

Vilnius University
Institute of International Relations and Political Science

Spring Semester, 2025/26
Tuesdays at 9.45-11.15, auditorium 102

NON VIOLENT CIVIC RESISTANCE
(BA studies)

Lecturer

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Outline of the course

The course will introduce students with the main theoretical and practical concepts of civic resistance and civic resilience, it aims at developing abilities to analyze various case studies of non-violent civic resistance throughout the history of the world, focusing on former Soviet states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Sakartvelo, Ukraine, Russia, Central Asia and the Baltics); as well as by comparing different case studies world wide, to investigate the different reasons behind civic action and different levels of their success.

The form of the course is a combination of lectures and participatory seminars, which could be enriched by the screenings of the movies and the lectures of the guest speakers. The attendance of the class is compulsory. The evaluation of the course consists of the final exam (40%), the written paper (40%), active participation during the seminars (20%). The passiveness during the discussions / seminars might negatively affect the final mark, while the active participation might give a bonus. The written paper should be an analysis (rather than a descriptive paper) of 5-7 pages. Methodological requirements are available at IIRPS website. The deadline for submission of the paper 1st of June, preliminary topics need to be agreed by the 30th of April.

The classes would be conducted in the manner of lectures-seminars-discussions (including role plays and other type of interactive interventions). Each particular topic would be shortly presented / kicked-off by the lecturer, meanwhile students need to bring their own examples according to their pre-selected tracks for the entire course:

- A. Countries (Ukraine / Georgia / Belarus / Iran / Serbia / Turkey / Russia, etc) and/or
- B. Issues (Arts / Environment / LGBTQ / Sports / Trade Unions / Digital / Social Networks / Street Actions / Self Determination, etc).

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Gene Sharp	<i>From Dictatorship to Democracy</i> , 2012
Srdja Popovic	<i>Blueprint for Revolution</i> , 2015
Anne Applebaum	<i>Autocracy Inc: Dictators Who Want to Run the World</i> , 2024.
S. Guriev, D. Treisman	<i>Spin Dictators: The Changing Face of Tyranny in the 21st Century</i> , 2022
S. Levitsky, D. Ziblatt	<i>How Democracies Die</i> , 2018
Maria Ressa	<i>How To Stand Up to a Dictator</i> , 2022

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
18 February	Introductory lecture, selecting the tracks <u>Main literature:</u> Peter Ackerman, Jack Duvall, <i>A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict</i>, Palgrave, 2000. Mark Kurlansky, <i>Non-Violence. The History of a Dangerous Idea</i>, 2007. <u>Additional material / movie screenings:</u> Bringing Down a Dictator, directed by Steve York, Documentary, Serbia, 56 mins.
24 February	1. Sources of Power <u>Main literature:</u> Gene Sharp, <i>From Dictatorship to Democracy</i>, 2012 • Whence comes the power, 26-36. • Dictatorships have weaknesses, 37-42. • Exercising power, 43-59. <u>Additional material:</u> The Power of the Powerless, by Vaclav Havel, October, 1978
3 March	2. Why People Obey & How to Resist It <u>Main literature:</u> Srdja Popovic, <i>Blueprint for Revolution</i>, 2015. • Laugh Your Way Through, 97-124 <u>Additional material:</u> The Power of Laughtivism: Srdja Popovic at TEDxBG Marci Shore, In Dissent - Jewish Review of Books
9 March	Guest Speaker I: Victoria Naraxsa (Pussy Riot) <u>Suggested reading:</u> Nadya Tolokonnikova, <i>Read & Riot: A Pussy Riot Guide to Activism – From the Founder on Making Political Action Joyful</i>, 2018. Marya Alekhina, <i>Political Girl: Life and Fate in Russia</i>, 2025. Marya Alekhina, <i>Riot Days</i>, 2018 <u>Additional materials / movie screenings:</u> Mr Nobody against Putin directed by David Borenstein & Pavel Talankin, Documentary, 2025.
17 March	3. Digital Activism: Pros & Cons <u>Main literature:</u> Maria Ressa, <i>How to Stand Up to a Dictator:</i> • The Network Effect, 83-99.

- Creating Ripples of Change, 100-118.
- How Friends of Friends Brought Democracy Down, 119-144.
- How the Rule of Law Crumbled from Within, 145-176.

[Closing the Gap: Protecting Activists from Authoritarian Use of AI](#)

Additional materials / movie screenings:

Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion*, 2011.

[Burma VJ: Reporting from a Closed Country](#), Documentary, 2008, 85 mins.

31 March

4. Elections as the Tipping Point of the Protest.

Main literature:

[Defending the Vote from Authoritarians: Lessons for Nonviolent Movements](#)

14 April

Guest Speaker II: Belarus (Dzianis Kuchynski)

Suggested reading:

Olga Shparaga, *The Face of the Revolution is Female*, 2022.

Additional materials / movie screenings:

The Accidental President, directed by Mike Lerner/Martin Herring, 2024, 90 mins

Courage, directed by Aleksei Poluyan, 2021, 90 mins

20 April

Guest Speaker III: Lithuania (Karolis Kaupinis)

Suggested reading:

Additional material / movie screening:

[Raimundas Banionis, Vaikai is Amerikos viesbucio \(1990\) - IMDb](#)

[Marius A. Markevicius, The Other Dream Team \(2012\) - IMDb](#)

28 April

6. Shifting Tyranny and Other Means / Avenues to Resist

Main literature:

Sergei Guriev, Daniel Treisman, *Spin Dictators*:

- Fear and Spin, 3-31.

Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Crown New York, 2017.

Additional materials/movie screenings:

“Tambogrande” (Ernesto Cabellos & Stephanie Boyd)

5 May

7. International Response

Main literature:

Anne Applebaum, *Autocracy*, Inc

- Changing the Operating System, 98-121
- Epilogue: Democrats United, 151-178

Additional literature:

Jack Fairweather, *The Prosecutor: One Man's Battle to Bring Nazis to Justice*. The

Crown, 2025.

[The Bad Guys Are Winning – Anne Applebaum](#)

12 May

Guest Speaker IV: Georgia (Giorgi Meladze)

Suggested Reading:

Giorgi Meladze, Srdja Popovic, [How to Defend the Vote from Authoritarians](#), Journal of Democracy, October 2024.

Giorgi Meladze, [ICNC - Lifting the Language Curtain and Affirming Georgia's Nonviolent History](#), August 2023.

Additional materials/movie screenings:

[Did Georgian police use a chemical weapon against protesters? - BBC World Service Documentaries](#)

19 May

8. The Future of Non-Violent Resistance

Main literature:

[Erica Chenoweth, The Future of Nonviolent Resistance, Journal of Democracy, Vol. 30, July 2020.](#)

26 May

Wrap Up of the Course