

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Civil Disobedience and Social Protest**

Course Number and Section:

PHILOSOP

2760F 550

Instructor Name(s): Stephen D'Arcy

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This is a course about defiant and confrontational social protest, in the context of liberal democratic legal and political systems. The course explores this theme by means of in-depth discussion and careful critical reading of three notable thinkers on this area, each with a different, sophisticated philosophical perspective on protest and resistance. First, we look at two US political philosophers, Jennifer Kling and Megan Mitchell, who argue in detail for the claim that “non-lethal violence,” as they understand it, is sometimes a justifiable and legitimate form of democratic civic engagement. Second, we examine the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe (Anishinaabe) thinker, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, who defends practices of Indigenous 'radical resistance' to 'hetero-patriarchal' colonial capitalism, often in the form of determined efforts at land-based intergenerational transmission of socio-cultural competence in Nishnaabe lifeways, but also in the form of 'constellations of co-resistance' that foster 'profoundly anticapitalist' forms of 'generative refusal.' Finally, third, we turn to the work of the Irish philosopher, Christopher Finlay, who applies traditional 'just war theory' to test the claim that armed resistance, as in revolutionary warfare or even some acts that some would call terrorism, may be justifiable on moral grounds.

Learning Outcomes:

The readings, lectures, and class discussions should prepare students to evaluate and apply theoretical perspectives in legal philosophy and democratic theory, in order to assess the merits of various styles and genres of militant protest and civil defiance.

By the end of the course, students should be able to carefully weigh considerations of social justice, democratic legitimacy, personal dignity, and public welfare, and to articulate verbally and in writing the implications of these values for the assessment of particular cases or types of controversial protest.

Students should be able to entertain, with appropriate open-mindedness, the reasons and arguments considered in the course for the legitimacy of forms of protest and resistance that might be controversial.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

In this course, we study three main perspectives: Jennifer Kling and Megan Mitchell, authors of 'The Philosophy of Protest,' Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, author of 'As We Have Always Done,' and Christopher Finlay, author of 'Terrorism and the Right to Resist.'

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Essay 1	10/23/2024	20%
Essay 2	11/15/2024	20%
Essay 3	12/05/2024	20%
Final Exam	Exam Period	30%
Participation & Attendance		10%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Friday, August 30, 2024