

# PLSC S410 01 (SA24): Political Protests

## Meeting and Contact information

**Instructor:** Prof. Maria J. Hierro [website](#)

**Time:** MWF 9 am- 11:15 am

**Location:** TBA

**Office Hours** Monday, 11:30 - 12:30. Please sign up [here](#) (at least 24 hours in advance)

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**Office #:** RKZ 421

## Welcome message

Welcome to the *Political Protests Yale Summer Session Course!*

This course invites students to reflect on protest movements to understand their potential impact better.

The course is eclectic in the use of teaching materials and learning strategies. We will learn from political protests across the world, seminal and cutting-edge research on protest and social movements, journalistic pieces, documentaries, and guest speakers. The course will adopt a multidisciplinary and methodological plural approach.

I hope we can build together, as a class, an intellectual community where everyone feels inspired to learn, comfortable to participate, and eager to discuss.

I look forward to meeting you and accompanying your learning process this summer!

Maria Jose Hierro

## Course Description

The Guardian defined the 2010s as the “[mass protest decade](#),” and 2019 capped this decade with an [upsurge of protests worldwide](#). In 2020, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the US witnessed the [widest protests in its recent history](#) in response to the George Floyd killing. Last year, [civil unrest in Africa hit a 6-year high](#), and this year, farmers in [India](#) and [Europe](#) are demonstrating against dropping produce prices, rising fuel costs, and environmental reforms. Protesting has been normalized as a form of political participation.

Under what conditions does a protest start? Why do people decide to join a protest? Do protests succeed? Can repression kill protest movements?

Focusing on recent protest movements worldwide, this seminar will address these, and other questions related to the study of political protest. We will start the course by

analyzing the problem of collective action and how different theories have explained the emergence of protest movements and participation. From there, we will turn to movements around the world to understand the power of non-violence, examine the outcomes of protests, the consequences of repression, how social media has changed protest participation, or what differences are between old and new social movements.

## Goals

- Students will become equipped with the analytical skills to critically understand the origin, growth, success, failure, evolution, and fading of today's protest movements.
- Students will learn about the scholarship and activists' views and discussions on protest.

## Required Course Materials

There is **NO** required textbook for this class. All readings for the class will be made available through Course Reserves in Canvas. Journal articles, documentaries, and podcasts are accessible in the course schedule below. To access, make sure you are connected through the [Yale VPN](#).

I have made an explicit effort to have a diverse selection of authors, but please note that the course readings are selected based on their relevance to each session's topic.

Some of the readings include statistical analyses. You can access this [resource](#) to learn how to interpret regression tables and figures.

## Resources

Kenya Flash, the late Political Science librarian, created a [library guide](#) for our class. Moving forward, [Jennifer Snow](#), the librarian for Sociology, will be responsible for this guide. The guide is an excellent source if you want to learn more about protests and social movements in the US and the world.

## Assignments

### 1. Class participation (15%)

A seminar is successful when everyone participates in class every day and when the discussion is horizontal.

- Attendance is required.
- Students are expected to contribute to the class discussions and participate in the class activities (i.e., prepping queries for guest speakers, contributing to the movie discussions, etc.).

- Only students who contribute to the class discussions with high-quality comments and participate regularly will receive a high grade on participation.

## 2. Reading Response Papers (25%)

Students are expected to do all required readings every week regardless they prepare a response paper or not for that session. Please read the required readings carefully, take notes, and bring them to class.

Students will prepare five response papers (approximately 750 words) during the summer course. The paper will respond to a prompt I will share with the class beforehand. You must submit one response paper for classes 2 to 4, one for classes 5 to 9, and one for classes 10 to 13. You can decide when to submit the two remaining response papers.

Responses will be submitted the day before the class meets (by 5 pm).

## 3. Movie Forum (20%)

There will be two movie forums during the course. The movies (documentaries) have been selected to help us draw lessons for our course. Students must come prepared for the discussion of the documentaries. I will offer a series of guiding questions to prepare for the discussion.

*First Documentary:* [How to Start a Revolution](#), a conversation with Gene Sharp on peaceful revolutions.

*Date:* June 7

*Second Documentary:* [How to Change the World](#) about the origin, growth, institutionalization, and fragmentation of Greenpeace.

*Date:* June 17

## 5. Report (15%)

Identify a geographic area (country, state, city). Look up information regarding a significant (or minor) protest in that area last year (or timeframe of interest). Learn about the timeline of the rally, its roots, goals, the protest's mobilization capacity, duration, the protester profile, repression, violence, and the protest's end. Produce a report summarizing your findings in a table (three pages, including references). See a template [here](#). Students can collaborate in collecting the information, but the report must be individual.

Run by me your case study and topic for the report by Date TBA – send an email with the subject PLSC S410 Case & Topic.

*Submission date:* TBA

#### 4. Analyze a political protest (25%)

In the last two sessions of the course, students will present a movement to the class. Students will use what they learned about the movement in preparing the report to prepare the presentation. Presenters will be assigned 15 minutes and we will devote 10 more minutes for discussion. Detailed instructions on how to prepare this assignment will be given in advance. This assignment will have an individual or group format, depending on the number of students in class.

*Submission dates: June 26 & June 28 (class presentations)*

### Grading

93-100:	A
90-92.99:	A-
87-89.99:	B+
83-86.99:	B
80-82.99:	B-
77-79.99:	C+
73-76.99:	C
70-72.99:	C-
67-69.99:	D+
63-66.99:	D
60-62.99:	D-
0-59.99:	F

### Academic Integrity

Assignments are to be completed **individually**, as they should reflect your own thinking.

Using ChatGPT or other forms of Artificial Intelligence detracts from your learning and becoming a critical thinker and, therefore, a critical citizen. This course does not permit collaboration with ChatGPT or other AI composition software to prepare your response papers. Please use AI responsibly.

Plagiarism will not be allowed under any circumstances.

For more information, please refer to the [Yale Policy on Plagiarism, Cheating, and Documentation of Sources](#), the Yale Writing Center for guidance on [how to cite](#), and the Poorvu Center's page on ["Why Are There Different Citation Styles?"](#)

### Accessibility

I encourage students with disabilities to email me during the first week of classes to determine what adjustments are required to accommodate their needs. All discussions on this topic will remain confidential.

If you encounter any accessibility problems in the readings or materials for this course, please let me know, and I will remedy the problem ASAP.

## Inclusiveness

It is important that you feel part of the class and that you make the most of it. To that end, I am fully committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

If you have suggestions or comments, [email](#) me or use the [Feedback & Accessibility Barriers tool](#) in Canvas. I will review this tool periodically.

Students must also contribute to creating an inclusive environment. Please use respectful and civil language and be mindful of others' feelings. We can all make mistakes when we try to convey ideas as they come to our minds. Still, we must acknowledge and remediate those mistakes.

## Course Schedule

**[Please, note the course schedule could be subject to changes before the course starts]**

### **Session 1. May 27. Overview.**

We will divide the first class into three parts. The first part of the class will be devoted to introductions. In the second part, I will introduce the questions guiding the study of political protests. We will discuss the course goals, assignments, class logistics, etc. The third part of the class will help us break the ice by discussing a series of articles that examine protesting and help us learn about recent Farmers' protests.

- Aytaç, Selim Erdem and Stokes, Susan. 2020. "[Why protest? 2019 was a year of global protest. Was it democracy in action or democracy in crisis?](#)" *The Wilson Quarterly*, Winter 2020.
- Singh, Pritam. Feb 2024. [How farmers' protests in Europe and India share common ground](#), *Frontline*.

### **Session 2. May 29. The Collective Action Problem I**

This session starts with a discussion of what counts as political protest and surveys different definitions of protest, social movement, and social movement organization. Once we have settled this question, we will learn about the collective action problem in protest participation. Protesting requires cooperation and individual engagement in collective action, but cooperation is challenging. In this session, we will learn about the difficulties of cooperating under uncertainty and the material and non-material selective incentives behind protest participation.

- Opp, Karl-Dieter. 2009. *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis*. New York. Routledge [[Ch 2 Opp pages 33 to 42](#)]

- Opp, Karl-Dieter. 2001. [Collective Political Action: A Research Program and Some of its Results](#). *Analyse & Kritik*, 23(1), 1-20.

### **Session 3. May 31. The Collective Action Problem II**

We will focus on two protests: the Cochabamba (Bolivia) Water Wars in 1999 and the 2016 “July 1 March” in Hong Kong. These protests illustrate the usefulness of a collective action theoretical framework to explain individuals’ participation in protests and the nuances and limitations of the framework.

- Cantoni, Davide, David Y Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Jane Zhang. 2019. [Protests as Strategic Games: Experimental Evidence from Hong Kong’s Antiauthoritarian Movement](#) *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(2): 1021–1077. Find [here](#) the annotated copy of the article.
- Simmons, Erica. 2016. *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press **[Chapter 3]**

### **Session 4. June 3. Theoretical approaches to the study of protest**

We will devote the next session to learning about different theoretical approaches to studying protest. We will study approaches that emphasize the relevance of relative deprivation, resource mobilization, political opportunities, framing, and psychological factors. These theoretical approaches were originally envisioned to explain the emergence and growth of protest movements, but they have also been used to describe individual participation in protests. This class is theory-oriented. To ease the comprehension of the different approaches to studying protest, I will offer an overview of the main propositions of the approaches.

- Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2009). [Social Movement Theory: Past, Present, and Prospects](#). In Ellis, S., & Van Kessel, I. (Eds.). *Movers and Shakers: Social Movements in Africa*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. **[Pages 17-35]**
- Chenoweth, E., Hamilton, B. H., Lee, H., Papageorge, N. W., Roll, S. P., & Zahn, M. V. (2022). [Who Protests, What Do They Protest, and Why?](#) (No. w29987). *National Bureau of Economic Research*. **[Read Introduction, sections 3 and 4]**

### **Session 5. June 5. Nonviolent forms of protest I**

In this session, we will talk about violent and non-violent repertoires of protest. We will also examine the strategic use of non-violence and discuss why/whether nonviolent protests are more effective than violent protests.

- Engler, Mark and Paul Engler. 2017. *This is an uprising. How Nonviolent Revolt is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Nation Books. **[Chapter 1]**
- Malm, Andreas. 2021. *How to Blow a Pipeline*. New York: Verso. **[Chapter 1]**

In class, we will review:

- Manekin, Devorah, & Mitts, Tamar. 2022. [Effective for Whom? Ethnic Identity and Nonviolent Resistance](#). *American Political Science Review*, 116(1), 161-180.

### **Session 6. June 7. Nonviolent forms of protest II. Movie Forum**

This session analyzes the arguments offered by those who support the strategic value of non-violence. We will devote time to discussing the movie *How to Start a Revolution*.

- Stephan, Maria J., and Erica Chenoweth. 2014. [Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works](#). *Foreign Affairs*, 94 (2014)
- Watch [How to Start a Revolution](#)

### **Session 7. June 10. Protest and its Consequences**

This session reflects on the implications of protest on policy adoption and policy change, political institutions, protesters, and non-protesters' attitudes. It also examines the practical and methodological challenges associated with identifying the causal effects of protesting. The papers by Madestam et al and Anderson et al offer some clues on how we can causally identify the impact of protest on attitudes, voting, or policy.

- Madestam, Andreas, Daniel Shoag, Stan Veuger, and David Yanagizawa-Drott. 2013. [Do Political Protests Matter? Evidence from the Tea Party Movement](#). *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128 (4): 1633–1685.
- Anderson, D. M., Charles, K., Karbownik, K., Rees, D. I., & Steffens, C. 2023. [Civil Rights Protests and Election Outcomes: Exploring the Effects of the Poor People's Campaign](#) (No. w31973). National Bureau of Economic Research.

In class we will review:

- Ozden, James and Sam Glover. 2022. [Literature Review: Protest Outcomes](#). Social Change Lab. Report.

### **Session 8. June 12. Social Media and Protest I**

Social media has decreased the organization and coordination costs associated with protests. It has also influenced protest by facilitating information and mobilization. This session reviews the role of social media in protests and examines how information spreads within a network.

- Jost, John T. et al. 2018. [How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks](#). *Advances in Political Psychology*, 39(1): **[Read only pages 85-95]**

- González-Bailón, Sandra, Borge-Holthoefer, J., & Moreno, Y. 2013. [Broadcasters and hidden influentials in online protest diffusion](#). *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7), 943-965.

#### In-Class Activity

- Investigate Indian's Farmers Protests

#### **Session 9. June 14. Social Media and Protest**

This session studies how social media influences protests by examining two cases: the 2011 Egyptian upheaval and the Farmers' Protests in India. The readings will help us ponder social media's effect on protests, yesterday and today, under authoritarian and democratic regimes.

- Rydzak, J. 2019. [Of blackouts and bandhs: The strategy and structure of disconnected protest in India](#). Available at SSRN 3330413. **[Skip the literature review section in the paper]**
- Gerbaudo, Paolo. 2012. [Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism](#). Pluto Press. **[Chapter 2]**

#### **Session 10. June 17. Do movements die, or do they just get transformed? Movie Forum**

We will discuss prefigurative politics and the institutionalization logic, as exemplified by the Arab Spring in Egypt and Greenpeace. We will also learn about fractionalization's role in the death of social movements. In class, we will discuss the movie "How to Change the World."

- Engler, Mark and Paul Engler. 2017. *This is an uprising. How is Nonviolent revolt shaping the Twenty-First Century?* New York: Nation Books. **[Chapter 10]**
- Watch [How to Change the World](#)

#### **Session 11. June 19. Do movements die, or are they killed?**

This session reviews theoretical approaches that explain how protest is killed. We will learn about the role of censorship and repression. We will learn about repression from the state's and protesters' perspectives. In our discussion, we will try to hypothesize about how democratic governments react to protests.

- Davenport, Christian. 2015. *How Social Movements Die. Repression and Demobilization of the Republic of New Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **[Chapter 1,2]**
- Earl, Jennifer, Maher, Thomas V., & Pan, Jennifer. 2022. [The digital repression of social movements, protest, and activism](#): A synthetic review. *Science Advances*, 8(10), eabl8198.



## In-Class Activity

- Investigate the repression of Indian farmers's Protests

### **Session 12. June 21. Parties and Movements**

This session reflects on the relationship between political parties and movements, which is sometimes cooperative and sometimes conflictual. We will also talk about how this relationship changes over time.

- Tarrow, Sidney. 2021. [Hollowing Parties in a Movement Society](#). In *Movements and Parties: Critical Connections in American Political Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Chapter 7]
- Della Porta, Donatella, Fernández, Joseba, Kouki, Hara, Mosca, Lorenzo. *Movement Parties against Austerity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Chapter 1].
- [Knock Down the House](#), a Netflix Original Documentary.

### **Session 13. June 24. Old versus new social movements**

This session examines whether and how social movements have changed over time. We will focus on the climate movement. What are the elements that make old and new movements similar? What factors make them different? Has protest efficiency improved or worsened? Do we know?

- Joost de Moor, Michiel De Vydt, Katrin Uba & Mattias Wahlström. 2021. [New kids on the block: taking stock of the recent cycle of climate activism](#). *Social Movement Studies*, 20 (5): 619-625.
- [Inside Extinction Rebellion](#) KEO films | Extinction Rebellion
- Review: [How to Change the World](#) about the origin, growth, institutionalization, and fragmentation of Greenpeace.
- Review: Malm, Andreas. 2021. *How to Blow a Pipeline*. New York: Verso. [Chapter 1]

### **Sessions 14 and 15. June 26 and June 28. Presentations.**