Course Overview

Welcome to Social Movement(s), Protest, and Resistance. We are all enmeshed in powerful political, social, and economic systems that are generally resistant to change. In response to some felt marginalization, however, people do band together and challenge hegemonic systems: they picket and petition, they march and sit-in, they strike and circulate hashtags, they create subversive humor and film the world around them. In short, they (and we), agitate for change. Most generally, we will explore relationships between rhetoric and the movement of social imaginaries. Our primary goal is to focus on how people communicate with and about social justice as rhetorical agents, attempting to change public culture. Since the lessons of the past are also key to understanding the conditions of possibility for change today, this course will also highlight a range of historically situated social agitators.

As the emergence of mass movements that span the political spectrum and the globe suggest, protest and other modes of oppositional rhetoric continue to be major forces for making controversial issues visible and advancing changes in public policy. Politics remains the business of the people. This course offers an exploration of social movement(s), protest, and resistance by scrutinizing their rhetorical dynamics in public culture. This course is one that believes, at its core, that we can change the conditions in which we collectively live; we will work together to envision productive ways of creating such change.
Course Learning Objectives

1. To explore theories of social change as they relate to social protest and resistance.
2. To survey a wide array of debates and literatures relevant to social movement(s) and consider seriously their critical implications for life in an ever-shrinking global community.
3. To explore relationships between agitation and control.
4. To situate different moments of resistance within their unique historical, political, and cultural contexts/conditions.
5. To become familiar with paradigms and vocabularies for understanding social movement tactics (marches, hashtags, sit-ins, strikes, culture jamming, etc.)
6. To recognize how framing (by activists and mass media alike) can influence perceptions and understandings of social agitation.
7. To approach social agitation in a manner that can differentiate between constitutive and instrumental ends.
8. To develop empathic capacities for thought and understanding, switching between one’s own political worldview and the worldview(s) of various social movements/activists.
9. To reflect on the role of social activists and the attending demands of citizenship.
10. To translate theoretical concepts into rhetorically informed activist messages.

What You Should Expect From Suzanne

I view the classroom as one of the few spaces where taken-for-granted notions of privilege and power can be productively challenged and hopes voiced. My approach to teaching is one that takes seriously the charge of raising students’ consciousness and aiding their progression in becoming more engaged participants in our public culture. Following a dialogical model of pedagogy, I insist that students bear a great deal of responsibility in contributing to the learning environment with insight from course readings and expressions of life experiences. I am here to help guide you through this learning experience.

1. I will be prepared for all class sessions, trying my best to make lectures engaging and to make the best use of class time through teacher-student interactions, discussions, and other activities.
2. I will evaluate your work in a timely manner, fairly, and offer constructive criticism for improvement. I will ensure that you receive feedback with enough time to understand the possibilities for improving your projects.
3. I will make myself available during office hours (and in other appointments as requested) to work with you on your assignments—brainstorming, revisions, explanations, examples, etc.—to ensure you have a clear grasp for the possibilities for making your projects as strong and dynamic as possible.
4. I will respond to e-mail questions in a reasonable amount of time, guiding you with as much detail as possible. On week days, I will respond to you within 24 hours; on weekends, you may have to wait until Monday to receive a response (depending on my research and travel schedule).
5. I will be enthusiastically committed to helping you achieve the challenging course objectives.
6. I will approach the classroom fundamentally with an ethic of care and respect for my students and for the course concepts. I do not have the goal to make all students simply “think like me,” but to enable students to understand the concepts associated with this course and use them proficiently, and to think critically.
Assignments

**Active Participation (15%)**

First of all (and perhaps obviously), you have to be here to participate. Merely showing up for class is not the same as actively participating in the course. If you attend every day but rarely engage in the materials in a way that is responsive to others in the class, you will earn a poor participation grade by the end of the semester. Likewise, if you are not in class, you certainly cannot engage our discussions fully. A graduate seminar is meant to call forth the critic in each of us so that we may engage in productive dialogue. Although we all possess various backgrounds in rhetoric, each of you is expected to raise questions of interest or uncertainty on a weekly basis rooted in questions relevant to course topics. Inevitably, we will disagree on occasion. Disagreement is not a problem from an academic perspective. Rather, disagreement suggests the opportunity for further dialogue and engagement. Instead of aiming to for the “right” answers, we will attempt to grapple with arguments that propel us toward “better” depth of understanding and critique. Thus, your comments should be constructive and aim for specificity (noting a specific passage, a particular comment made in class, an example of a current event, etc.). Your goal should be to produce generative responses: responses that challenge predicking assumptions, that probe theoretical implications, and that interrogate our everyday communication practices. By contextualizing even our questions, hopefully we will be able to learn from each other—which, I believe, is the primary goal of a graduate seminar. Occasionally, you'll be asked to prepare to discuss particular questions or complete a small-scale assignment for the next week. These assignments will count toward this portion of the grade.

**Reading Responses (30%)**

Three times in the semester, each enrolled participant will write and deliver a short reading response, followed by discussion questions. I will distribute a sign-up sheet to determine who will present on which readings. In most cases, there will be 2-3 presentations per reading. These responses must be typed and composed like a professional academic essay (i.e. not an outline). They should be 3-5 pages in length.

A good response will, first, briefly summarize the reading and then explore one to three issues or concepts that you find interesting, compelling, frustrating, etc. You may use textual analysis to illustrate your point, or may choose to write a straightforward theory essay. Think of this as a slightly more casual version of a conference presentation.

**Some pointers:**

- It is not your job to “teach” the reading in your essay. Rather, use this essay as an opportunity to explore your own areas of interest as they relate to the material.
- Base your responses on issues and concepts about which you care deeply. Boring responses do a disservice to you and the rest of your peers.
- Responses will be read aloud and should last no more than ten minutes.
- End your response with two or three good questions that you feel are important to helping guide class discussion for that evening.
- It is your responsibility to email a copy of your response to the entire class at least an hour before we meet for class (by 5pm)
Final Research Paper (45% total)
By the end of the semester, we will have examined many rhetorics of social movement, protest, resistance, and progress embedded in a variety of rhetorical foundations. In general, you’re being asked to write a final paper, suitable for scholarly publication, that critically analyzes a key artifact through theories relevant to the course. While more specific details will be provided as the semester progresses, the four aspects of this assignment are listed here:

STEP 1: Text, Context, and Attitude Proposal (5%)— This 3-4 page paper should lay out the basic argument you seek to explore in your final paper. Ideally, at least part of what you write for this proposal should be incorporated into your final paper. As such this paper should address the following questions:
1. What text/activism/ movement/ resistance are you proposing to analyze & how do you propose to make your analysis manageable? (Give this some depth of description, especially as it is relevant to concepts related to the course).
2. Why is this text/activism/ movement/ resistance culturally significant to the advancement of or limitations to understanding social movement(s) and resistance? For this, you should describe the cultural context of your project, in addition to making the case for why this text/activism/ movement/ resistance is worthy of scholarly attention.
3. Into what scholarly conversations are you entering? You should incorporate relevant scholarly research that demonstrates a solid foundation for your final project (be sure that your research is primarily critical/rhetorical in approach).
4. What is your preliminary thesis with regard to this project? Specifically, what rhetorical argument do you intend to construct with your final paper?

STEP 2: Strong First Draft of Paper (15%)—This should be a very strong first draft of your final paper (see details in Step 3). Please submit this to Suzanne via e-mail.

STEP 3: Final Paper (25%)
Building upon the previous aspects of the project, this final paper should represent the culmination of your scholarly engagement with this cultural artifact. Thus, what you submit needs to be a polished paper, appropriate for conference presentation and, with work, publication. I will give you more specific expectations as we get closer to the deadline; for now, know that it should be approximately 8,000 words including notes, and written in either MLA or Chicago style.

Peer Review of Papers (10%)
Authoring constructive peer reviews is a difficult, but important task. This assignment is designed to help you hone your peer-review skills and, ultimately, your own critical voice and insights. You are being asked to provide a thoughtful, honest, critical review for each of these two papers. Your critique should fall between 2-3 double-spaced pages for each of the two drafts you will receive from your peers in this course a week before our in-class workshop. These critiques will be due to your peers and Suzanne by the time of our in-class workshop. As always, you will receive more guidance as the time draws closer.
Readings

Oh, there will be many! You will be responsible for a good deal of reading—some of it complex, some of it not so much. Complex readings are not included to frustrate you—they have been chosen because they are strong examples of the attitudes of critique we are discussing, and they make arguments in ways that are especially nuanced and sophisticated. Most readings are drawn from scholarly journals and books in the field of Communication Studies or affiliated field. Due to the diverse nature of our readings, there will be some week-to-week variation in terms of your reading load. With this in mind, you should plan to give yourself plenty of time to read carefully, take notes appropriately, and be prepared to ask questions. This course will employ a wide variety of reading prompts to help guide your reading and note taking.

There is no expectation that you will come to this class with a strong background in rhetoric. However, there is an implicit insistence that everyone will come to this course with a willingness to engage the readings at a graduate level. No one in the room will have all the answers (your professor included!); together, we will come closer to grasping the breadth of materials that make up this course.

We will read the following books in this course, in addition to a variety of scholarly articles that will be posted via Canvas. Copies of these books will be available for grad students to check out for the duration of your graduate program and will need to be returned to the department prior to you graduating. Please do not mark directly in these books, but please do take copious notes, use post-it notes, etc.

- Lisa Corrigan, *Prison Power: How Prison Influenced the Movement for Black Liberation*
- Phaedra Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice*
- Stacey Sowards, *¡Sí, Ella Puede!: The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers*
- Darrel Wanzer-Serrano, *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation*
- Isaac West, *Transforming Citizenships: Transgender Articulations of the Law*

Please bring readings with you to class each week. You can print out articles either from your home computers or in a General Access Computer Lab on campus. You can also go paperless if this is a practice that works for you (after all, at UNT, WE MEAN GREEN)—computers or tablets are welcome in the seminar space as long as they are used only for reading and note-taking.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of "F" in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy at: [http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm](http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm).

Every assignment, unless otherwise indicated, requires you to do original, independent, and creative work. In addition to copying someone else’s words or ideas, reusing your own work (from other courses) is considered academic dishonesty—you might be permitted to extend research from other classes, but you must clear this with your professors before proceeding with such research.
Writing/Research Resources

Communication Studies Library
The Department of Communication Studies has an impressive collection of scholarly books relevant to this course. Please take advantage of this perk! Do keep in mind, though, that the Communication Library is not a lending library; you can use the books and media inside the library space when the library is open and make photocopies of particular chapters/essays that would be most helpful to you. To see what the Communication Library has in its collection and find out when it is open for general use, consult the Department’s website: http://communication.unt.edu/research/research-spaces/library

COMM Library Copier Use Policy
Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department’s holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

The Writing Center
A great place to talk about ideas, improve the organization of your paper, or work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours, request an appointment online, or even find out how to receive feedback on your writing online at: http://ltc.unt.edu/labs/unt-writing-lab-home. You can also contact The Writing Center at 940-565-2563 or e-mail: WritingLab@unt.edu, or go visit them in Sage Hall, Room 150. They even offer online tutoring hours and assistance specifically aimed at graduate-level work.

The Learning Center
The Learning Center offers a variety of services to assist students interested in graduate education and support current graduate students. Included in the Learning Center’s services are a speed reading course and academic coaching. You can contact them at 940-369-7006, via e-mail at learningcenter@unt.edu, or visiting them in Sage Hall, Room 170.

Accountability
This is graduate school—it is expected that you are here because you want to be and that you are here to contribute to the learning environment of your peers. We will spend the bulk of our time discussing the ideas raised in the readings and presenting arguments to one another. Especially where presentations are concerned, having an audience in active attendance is essential to the success of this class. Your professor will act primarily as a facilitator and each of you will bear responsibility for the educational experience of the entire class. If you are not here, you will not gain as much from or contribute as much to the class; your experiences are important to our collective learning experience. If you must miss class, it is expected that you will talk to me ahead of time to make alternative arrangements for the materials you will miss.

If you miss more than one class, your final grade will reflect a full letter grade deduction for each class missed beyond one.
Class Climate

The types of issues we will discuss in this class range from the writings of classical Greek scholars to representations of races, genders, and sexualities. Some of you will undoubtedly have strong reactions to some of our readings and discussions—strong reactions are not discouraged. However, the ways in which reactions get framed and presented must be respectful and civil. In order for us all to glean the most from this course, we must create an environment in which individuals feel comfortable speaking their minds and relaying their experiences. Constructive criticism, responses, and disagreement are welcome (and expected). Disrespect of any kind cannot be tolerated.

Because we will rely on extensive interaction through frank conversations and discussions, and because we will be engaging with controversial topics, it is important to work together to create a constructive environment by observing these guidelines:

1. You should participate in the discussion of ideas. If you feel uncomfortable in the environment provided by the course, it is your responsibility to talk about it with me.
2. You may choose to pass on specific questions or topics without giving any explanation.
3. You should respect diverse points of view related to theory: we do not need to come to an agreement on any particular theoretical issues.
4. You should not belittle another individual for holding a point of view different than your own; however, you can articulate arguments about behaviors & actions and how they affect the world.
5. Your use of language should be respectful of other individuals or groups.
6. You need not represent any group, only yourself, though you may choose to speak to larger group identities if you wish.

UNT Acceptable Student Behavior Statement:
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Firearms Policy:
A licensed holder may carry a concealed handgun while on the campus premises, except in locations and at activities prohibited by law or UNT policy. A licensed holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun, or intentionally or knowingly display a handgun in plain view of another person.

E-Mail
Students are expected to check their preferred e-mail quite frequently in order to stay current with course communications. If you have a question outside of class and can’t make it to my office hours, please contact me via e-mail.

Cell Phones/Text Messaging/Computers
Please don't abuse technology during class.
**Deadlines**

Deadlines are important; they keep you on track and they ensure that I can maintain order in my own research and teaching schedule. I do not accept late work unless there is an especially dire situation, in which case you should talk to me very quickly.

**Meetings**

I recognize that this course will be challenging in different ways to each seminar participant. Graduate education takes place as much (if not more) outside the classroom as inside. I expect that I will meet with you outside of our official class times. I am certainly willing to offer suggestions for research and offer assistance for grappling with the readings.

While grade disputes are rarely an issue in graduate level classes, I am certainly willing to discuss graded materials with you. However, I will not discuss grades over e-mail or telephone, and I will not discuss your grades in reference to anyone else in the class. You are not graded against others in the class and all students are evaluated based on their contributions to the learning environment. If you are concerned about your progress for any reason, please come talk to me so we can determine how best to supplement your learning.

**Crisis Contingency**

In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak (e.g. swine flu), please look for an e-mail from Suzanne. I will provide instructions on how to turn in assignments and how the class will proceed through some technological assistance (e.g., Google Hangout or Skype).

**Course Evaluations**

Course evaluations are an important requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this course is designed and taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider course evaluations to be a helpful contribution to the evolution of graduate education in the department.

**Incompletes**

In accordance with university policy, a student can only receive a course grade of “I” if the student 1) has completed at least 75% of the coursework, 2) is passing the course, and 3) has a justifiable and documented reason beyond the control of the student for not completing the work on schedule (e.g., serious illness, military service).

**Recording Class**

This course will encourage open and robust discussions on issues and ideas without fear that any statements made will be used for inappropriate or retaliatory purposes. To ensure the comfort and protection of everyone in our classroom, recording of any kind is prohibited in this space (this includes audio recordings, live-streaming, photographs of course materials, etc.) unless a student has an approved accommodation from the Office of Disability Access (ODA). In such cases, the accommodation letter must be presented to the instructor in advance of any recording being done and all students in the course will be notified whenever recording will be taking place.
Course Accessibility

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Statement from the Office of Disability Accommodation:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation in Sage Hall Suite 167 or on their website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

Title IX Support for Victims of Violence

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

UNT’s Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim’s compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to UNT’s Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. UNT has both a Food Pantry and a “Seeking Options & Solutions” team who work to help students navigate diverse concerns, including identifying resources for personal, academic, financial, and social issues.

Furthermore, please talk to Suzanne if you are comfortable doing so. If there are resources she can connect you to, she will—and she will advocate for your needs whenever possible.
**Academic Research**

The UNT Library website has the option “Communication & Mass Media Complete” (CMMC)—this search engine should be your friend. While it does not catalogue all journals in the field of Communication, it does search a good number of them and offers many of them in pdf format. Many of the COMM journal links won’t work directly from the CMMC database and you’ll need to go to the “Taylor & Francis” database on the library’s website to find the direct (free) links to articles/journals in our field. And sometimes, you may need to request an article or book through [Interlibrary Loan](#)—please give yourself plenty of time to collect necessary research.

**Grading/Quality of Work**

All grades will be in the form of a letter grade (A-F) and weighted according to the demands of the specific assignments. In the end, your final grade will be accounted in the following manner:

**A: Exemplary**: work or performance that goes well beyond the basic expectations of the assignment to the point of providing a model of excellence to others.

**B: Commendable**: work or performance that not only meets all requirements but exceeds them, demonstrating depth, originality, and other marks of quality that give the work distinction.

**C: Satisfactory**: work or performance that fully meets all requirements competently and shows the ability to function as a college student.

**D: Marginal**: work or performance that either (1) fails to meet all requirements though what is done is considered competent, or (2) meets all requirements but not at a basic level of competence or (3) both of the above but not poor enough to be considered failing.

**F: Failing**: work or performance that falls significantly short of requirements or basic competence or both. And, of course, work not done.

**Please note**: There seems to be a perception that graduate assignments will default to the grades of A or B; this is only the case if you have exceeded the basic expectations for satisfactory/acceptable work. *Graduate work is expected to be at the level of A or B work* (i.e., *above and beyond the basic requirements of the assignment*). Please read and understand the above expectations of what constitutes A or B work if this is your end goal.

**Disclaimer**

This syllabus should not be considered a binding contract on the part of the professor, who reserves the right to change any aspect of the course as necessary to meet the needs of course participants.

**Acknowledgments**

Syllabi are often influenced by others in the field who do good work as teachers and mentors. I am especially indebted to the following people for their influence on this syllabus: Jason Del Gandio, Amy Pason, Bryan McCann, Logan Rae Gomez, Lisa Corrigan, Jeff Bennett, Cara Buckley, Anne Demo, Matea Ivanovic, Claire Sisco King, Phaedra Pezzullo, Michele Ramsey, Valerie Renegar, Jamie Skerski, and Isaac West.
Schedule of Readings

It is expected that you will read the text(s) BEFORE coming to class for the day, that you will take notes on you readings, and that you will bring the readings with you to class so we can discuss them fully. Please either use your printing privileges or technology skills and bring all readings with you (chocked full of useful notes) to enable quick consultation.

January 13 — Getting to Know You

January 20 — Classes cancelled in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., Day

January 27 — Provisional Foundations


February 3 — Breaking & Deploying Silence

- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” – July 5, 1852.

February 10 — Rhetorical Histories of Movement

- Stacey Sowards, *¡Sí, Ella Puede!: The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers*

February 17 — Contextualizing Civil Rights

- Lisa Corrigan, *Prison Power: How Prison Influenced the Movement for Black Liberation*

February 24 — Struggles for Decolonization

- Darrel Wanzer-Serrano, *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation*
March 2 — Subverting the Status Quo


FRIDAY March 6 — Text, Text, Context, and Attitude Proposals DUE BY MIDNIGHT

March 7 - 15 — SPRING BREAK

March 16 — Community-Building

- Watch *The Garden* in class

March 23 — Performing Resistance

- Phaedra Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice*

March 30 — Resisting Cultural Violence

April 6 — Resisting Interpersonal Violence — #MeToo


April 13 — Transforming the Law

- Isaac West, *Transforming Citizenships: Transgender Articulations of the Law*

April 20 — Technologies of Change


April 27 — Coalition Building


TUESDAY, April 28 — STRONG Final Papers due by midnight (to be distributed to peers in class by Wednesday morning).

May 4  In-class paper workshop
• Written peer reviews due to authors and Suzanne by beginning of class

May 11  Enjoy food & discussion at Suzanne’s House
• Final papers due by 5 pm