

## Psychology 272: How to Make an Activist

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Instructor: Dr. Nicola Curtin

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Course Meetings: Friday 9:00 AM- 11:50, JC 370

**Office hours:** In past years, I have found that students very rarely make use of my scheduled office hours. Therefore, this year, I am making all office hours by appointment. Please also note that I can schedule occasional evening meetings (via google hangout), if that works better for your schedule. I LOVE to see students during office hours and you don't need to have a "problem" to come see me! So please do contact me to set up a time to meet!

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**Course Objectives:** This capstone seminar explores the question, "what makes an activist" by examining the psychology of social/political activism and political engagement in the U.S. context. Why do some people want to change the world and how can psychological theories help us better understand activism in the world, and in our own lives? It is not necessary for you to consider yourself an activist (or want to be an activist) in order to take this course. Together we will read empirical and theoretical work examining these questions, and make connections to the world around us. If you are involved with community-based work, or curious about why other people are, this course presents an opportunity to explore these issues from an interdisciplinary psychological perspective. The emphasis will be on how psychological processes and engagement are shaped by social context (history, social and cultural location) and individual differences (including not only personality, but also gender, race, sexuality, class, etc.).

We will examine specific recurring themes throughout the semester such as intersectionality, identity, social position and the challenges and rewards of identity politics. We will draw upon readings in psychology, gender studies, political science and sociology as well as case studies from the Global Feminisms Archive and other sources.

Discussions will often focus on applying the materials to a "case study," chosen as a means of thinking about the theories, models or concepts learned that week in the life of a real person. Additionally, case studies provide a framework for constructively critiquing the week's readings as they apply to different people.

At the end of the course you should understand the complex roles that identity and life experiences play in both individual engagement and larger movements, and be able to identify and apply different theories and issues in the psychology of political engagement and social activism. Additionally, you should be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these theories as they apply to people in the real world.

**Grading (You must complete all of the requirements in order to pass the course):**

- Attendance/Participation 15% (15 points)
- Facilitation: 15 % (15 points)
- Weekly Reflection Papers: 20% (20 points)
- Activist Profile Project: 40% (40 points)
- Final Presentation: 10% (10 points)

**Required Readings:**

Course readings will be made available on Moodle

Warren, M. R. (2010). *Fire in the heart: How white activists embrace racial justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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### Electronic Resources:

Global Feminism Archives (selections below): <http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem/us.html>

Deep Blue: <http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/55692>

### Course requirements

Seminars involve lots of discussion and engagement by students. Thus a seminar only “works” when everybody comes to class, does the reading in advance, and is prepared to participate. **Although some of you are used to taking notes on a laptop during class, I ask that you *don't* use laptops in this class. In a seminar, laptops are distracting and often create the impression that the user isn't really involved in the discussion. You may use your laptop/tablet if it has your readings on it, but again, please don't be typing/surfing the internet (!) as we are discussing.** In a seminar, it's much more important to be out in the middle of the discussion, instead of taking perfect notes.

**Attendance:** You should attend every class. I understand that extenuating circumstances arise, but please let me know before class if you cannot attend. All make-up assignments are at my discretion and require that you contact me within 24 hours and provide documentation. **You are responsible for all the information covered in class (including announcements) whether or not you are in attendance. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change and that changes may be announced in class or posted online.**

**Participation:** Please come prepared to engage fully and respectfully; having read, and reflected upon, the weekly readings. Participation includes attendance, thoughtful contributions to discussion (via oral participation), active listening, and some short, in-class, writing assignments.

**Weekly Reflection Papers:** A brief one-page single-spaced “reaction paper” (*no more than 500 words*) is due at 9:00 PM every TUESDAY for the FRIDAY class after (i.e., if we are meeting on 9/5/2014, your reflection paper is due, 9/2/2014). Your reaction could include any of the following: a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the readings, a synthesis of the ideas found in the readings with other material from this class and others you taken, questions you may have about the readings, something you learned, a concept or idea that was (or was not) clarified for you, or some thoughts stimulated by the readings or class discussion. Be specific! I want to know your reactions—for example, which topics and readings work, and which don't? **You are responsible for 12 such reaction papers across the course of the term. No reflection papers are due the week of Nov 27<sup>th</sup> or Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. You may choose one other week not to complete a reflection paper.**

**Discussion Facilitation:** Every person will sign up to facilitate twice during the semester (1-2 people/week). On the week when you facilitate the discussion, you will work with your co-facilitator (if you have one) to develop a set of questions/topics you think are important to discuss from that week's readings. You do not need to be comprehensive. I will often supplement your questions. Some examples to guide the development of questions: What are the most important passages or aspects of the readings? The most difficult passages or aspects? What is valuable? What seems useless, or expendable? **Please see the facilitation handout.** You may also wish to find/design in-class activities that you think might be valuable, or to find/show videos, YouTube clips, TED talks etc. that go with that week's theme. **You (your pair) must send me their questions for Friday's class by Tuesday evening (9 PM). I will then edit/make comments to your questions, you will take my edits/make corrections to your questions and send them back to me (no later than Thursday at 9 PM), and I will print them for our use during class.** Facilitating is a skill, as it the art of developing good discussion questions; by sending your questions to me for feedback, you will work on developing these skills. Failure to send me your questions in a timely fashion will result in a lowered facilitation grade.

**Case Studies:** On some weeks, we will have a “case study” example from the Global Feminisms (GF) Archive, or from other selected sources. You are required to either read the transcript or chapter and/or

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watch the video of the interview for the activist we will be discussing that week; or read the assigned articles, etc. We will be referencing the case studies in our discussions and they are considered part of the course requirements. You may also reference them in your reflection papers. The transcripts and the videos for the GF project can be found on the deep-blue website (the URL for each interview is also provided below).

**Final Paper: Activist Profile (8-12 pages)** Apply the concepts we have learned in the seminar to an activist of your choosing and do an extended case-study. Pick one activist (any time-period/location) and apply 2-3 theories/models/concepts from the course to explain her/his engagement in activism (you may use one outside theory, only with my permission), paying close attention to the role(s) of gender, race, class, sexuality and/or other important identities. You must use at least one “primary” source on the activist [i.e. their (auto) biography or an extended interview with them] for your paper. I encourage you to make use of the Global Feminisms (GF) interviews in your project (if you do use the GF archive, you may select two activists and do a compare/contrast. This is an option only if you use this archive).

**Further instructions to follow later in the term.** By the fourth week of classes (Friday, Sept. 17), you need to have selected an activist to profile, and received approval (via e-mail) from me for that selection.

**Paragraph description of final paper: DUE OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup>.** This is a one-paragraph description of your final paper project:

Describe the activist you have chosen to profile and at least one of the theories you plan on using. You should provide a short socio-historical context for your individual [i.e. when and where s/he was/is active, family background, social position, and any relevant social identities you plan to discuss] and how you see the theory you have selected as being particularly appropriate for examining this person’s activist engagement.

**Draft of Final Paper: DUE NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>.** This is a **complete draft** of your final paper project

**FINAL PAPER: DUE DEC 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Presentations:** You will be required to make a 10-minute presentation of your final paper (no shorter than 7 minutes and no longer than 10). This presentation will be given to the entire class in either poster or power-point format. You are encouraged to have fun and be creative with this requirement! If you have a different form of presentation in mind, please talk to me about it and get my permission in advance.

**Reading:** This is a challenging course and, as such, the reading will be heavy (usually about 50, but up to 100, pages a week). You are expected to complete all of the reading for each week.

### Course Policies

#### Paper Submission policy

1. If you submit papers late, you will be penalized 10% every 24 hours, unless there are special circumstances that I have previously approved.
2. I will unfortunately not be able to accept resubmissions. If you are uncertain about your idea or a rough draft of your paper, I would be happy to give you my comments ahead of time, or to meet with you to discuss your paper or ideas. I will read drafts of your final paper— so long as you give me at least a week to give you feedback, so plan accordingly.

**Classroom Civility:** As people studying psychology, we should have a deep understanding of, and appreciation for the fact that social situations and the people around us matter! Your behavior in class affects me, you, and your fellow classmates (and vice versa). Therefore, please:

1. Put your cell phone on silent or turn it off.

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2. Do not surf the internet or text during class.
3. Respect each other's comments even if you disagree with each other's opinions; challenge the idea and the evidence presented to support it, not the person.
4. Please keep your questions and comments appropriate in both their timing and content.
5. Remember: we all have conscious *and unconscious* beliefs, biases, and values. These shape how we react to and interpret the readings, course content, and each other. Please voice your ideas, reactions, and opinions, and be respectful of others' differences.

**Individual Circumstances:** Please contact me by email within the first two weeks of class if you have any circumstances that might affect your attendance, participation, and/or comfort in class. These may include (but are not limited to) having a certified/documented disability, involvement in upcoming religious observances, or involvement in school-related sports or extra-curricular activities. If you are especially uncomfortable with participating verbally, you must also contact me within the first two weeks of class, and we can make alternative arrangements for your participation. Please note that you will still be expected to come to class and pay attention. If you suspect you have a disability, or want to know more about Clark's policy on disabilities, please see: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/>

**Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:** All work on reflection papers and individual projects must be your own, completed individually and for this course alone. Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements, or work as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. If you are ever unsure, please ask. Plagiarism is sometimes confusing, so don't be embarrassed to ask; I am a resource who is happy to provide clarification if you don't know. If you violate this policy, your name will be forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs, and appropriate sanctions will apply. **If you find yourself even considering cheating, see it as a sign that you need assistance learning the course material and come see me.** For information on academic integrity at Clark, please visit:

<http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm>

<http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm#Section%20I:%20%20Academic%20Dishonesty>

**Finally:** I look forward to exploring these topics and with you all this semester, to questioning, discussing, debating, and engaging deeply with, the readings, as well as hearing your thoughts about how they apply to the world and your lives! I also welcome your feedback. Never hesitate to come see me during office hours to ask questions, or let me know if you have any concerns about the course.

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### READINGS

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#### Week 1: August 29<sup>th</sup>

##### Introduction and course overview

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#### Week 2: Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>

##### What is activism?

1. Duncan, L. E. (2012). The psychology of collective action. In K. Deaux, & M. Snyder (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology* (pp. 781-803). Oxford Library of Psychology: Oxford.
2. Permanent Culture Now (n.d.). *What is activism?* Downloaded from: <http://www.permanentculturenow.com/what-is-activism/>
3. Quaye, S. J. (2007). Hope and learning: The outcomes of contemporary student activism. *About Campus* 12(2), 2-9.

**Case Studies: Ferguson and ALS Ice-bucket challenge**  
**See folder on Moodle**

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#### Week 3: Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>

##### When people don't act: Barriers to participation

**Before we begin to think about general models of activism, I want us to spend some time thinking about structural reasons that people may not chose/be able to become engaged (this week), as well as how social location may shape the meaning of engagement for different groups of people (next week). Klandermans & Oegema will get us thinking about the different "phases" of engagement, all of which, they argue, require their own theorizing and investigation**

1. Stewart, A.J., & McDermott, C. (2004). Gender in psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, p. **531-537 only section on intersectionality.**
2. Burns, N. (2005). Finding gender. *Politics & Gender*, 1(1), 137-141.
3. Caiazza, A. (2005). Don't bowl at night: Gender, safety and civil participation. *Signs*, 30(2), 1607-1631.
4. Klandermans, B., & Oegema, D. (1987). Potentials, networks, motivations, and barriers: Steps towards participation in social movements. *American sociological review*, 519-531.

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#### Week 4: Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>

##### When people do act: Meaning and consequences

1. Gilkes, C. T. (2007). If it wasn't for the women... African American women, community work, and social change. In Segal & Martinez (Eds.) *Intersections of gender, race and class* (pp. 453-463).
2. Hardy-Fanta, C. (1997). Latina women and political consciousness: La chispa que prende. In C.J. Cohen, K. B. Jones & J. C. Tronto (Eds.), *Women Transforming Politics: An alternative reader* (pp.223-237). New York: New York University Press.
3. Thomas, E. F., & Louis, W. R. (2013). Doing democracy: The social psychological mobilization and consequences of collective action. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 7(1), 173-200.

**Case Study:** Loretta Ross: <http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/55719>

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### Week 5: Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>

#### Group consciousness

1. Gurin, P., Miller, A.H., & Gurin, G. (1980). Stratum identification and consciousness. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43(1), 30-47.
2. King, K.R. (2003). Do you see what I see? Effects of group consciousness on African American women's attributions to prejudice. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27(1), 17-30.
3. Duncan, L. E. (2010). Using group consciousness theories to understand political activism: Case studies of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Ingo Hasselbach. *Journal of Personality*, 78, 1601-1636.
4. Hasselbach, I. & Reiss, T. (1996, January 8). How Nazis are made. *The New Yorker*, pp. 36-57.

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### Week 6: Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### Identity: An Introduction

1. Lorde, A. (1984). Age, race, class and sex: Women redefining difference. In *Sister Outsider*, pp. 114-123). Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.
2. Anzaldúa, G. (2007) La Conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a new consciousness. In C. R. McCann and S. Kim (Eds) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. (pp. 99-113) Routledge: New York.
3. Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(1), 80-114. **NOTE THIS IS A LONG READ!**

**Case Study:** Andrea Smith (pay close attention to her discussions of identity politics)  
<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/55717>

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### Week 7: Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>

#### Identity and social context

1. Friedman, C., & Leaper, C. (2010). Sexual-minority college women's experiences with discrimination: Relations with identity and collective action. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34(2), 152-164.
2. Wiley, S., Srinivasan, R., Finke, E., Firnhaber, J., & Shilinsky, A. (2013). Positive portrayals of feminist men increase men's solidarity with feminists and collective action intentions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(1), 61-71.
3. Thomas, E. F., McGarty, C., & Louis, W. (2014). Social interaction and psychological pathways to political engagement and extremism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(1), 15-22.

**Instead of case-studies for this week, we will discuss the following set of readings from "That's Revolting"**

1. Bailey, M. M., Kandaswamy, P., & Richardson, M. U. (2004). Is gay marriage racist? *That's revolting*, 87-96.
2. Chess, S., Kafer, A., Quizar, J., & Richardson, M. U. (2004). Calling all restroom revolutionaries! *That's revolting*, 189-206.

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### Week 8: Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>

#### Identity: Continued

1. Becker, J. C., Tausch, N., Spears, R., & Christ, O. (2011). Committed dis(s)idents: Participation in radical collective action fosters disidentification with the broader in-group but enhances political identification. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(8), 1104-1116.
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2. Kelly, C. & Breinlinger, S. (1995). Identity and injustice: Exploring women's participation in collective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5, 41-57. doi: 10.1002/casp.24500501
3. McGarty, C., Bliuc, A. M., Thomas, E. F., & Bongiorno, R. (2009). Collective action as the material expression of opinion-based group membership. *Journal of Social Issues*, 65, 839-857. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01627.x

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### PARAGRAPH DESCRIPTION OF FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY IN CLASS

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#### Week 9: Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>

##### Virtual activism

1. Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs, and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004–2011. *Journal Of Communication*, 62(2), 231-248.
2. Brunsting S, & Postmes T. (2002) Social movement participation in the digital age: Predicting offline and online collective action. *Small Group Research*, 33(5), 525-554.
3. Bailyn, E. (2012). The difference between slacktivism and activism: How 'Kony2012' is narrowing the gap. *Huffington Post*.
4. Mengestu, D. (2012). Not a click away: Joseph Kony in the real world. *Warscapes*.
5. Gladwell, M. (2010). Small change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted. *New Yorker*.

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#### Week 10: Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>

##### Right-wing activism

1. Klatch, R. E. (2001). The formation of feminist consciousness among left-and right-wing activists of the 1960s. *Gender & Society*, 15(6), 791-815.
2. Schreiber, R. (2002). Injecting a woman's voice: Conservative women's organizations, gender consciousness, and the expression of women's policy preferences. *Sex roles*, 47(7), 331-342.
3. Musgrove, L., & McGarty, C. (2008). Opinion-based group membership as a predictor of collective emotional responses and support for pro-and anti-war action. *Social Psychology*, 39(1), 37-47.

**Instead of case-studies this week, please look at the following websites:**

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

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

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

**Please note that October 31<sup>st</sup> is the last day for undergraduate students to withdraw from a course with a grade of "W"**

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#### Week 11: Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>

##### Hate Movements

1. Blee, K. M., & Creasap, K. A. (2010). Conservative and right-wing movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 269-286 (**please note that Blee is using the term "right-wing" here differently than I do above**)
2. Whitley, B. r. (1999). Right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and prejudice. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 77(1), 126-134.
3. Ezekiel, R. S. (2002). An ethnographer looks at neo-Nazi and Klan groups: The racist mind revisited. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 46(1), 51-71.

**Instead of case-studies this week, we will discuss the following two profiles.**

4. Hasselbach, I. & Reiss, T. (1996, January 8). How Nazis are made. *The New Yorker*, pp. 36-57.
5. Finnegan, W. (1997, December 1). The unwanted. *The New Yorker*, pp. 61-78.



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**Week 12: Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Ally activism**

Warren, M. R. (2010). Fire in the heart: How white activists embrace racial justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **READ PAGES 1-149.**

**DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY IN SEMINAR**

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**Week 13: Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Ally activism Cont.**

Warren, M. R. (2010). Fire in the heart: How white activists embrace racial justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **READ PAGES 149-247.**

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**Week 14: Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>**

**No Class- Thanksgiving**

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**Week 15: Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>**

**PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS TODAY.**

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**DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, FINAL PAPERS DUE VIA EMAIL**