

ICS 415G Power and Resistance  
2008 Theme: *Rights, Resources, Resistances and Change*  
Centre for Global Studies  
Monday 1:30-4:30 V 207  
Huron University College  
Winter 2008  
Wendy Russell

*“Are you not hourly in dread of an insurrection?”  
Olaudah Equiano, asked of the rulers of England in 1790.*

*“Counterinsurgency is a full-time job.” Hardt and Negri 2004 (54)*

### Introduction

This course examines methods for understanding and analysing modes of oppression and modes of resistance. ‘Oppression’ and ‘resistance’ are simply a rough attempt to find language that allows us to talk about the reality of the contest over power that characterises most performances of social life. Additionally, pairing the terms in this way tries to capture the idea that social and political structures themselves tend to be ‘interested’ in that contest: social norms, legal traditions, authoritative public discourse all tend to protect and reproduce both subordinate social positions and dominant interests. And so ‘oppression’ and ‘resistance’ are two sides of the same coin. They share a time frame, a space, the same people who may ‘comply’ are the same people who may ‘resist’, and so ‘domination’ and ‘resistance’ are paired forces in an on-going negotiation over access to power.

Oppression and domination are the acts, ideologies and habits that expropriate the labour, lands and authority of one group in the service of the interests of another group. Resistance is the activity that, first, takes place within a context of domination and second, challenges that domination: a glance to a comrade, writing a pamphlet, joining a mob, shooting (and eating) a specific goose or taking over farm land are all used as strategies of resistance.

The fundamental argument of studies of resistance is that oppression and domination are never ‘total’, no matter how great the consensus a particular system of domination enjoys. Most theoretical approaches to resistance thus argue that, despite the force of ‘common sense’ or ‘entrenched habits’ or ‘market forces’, there remain alive other ways of thinking, interpreting and acting.

That is, consider why Equiano, an abolitionist African (who, by virtue of being enslaved, became something of a global citizen), would ask those most comfortable with the imperial global order of the 18<sup>th</sup> century if they were living in fear. Is he asking because it seems self-evident to him that ‘slavery is wrong’? Possibly, but he is also reminding the most powerful within the imperial

global order of things that the enslaved themselves know slavery is wrong. Milan Kundera wrote “the struggle against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”. Resistance can be seen as the struggle to pose a competing truth against the ‘consensual’ truth (the hegemonic truth). So we are going to pursue resistance as the means of expressing the revolutionary ideas that emerge alongside the most exclusionary, dangerous and overwhelming forms of oppression. But also as a struggle to achieve power and authority in the relationship with the dominant order.

This year we are going to examine ‘resistance’ generally to start out, reading James C. Scott’s major theoretical expression of the subject. Our case studies represent three of the major trends in contemporary resistance movements: land reform, Indigenous People’s movements and, in the combination of these two, identity-based movements that link identity to place.

For example, the creation of Nunavut establishes the territorial reality of Inuit people, but only after much too protracted negotiations over the simple possibility of such a ‘place’ within a maturing settler state. Nunavut represents the triumph of a resistance movement, the flowering of something that colonial imaginings had tried to erase.

These three types of movements - land reform, Indigenous rights, Indigenous people’s territorial movements- define the times in which we live, in that all of us in one way or another living anywhere in the world are aware of struggles that have one thing in common: they are in many ways new struggles over the ‘order of things’ that was established under colonial expansion, and thus represent conflicts that have been systematically concealed in the operations of states.

#### Textbook and Readings

Hardt, Antonio and Michael Hardt

2004 *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Books.

Scott, James C.

1990 *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

CGS 415G Course Pack

Readings on reserve in Huron Library

Evaluation *Please note that due dates are absolute and no late work will be accepted.*

Bibliography	15% (due February 4 in class)
Essay proposal	20% (due March 10 in class)
Presentations	10% and 15%
Participation	10%
Final Paper	30% (due April 9 before 4:00 p.m. in my office)

## Your Essay Topic

You have some great latitude for choosing a paper topic in this course, though your paper must examine resistance movements or a resistance movement (!). Add to this that you need to ground your paper in a case or cases, and for this particular year of the course you will likely need to found your study on some case where basic access to a resource or resource base is at stake: 'environmentalism' or 'civil rights' are likely too broad, but you can still write about them using particular struggles in particular places. Your paper should thus examine a resistance movement or set of similar resistance movements, and probably pursue some core theoretical concern in the literature on those movements.

For example, if you decide you want to write about abolitionist movements, there are a variety of trends in the literature you might pursue including: in what ways was some abolitionist discourse prone to re-entrenching racism? how was the radical potential of abolitionism defused as it was appropriated by anti-imperialist sentiments in the United States? how did Thomas Jefferson express the deep ambivalence he had about abolition/slavery? are there similarities between the abolitionist boycotts of the products of slave plantations and today's boycotts of sweatshop products or the Fair Trade movement?

If you decided to write about environmental resistance movements, you might want to consider alliances between environmentalists and Indigenous peoples. Themes in that literature include: do environmentalist allies reproduce stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as 'noble savages'? Do stereotypes constrain Indigenous people's movements?

You might choose to examine successful resistance movements, of which there are many (Google 'Robert F. Kennedy Jr.' for some examples.) Some of the questions you might ask are either what makes some movements successful, or what do successful movements have in common? What do the 'best' resolutions have in common? Is 'compensation' the outcome of most successful resistance movements, or is it 'new ways of doing things'? What new political possibilities have been created through resistance movements such as Indigenous people's land claims in countries like Canada, New Zealand or Australia? How do these compare with similarly successful movements in Brazil or Panama? How have movements against the development of mining and forestry created new legislative mechanisms that in effect permit 'harm reduction strategies', protection and conservation? What political mechanisms for co-operation between competing interests have emerged through resistance movements?

## Essay Requirements

Your paper should be 20-25 pages. Your paper will be graded for clarity, style, insight, argument, originality and organization. Your work will also be evaluated for appropriate use of sources and appropriate citations. If you make multiple errors of spelling, formatting and grammar, you will be penalized, but I seriously doubt that this will be the case. You need a title page, page numbers and so on as well, with a complete bibliography.

## Bibliography

This is simply a comprehensive review bibliography of your topic. The purpose of this exercise is for you to discover whether or not there is a sufficient literature to support your topic.

## Essay Proposal

This is the first articulation of your essay topic: what is your working thesis? what points are you going to consider? how are you using the literature you have chosen?

The purposes of this exercise are to get you to think through the arguments you want to make in your paper, to determine if you have enough literature to make those arguments, to determine how much and what background information you need to put in your paper. Writing the essay proposal should take quite awhile: this is the framework for your paper, and will require you to come to some clear understanding about the movement you are investigating, the issues involved and the major aspects of this case you want to address. You will then be able to identify what argument you will be pursuing in the paper.

## Presentations

Each of you are required to do presentations of two course readings. If you choose Hardt and Negri, you can do one of the chapters in the assigned section for that week. We will assign dates early in the term, based on your own interests. Please feel free to incorporate your own case study topic into your presentation.

## Participation

For each class, in order to prevent me from lecturing the entire time, I will call on each of you to speak. So, you should each have selected a particular passage from the readings that you find particularly interesting, puzzling, worrying or even distressing. Be prepared to discuss your reaction. You may also want to bring in an example of a resistance movement that you have encountered in the newspaper or other media and describe it to the class.

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

**January 7** Introduction: Is Nunavut a Revolutionary Idea?

**January 14** What is Domination?

Do you know of any resistance movements? How did you learn about it? For the reading, go ahead and pick a passage or an idea that intrigues you and we will discuss it in class. Do you agree with Scott that domination is never total?

*readings:* Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in Scott

*film:* Battle for the Trees *or* Bitter Paradise

**January 21** What is Resistance?

While you are reading Scott for this week, I want you to think about the film we saw last week. We likely talked last week about how this is ‘domination’, but think this week about how the

film represents 'resistance'. By who? When? How?

Our film for this week, while telling the story of one figure in the Civil Rights movement in the United States, also serves as a nice thumbnail sketch of the dominant trends and strategies that have defined this movement. Why 'non-violence'? Does this mean more than an overt rejection of violence? Why is non-violence a profoundly demanding form of resistance?

I want us to consider the various demands that the Civil Rights movement makes on both those people who are privileged by the operation of racism and those who are put in the position of fighting against it. Another way to ask this question is: what is "the dream" of the civil rights movement? I want us to appreciate how taxing it can be to keep that dream alive.

*readings:* Chapters 5, 6 and 7 in Scott

*film:* Brother Outsider *while watching the film, try to identify forms of domination and forms of resistance.*

### **January 28** Ideological Domination (and Recovering Voice)

This week we are going to discuss the Civil Rights movement as represented in Brother Outsider from last week with the table of types of domination and resistance in Scott's Chapter 8. Be prepared to link at least three ideas, strategies, or events from the film to one of the nodes in Scott's chart. (A node is where a category from the top axis meets a category from the lateral axis).

We are also going to use Scott's chart to examine another case of resistance in our film.

*readings:* Part I in Hardt and Negri Chapter 8 in Scott; .

*film:* Place of the Boss *or* Nulijuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts

### **February 4** No Place for Resistance: The Multitude!

This week we are considering 'where' movements like the Civil Rights movement or Indigenous resistance or people's movements exist. Or not. Hardt and Negri propose that locale is now the missing element of resistance movements.

*readings:* Part II in Hardt and Negri

### **February 11** Land Reform! Space is the Abstract, Place Feeds You ... Or Everybody Needs A Place

Now that we understand a) what domination is b) what resistance is and c) how resistance is a recovery of the 'voice' or 'volume' of a particular interpretive framework, we are going to apply our sharp minds to the conflicts that emerge over access to 'land', 'property' or 'place'.

For discussion answer these simple questions: why are some people landless? Why is the

condition of 'landlessness' spreading? What are the functions of land? What are the social functions of land? What is land reform? How is 'land reform' a resistance movement?

*readings:*

Barraclough, Solon L.

1994 The Legacy of Latin American Land Reform. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 28(3): 16-21.

de Almeida, Lucio Flavio and Felix Ruiz

2000 The Landless Workers= Movement and Social Struggles Against Neo-liberalism. *Latin American Perspectives* 27(5):11-32.

Edelman, Marc

2000 The Persistence of the Peasantry. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33(5): 14-19.

Martins, Monica Dias

2000 The MST Challenge to Neo-liberalism. *Latin American Perspectives* 27(5): 33-45.

Tavares, Ricardo

1995 Land and Democracy: Reconsidering the Agrarian Question. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 28(6):23-29.

*film:* Holding Our Ground *or* Sipakapa NO!

### **March 3** Indigenous Rights Movements: Becoming Visible

It almost goes without saying that among the most significant forms of resistance in the world shaped by colonization is the Indigenous rights movement. It almost goes without saying, except that the repercussions of these movements, their sheer number and the foundational challenge they pose is (oddly) often overlooked, by governments and many citizens of settler states alike. Thing is, regardless of the apparently seamless consolidation of colonial authority over apparently secure land bases, Indigenous people didn't just 'up an' go away'.

You now have to 'place' Indigenous people within colonial states. So answer these six questions in the simplest way you can: What is colonized territory? What is rebel held territory? When does one become the other? What is a third option? What is the 'new' political identity being mobilized in the movements discussed in our readings? What is the status quo that has, more often than not, obscured that identity?

*readings:*

Brysk, Allison

1996 Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indigenous Rights. *Latin American Perspectives* Issue 89 23(2): 38-57.

Collier, George A.

2000 Zapatismo Resurgent: Land and Autonomy in Chiapas. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33(5): 20-25.

Collins, Jennifer N.

2000 A Sense of Possibility: Ecuador's Indigenous Movement Takes Centre Stage. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33(5): 40-46.

*film*: A Place Called Chiapas

**March 10** "Mending Fences" (by building fences *and* gates)

This week we are going to consider "the third option" from last week: the types of resolutions that have been achieved for Indigenous peoples through resistance. Brysk and Collier from last time we met gave you some ideas, but for this week I want you each to think of two important changes to the status quo that are posed by the political mobilization of the James Bay Cree and the Zapatistas. What changes have to be made to the status quo? That is: what are the fences and what are the gates?

*readings*:

Jenson, Jane and Martin Papillon

2000 Challenging the Citizenship Regime: The James Bay Cree and Transnational Action. *Politics and Society* 28(2): 245-264.

Nash, June

1994 The Reassertion of Indigenous Identity: Mayan Responses to State Intervention. *Latin American Research Review* 30 (3): .

*film*: Power

**March 17** Post-Democracy: Making New Public Transcripts

June Nash and Gustavo Esteva (we are not reading Esteva) both make the argument that the Zapatista movement envisions a new kind of democracy in which Indigenous people can no longer be 'erased' by the operation of the state, the dominant economy or the dominant ethos of national identity. (In the case of Mexico, though not solely in Mexico, remember that the national identity is presumed to 'be part Indigenous', thus making everybody indigenous and making 'indigenous rights' synonymous with 'everybody's rights'. This strategy of imagining 'the typical Mexican citizen' in effect makes the notion of Indigenous rights irrelevant.)

When 'Indigeneity' emerges as a real, valid, historically grounded and legitimate political identity, the state must adjust to accommodate, not just the idea, but the actual people who have now had their history and reality authorized by the mainstream. Last time we figured out that 'rebel held territory' is the land under people who are making a claim to their land base that conflicts with somebody else's sense of entitlement to that land, but now we want to consider the

next step: what is the new status quo when 'rebel held territory' is legitimately simply transformed back into 'homeland'? What is a pluri-cultural state like? What is the new public transcript of a pluri-cultural state?

*readings:*

Fisher, William

1994 Megadevelopment, Environmentalism and Resistance: The Institutional Context of Kayapó Indigenous Politics in Central Brazil. *Human Organization* 53(3): 220-232.

Nash, June

1997 The Fiesta of the Word: The Zapatista Uprising and Radical Democracy in Mexico. *American Anthropologist* 99(2): 261-274.

*film:* Never Again or People and the Struggle in the Fourth World War

**March 24** "Place is Always More Than Metaphor": Living in a State of Permanent Resistance

This week's readings take us back to the simple problem of the fundamental contradiction that Indigenous people pose within a colonial state. We have to return to this question, because despite rather extraordinary compromises and resolutions and reworkings of states, the fact is that colonization is in fact renewed more often than it is broken down: despite the effort it takes, domination can appear to be the default position. Why? Why does domination tend to renew itself? Where and how does it tend to be renewed? Is it renewed as violence alone? What are the on-going challenges to the kinds of resistance movements we have been considering? (Consider these very difficult questions: who does the Indigenous rights movement fail? The Civil Rights movement?)

*readings:*

Karlsson, B.G.

2001 Indigenous Politics: Community Formation and Indigenous People=s Struggle for Self-Determination in Northeast India. *Identities* 8(1): 7-45.

Simmons, Deborah

1999 After Chiapas: Aboriginal Land and Resistance in the New North America. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 19(1): 119-148.

*film:* Not So Friendly Neighbour

**March 31** Big Alliances: The Special Case of Indigenous Rights and Environmentalism

Almost since the very outset of the environmentalist movement in the Americas (which people locate in the 1960s and early 1970s and the work of Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring*) Indigenous groups have collaborated with environmentalist organizations in their political mobilization, sometimes taking up some of the rhetoric of environmentalism. This alliance is, to say the least, a

bit uneasy, though as we saw in the film *Power*, this strategy can be particularly effective.

In some ways we need to think about *why* that might be. What is 'environmentalism' anyway: what do you think is important about the environment, what does 'environmentally friendly' mean, what do you think the threats to the environment are, what are the costs of activity that is environmentally 'unfriendly'? This week we are going to consider the ways in which Indigenous movements have used the argument and morality of 'environmentalism' in their movements. Are the cases you read for today 'about' the environment, identity, culture or power? Are they about all of them at once? What kinds of conflicts can emerge in the alliance between environmentalists and Indigenous groups?

*readings:*

Gedicks, Al

*The New Resource Wars: Native And Environment Struggles Against Multinational Corporations.*

*film:* Four Corners

**April 7** Democracy?  
Hardt and Negri Part III

## ITEMS TO NOTE

### 1. Assignments

Students are responsible for keeping a copy of their work until they have received a final grade for the assignment. Any student who fails to write an examination on the scheduled date and time will be given zero on that examination.

### 2. Special Examination The policy of Huron University College is as follows:

"A special examination is any examination other than the regularly scheduled examination. Special exams will be allowed only on receipt of medical documentation verifying a serious illness that kept the student from writing the exam as originally scheduled. Such documentation is strictly confidential and kept in the student's file. In the case of missing a final exam for documented medical reasons, a special exam will be set within thirty days.

Special exams will not be granted for occasions such as employment interviews, weddings, bar mitzvahs, family reunions, vacations, misreading the exam timetable, or

oversleeping. Neither will special exams be granted in order to facilitate transportation arrangements, such as booking flights for home for Christmas or summer vacations. It is the policy of Huron University College to discourage informal arrangements by faculty which circumvent this regulation."

### 3. Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in this course, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### 4. Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf> .

### 5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/pdf/FASSonPlagiarism.pdf>

In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found at: [http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research\\_guides\\_and\\_handouts](http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research_guides_and_handouts)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### 6. Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

#### 7. Program and Academic Counselling

Centre for Global Studies students who require general advice about modules and courses offered in the Centre should contact the Acting Director, Dr. Trish Fulton, Centre for Global Studies, cgshuron@uwo.ca and identify themselves as CGS students with course number and student number. For other academic information and advice, Huron students should contact Debbie Chadwick or Kent Robinson, Academic Counsellors. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_arts\\_social\\_science/academic\\_counselling/](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_arts_social_science/academic_counselling/)

Non Huron students should contact the Academic Counselling office in their Faculty.

#### 8. Essay Submission

Essays and other written assignments must be handed to the instructor directly or placed in the essay drop-off box located across from the Information Desk in the West Wing Building.