

# **What is Resistance?**

## **Ethnic Studies 2520**

Diversity Scholars Program, Spring 2025

Dr. Alborz Ghandehari

He/him/his

Office Hours:

On Zoom Wednesdays (all term): 1:00pm - 2:30pm

Zoom link: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/92366944854>

Meeting ID: 923 6694 4854

Passcode: 147054

Class location: Gardner Commons 2675

### **Course Description**

While in the Fall, ETHNC 2510 centered injustice with regards to systems of land and labor, this course follows with the alternative questions: “How do we resist systems of injustice? What does resistance look like? How do we build collective power and win freedom?” All around us, we are faced with challenges such as climate change, gender and sexual violence, and attacks on the working class, migrant communities, indigenous people, and communities of color. How do we, as people outside of the formal institutions of political power, resist these attacks and build a more just society? Readings and films explore the different meanings of resistance and justice for different communities and how these are interconnected. In addition, a major component of the course is a creative practicum in which students will participate in a series of workshops and community conversations to develop a final storytelling or *spoken word* project. This part of the course features several workshops with the Salt Lake spoken word collective Truth Cypher. Throughout the semester, students will also be introduced to campus resource centers that support underrepresented students at the U. They will also meet and engage in conversation with diverse guest scholar-activists and community organizers.

### **Graduate Assistants and Advisors**

Samir Monges (CEL Coordinator)

Pronouns: he/him/his

Email: [u0265211@utah.edu](mailto:u0265211@utah.edu)

Office Hours: (By appointment) Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:45am-10:45am or 12:05pm-1:30pm.

Also available via ZOOM: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/5230351056> [Links to an external site.](#)

Meeting ID: 523 035 1056

Lessly Paulino Izquierdo (Peer Mentor)

Email: [u1376275@utah.edu](mailto:u1376275@utah.edu)

### Helpful dates to know

Last day to elect credit/no credit: Friday, January 17

Last day to withdraw: Friday, February 28

Last day to reverse credit/no credit: Friday, April 18

\*\*Speak to your advisors or Dr. Ghandehari if you would like to discuss these options

### COVID-19 Information

The University of Utah is a **mask friendly campus**. If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID, please follow these guidelines for testing, isolation, and care: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/2023/02/10-tips-isolation-if-you-have-covid-19>

You may also access other COVID-related resources at the following links: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/coronavirus/care-instructions>  
<https://deanofstudents.utah.edu/covid/>

All readings and films will be available on Canvas.

### Assignments

**Discussion Posts** (11 at 10 points each/all posts together equal 40% of final grade)

By class time most Thursdays, students will submit a discussion post on Canvas. These posts should be an approximately 300 word written reflection connecting themes from the readings and films for that week. In these reflections, you must answer the following questions: What were two to three (2-3) really interesting things for you from the readings and films this week? Why did these stick out to you? Please include author and page number in parentheses when referencing specific parts of the texts. If discussing clips from films, please include the time stamp for the start of the clip in parentheses. In your discussion posts, you can also reflect on the spoken word workshops or guest speakers we will have throughout the semester. Discussion posts are visible to all students and others in our canvas page so you may respond to other students' posts as well. **These posts will be due by class time most Thursdays.**

**Final Paper** (68.75 pts/25% of final grade)

**Due Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup>** (11:59pm). This is a critical thinking paper. Critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data from course materials to form your own argument. In this assignment, you will craft a 5-page double-spaced paper that proposes your argument in response to the following prompt:

Choose one example of resistance to social injustice discussed in this class, and construct an argument laying out how you think justice can be achieved. What changes are needed in society for justice to be achieved? What are three ways people are resisting this injustice? What additional steps do you think the movement can take to achieve the changes it/you/we seek? Place the example you choose in historical context and explore what this history can teach us about how to continue the movement for justice in the present. Conclude by dreaming big about what kind of alternative society you envision in the long term. **Use at least four sources from class to support your argument.** Include parenthetical citations at the end of sentences that reference the text directly like this

(Ghandehari 4). Use Modern Language Association (MLA) style to format paper (see canvas).

**Final Storytelling/Spoken Word Project** (55 pts/20% of final grade)

**Due Thursday April 17<sup>th</sup>** (present in class). Each student will develop a creative piece/monologue/spoken word poem as their final project for the course. This piece should be a response to one or both of the following questions: What does justice mean to you? What does resistance mean to you? Students will develop this storytelling piece through a series of workshops offered by Truth Cypher, a local spoken word collective. Truth Cypher will offer 5 hands-on workshops to aid in the development of this project. Final pieces will be presented orally on the last day of class, April 17<sup>th</sup>, and may include a wealth of theatrical elements including speech, sound, movement, dance, blocking, costume, props, video, and paintings. Pieces may tell a story, speak in the first person, offer research or critical analysis, use poetic language, song, or everyday talk. They should reflect the creativity and spirit of each person. Students' pieces can draw from their own lived experience. Upload your piece/poem to canvas by the presentation date, April 17<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*Students may choose to share their creative pieces in an evening community performance the last week of the semester, time and location TBD.

**Attendance and Participation** (41.25 pts/15% of your final grade)

This class relies heavily on your own thoughts and debates about course material and thus requires your active participation and in-class discussion, as well as attendance. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences (mental health days), no questions asked. Otherwise, additional absences will negatively impact your grade unless you speak with the instructor in advance to excuse your absence. Because our class will discuss difficult social and political topics, ground rules for discussion are set below:

- Know that you have something important to contribute, even if you have seldom been afforded the opportunity to voice your thoughts in public settings because of your perceived background, identity, or social status.
- Listen actively and respectfully, and with an ear to first understanding others' views, before you formulate your contribution.
- One diva, one mic (do not interrupt someone else's point)
- Make space for others who have not spoken to speak. Be cognizant of how much time you take up.
- Critique ideas, not individuals.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.

<u>Grading Breakdown</u>	<u>Weight (Pct. of Final Grade)</u>	<u>Grade Scale</u>			
Attendance/Participation	10%	94-100	A	74-76	C
Discussion Posts (11)	40%	90-93	A-	70-73	C-
Final Paper	25%	87-89	B+	66-69	D+
Final Storytelling Project	25%	84-86	B	63-65	D
		80-83	B-	60-63	D-
		77-79	C +	0-60	F

## **Important Announcements:**

1. ***Undocumented Student Support.*** Immigration is a complex phenomenon with broad impact—those who are directly affected by it, as well as those who are indirectly affected by their relationships with family members, friends, and loved ones. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. **Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid, or any other part of your residence.** The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families. **To learn more, please contact the Dream Center at 801.213.3697 or visit [dream.utah.edu](http://dream.utah.edu).**
2. ***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the [Center for Disability and Access](#), 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability and Access.
3. ***University Safety Statement.*** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).
4. ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
5. ***Student Mental Health Resources.*** Rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, isolation, and loneliness have noticeably increased during the pandemic. If you need help, reach out for campus mental health resources, including counseling, trainings and other support. Consider participating in a Mental Health First Aid or other wellness-themed training

provided by our Center for Student Wellness and sharing these opportunities with your peers, teaching assistants and department colleagues.

### **Additional Resources**

1. **Center for Student Access and Resources (CSAR)**; Union 411, @uofuCSAR, [studentresources.utah.edu](http://studentresources.utah.edu); email: [studentresources@utah.edu](mailto:studentresources@utah.edu)
2. **Center for Community & Cultural Engagement (CCE)**; Union 408, @uofucce, [culture.utah.edu](http://culture.utah.edu); email: [culture@utah.edu](mailto:culture@utah.edu)
3. **Student Leadership & Involvement (SLI)**, housed in the Student Involvement wing of the Union on the second floor, [leadership.utah.edu](http://leadership.utah.edu), @leadership.utah.
4. **Center for Childcare & Family Resources**; 801-585-5897, [childcare.utah.edu](http://childcare.utah.edu); Union Building rm. 408
5. **Writing Center**; 801-587-9122; [writingcenter.utah.edu](http://writingcenter.utah.edu); Marriott Library rm. 2701
6. **English for Academic Success (EAS) Program**; 801-581-8047; [linguistics.utah.edu/eas-program](http://linguistics.utah.edu/eas-program); LNCO rm. 2300