or action group? What can be learnt from the past's social movements and mobilizations? How can theories on social movements, activism and resistance be useful for organizing an impactful action? How to (be)come an agent of change? How to combine activism and academia and/or be an activist scholar?

These questions are central to the capita selecta course "Resistance, Power and Movements", a collaboration between Build Your Movement, OtherWise and the Sociology of Development and Change group. The course has been developed in response to a wish (and a need!) that has been voiced repeatedly by students and university lecturers alike to not only explore how theory and practice of social movement could feed into each other, but to actually bring that into practice in university education and teaching. As such, this course seeks to create a space to explore and reflect on agency and power with a focus on combining theory and practice. In so doing, WUR lecturers and professional trainers bring theory and practice of resistance, protest and movements together in a mix lectures and interactive workshops. On top of this, students will be guided to design and realize a small protest/act of resistance.

The course will focus on the following themes:

- Resistance, power and diversity
- Framing and storytelling
- Activist repertoires/repertoires of contention
- Movement cultures and decision-making
- Wellbeing of movements and operational (political) space
- Embodiment in/and activism
- Activism and the digital space

An important aspect of the learning process is experiential learning/learning by doing, besides a focus on group work and reflection on process and internal group dynamics.

Our students

PhD, MSc and 3rd year BSc students of all study programs are welcome to this course.

Participation is limited to 25 students. Students are asked to write a one-page motivation letter in which they explain why they want to follow the course and how this relates to their own trajectories of social/political/activist engagement. Motivation letters should be send michiel.kohne@wur.nl before September 15.

The course is organised in such a way that students can follow the course on top of their regular classes. It is 4 ECTS and spread out over two periods with classes on Friday afternoons. We do, however, ask for full commitment of the course participants because internal group dynamics are an integral part of the course. This means that attendance to all Friday afternoon sessions

is mandatory. In addition, the group assignment (designing and realizing a small protest/act of resistance) will demand students' commitment and flexibility.

To cover the costs for food and drinks for the weekend there will be a 15 Euro fee.

Learning outcomes

After having followed this course, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish and analyse different forms of activism and resistance (e.g. everyday forms of resistance vs. overt forms of resistance) within their historical, political and cultural context;
2. Analyse and reflect on internal movement wellbeing, identity, culture and decision-making processes;
3. Understand and analyse how "diversity" within and outside of movements shapes internal movement dynamics, as well as the ways movements evolve within societies;
4. Understand and analyse how "power (relations)" shape internal movement dynamics, as well as the ways movements evolve within societies;
5. Understand (the importance of) and develop a well thought strategy for action (including mission, narrative, framing, etc);
6. Distinguish and analyse different "activist methods", like activist research, civil disobedience, digital activism;
7. Employ several activist "skills", like using an activist vocabulary, developing an effective petition, organize a playful action, physically occupy a space, etc.

Course materials and resources

Literature will be made available through Brightspace.

Teaching methods

During the course there are weekly (Friday) interactive lecture-workshops. Students will spend most of their time working on their group assignment.

1. Lecture-workshops (40 hours):

The lecture-workshops combine theory and practice. This means that (interactive) lecturing will be combined with practical exercises in 'doing activism' and reflection on internal group processes. The lecture-workshops have three objectives: 1) discuss theory and case studies 2) develop "activist skills" and 3) provide a space for questions and reflections regarding the period project. The lecture-workshop will be facilitated by professional trainers and university lecturers. For some of the workshop-lecturers activists will be invited to share their experiences. This part of the course is assessed through the midterm report, final period project paper, the final presentations and an individual reflection paper.

2. Group work (60 hours):

During the course, students work in small groups (3-5 students) on their period project: designing, developing and realizing small protest/act of resistance. The objective of the group work is to learn how to put theory into practice and to develop "activist skills". During the period project, students are invited to reflect on - and put into practice - the elements that are central to the course: ideas about protest, activism and resistance, social movements, civic action groups and diversity; social movement narrative and strategy; movement identity;

activist repertoires; embodiment in/and activism; activism and resistance in/and the digital space. As a group, students also reflect on the group process during the period project.

Students prepare the Friday Assignments, the Midterm Report, the Final Period Project Report and the Final Period Project presentations as a group (a mini-social movement so to say ☺). The Friday Assignments (each 500 words) reflect on the theory and how that theory will be applied in the design and realization of the students' small protest/act of resistance. The Midterm report (2500 words) builds on the first two Friday Assignments and in addition consists of some theoretical reflections about the kick-off weekend and on the group process. Detailed guidelines will be available on Brightspace. The timeline for the period project is as follows:

- 27-28 September: students form groups around political themes of their interest
- 1 and 8 October: turn in "Friday Assignments" (500 words each)
- 1 November: turn in Midterm report
- 8 November: in-class discussion of Midterm reports
- 15 and 22 November: turn in Friday Assignments
- 22 November-13 December: realizing small protest/act of resistance
- 13 December: Period Project presentations. All groups present their work in a way that does most justice to their small protest/act of resistance
- 16 December: students turn in final paper Period Project

The group work is assessed through the final period project paper and the final presentations. These reports partly build on the "Friday assignments" through which students are invited to reflect on the literature.

Disclaimer: small protest/act of resistance that are designed and realized during this course cannot exceed the law. All students will have to sign a statement through which they accept this limitation and agree with the university not being responsible for possible consequences of civil disobedience or otherwise illegal actions.

3. Individual self-study and reflection (30 hours):

In the time that is reserved for individual self-study and reflection, students read the literature as a preparation for the Friday assignments, but also keep a log and write a paper about their personal growth, empowerment and reflections that they experience through the course. This part of the course is assessed through the final individual reflection paper. It is each students' own responsibility to work on the reflection paper throughout the course (see specific guidelines in a separate document on Brightspace)

Assessment strategy

The learning outcomes are assessed through the final period project paper (75%), final period project presentation (5%) and an individual reflection paper (20%).

Examination:

Period project: design, develop and realize a small protest/act of resistance(80%: 75% paper, 5% presentation)

The period project is an integral part of the course. During the period project students work in groups of 3-5 students on the design and realization of a civil action/act of resistance. The

overall goal of the period project is to bring theory and skills developed in the course into practice. The period project consists of developing, realizing and reporting on the group work. The period project is assessed through a written report (75%) and the final presentation (5%).

	Period Project Paper and Presentation	Individual reflection paper
Learning outcomes:		
Distinguish and analyse different forms of activism and resistance (e.g. everyday forms of resistance vs. overt forms of resistance) within their historical, political and cultural context;	X	
Analyse and reflect on internal movement wellbeing, identity, culture and decision-making processes;		X
Understand and analyse how “diversity” within and outside of movements shapes internal movement dynamics, as well as the ways movements evolve within societies;		X
Understand and analyse how “power (relations)” shape internal movement dynamics, as well as the ways movements evolve within societies;	X	X
Understand (the importance of) and develop a well thought strategy for action (including mission, narrative, framing, etc);	X	
Distinguish and analyse different “activist methods”, like activist research, civil disobedience, digital activism;	X	
Employ several activist “skills”, like using an activist vocabulary, developing an effective petition, organize a playful action, physically occupy a space, etc.	X	X

Course schedule

The course will kick-off with a weekend from 14.00 on September 27th until 17.00 on September 28th. Subsequent sessions will take place on seven Friday afternoons from 14.00 - 18.00 spread out over period 1 and 2. (4 and 11 October, 1, 8, 15 and 22 November, 13 December)