POLI 309
Democracy and Disobedience

Instructor:
Dr. Avigail Eisenberg and Stacie Swain (PhD Candidate) (Fall 2020)

Course description:
This course examines political theories and strategies of disobedience and dissent. Do citizens have an obligation to obey unjust laws? Which strategies of dissent and law breaking are successful? Does disruptive protest damage democratic community or can it be democratizing? Is violent resistance ever justified? The course begins by asking how we should understand the scope of political disobedience. It examines the ways in which dissent and disobedience rely on particular political subjects and how they view themselves in relation to others. We consider the leading texts in political theory about disobedience alongside some of the manifestos of social movements or reflections about groups such as Black Lives Matter, Earth First!, Idle No More, and Occupy to name some examples.

Prerequisites: None

Course outcomes/objectives:
- Develop knowledge of key concepts and questions in theories and cases about political dissent and disobedience
- Develop core undergraduate skills, especially effective writing, textual analysis and critical thinking
- Enhance critical reading skills
- Sharpen research skills and develop capacity to draw connections between theoretical debates and political practices

Topics may include:
- Political theories of disobedience
- Conscience and resistance
- Violent and nonviolent protest
- Imperialism and dissent

Course delivery:
In the Fall 2020 term, this course will be delivered synchronously on Wednesdays only. The remainder is asynchronous.