

# 2010-2011 Course Newsletter

## **News and updates from the MA in Activism & Social Change:**

*An innovative and original interdisciplinary course of participatory study brings together the worlds of academia and radical social campaigning.*

**Now recruiting for September 2011**

### This programme includes:

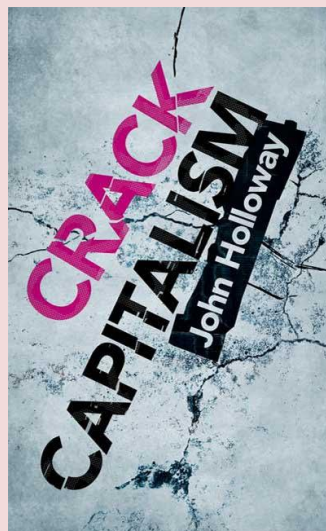
- An introduction to core ideas in radical and transformatory social theories and strategies.
- An overview of global social movement struggles with particular reference to anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism
- Grounding in participatory action research methods relevant to campaigning and social change.
- Contemporary political debates about the critical challenges we face and how to respond.
- Guest lectures and workshops by journalists, campaigners, researchers and activists.
- Opportunities to engage in action research projects with a variety of social struggles

### Visiting Professor John Holloway

Professor John Holloway is one of the most renowned commentators on today's global social movements and author of 'Change the World without taking power' and 'Crack Capitalism'.



He will be the Leverhulme Visiting Professor in Geography during Semester 1 of 2011-12 and will be teaching on the MA in Activism and Social Change during this time.



*"I have just been listening to some end-of-course presentations by the students on the MA in Activism and Social Change and am very struck by how interesting, committed and thoughtful they are. The work of the students themselves confirms my general impression that this is an excellent degree course, definitely to be recommended to anyone committed to making the world a better place."*

**More information and how to apply:**

[www.activismandsocialchange.org.uk](http://www.activismandsocialchange.org.uk)

**Contact: Dr Paul Waley at:**

[p.t.waley@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:p.t.waley@leeds.ac.uk)



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## Module Content

- **Spaces of Radical Thought (30 credits)**

Political activism today has its roots in a body of social theory that has evolved over the last hundred years. There are many different radical traditions but most have been inspired by a 'core' number of thinkers and their thoughts around key societal 'spaces'. Rather than attempting an encyclopaedic review of all existing radical thinking traditions, the module team will introduce selected thinkers and their works, enabling follow-up discussion on issues and themes that have been raised. We will be particularly reading in depth the works of three authors: David Harvey, J.K Gibson-Graham and John Holloway.

- **Researching for Social Change (15 credits)**

Achieving progressive social change is impossible without the research and development of ideas, practices and experiences, and the commitment to self-reflexive inquiry. Researching for social change, however, demands new ways of understanding what research is and who it is actually for. This module provides grounding in the principles, methods and strategies of action research, a methodology aimed at 'improving practice' and 'achieving goals' rather than simply 'producing knowledge'.

- **Qualitative Research Methods (15 credits)**

This module provides an advanced treatment of core issues in qualitative research design, data collection and analysis. Students will develop sophisticated critiques of published qualitative work while providing practice in applying qualitative techniques.

- **Campaigning for Social Change (30 credits)**

This offers a mixture of theoretical insights and practical tools. Students will study 10 major social movement struggles of the post-war era and consider the different cultures of protest and resistance and their relative successes and failures. These lessons form an important knowledge base for equipping students with the ideas, techniques and skills for effective campaigning.

- **Empire & Resistance (Optional 15 credit and 30 credit version)**

North Atlantic capital has dominated global developments over the last 200 and more years. This module examines the ways in which the power of the political economies of north-western Europe and north America were translated into global empires and how this continues to underpin the state of the world today. It starts with an introduction to attempts to explain the underlying structures of the modern world, including world systems theory, and a brief overview of the history of Western colonialism. Subsequent sessions examine a worldwide range of more specific examples of the exercise of imperial power and the struggles of resistance movements. The module concludes by looking at the spaces for resistance that are being opened up by global social movements campaigning against neoliberal policies.

- **Action Research Dissertation (60 credits)**

In this module students develop and implement course ideas through a dissertation. The module is built around a placement with a group/organisation, during which original, primary research for the dissertation is undertaken.

## Alumni reflection

**"This course was the perfect combination of theory & praxis, where I could engage with new theories as well as learn practical skills for campaigning and organising." – Aimee Castenell**

*(Aimee has worked as the New Media Manager for a large broad-based coalition campaign called One Nation Working Together in Washington D.C. and is now working as the Communications and Online Advocacy consultant with the US Human Rights Network.)*



**For more information about the course, scholarships and to access the online application form, please visit the course website at: [www.activismandsocialchange.org.uk](http://www.activismandsocialchange.org.uk).**

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## Meet the Staff



**Paul Chatterton** heads up the 'Cities and Social Justice' research Cluster at the University of Leeds. He specialises in scholar-activist research and recent interests include cities under neoliberalism, youth and protest cultures, self managed politics and movements for social and ecological justice. He is a founder member of the Trapeze popular education collective who wrote a handbook for Do it Yourself politics. Paul has many links to the wider campaigning/activist community. He helped to establish the Common Place Social Centre in Leeds city centre, is a member of a pioneering housing co-operative called Lilac, and is a trustee of a local resource centre Oblong. All his work can be found at <http://www.paulchatterton.com>.

**Sara Gonzalez** is a lecturer at the School of Geography and teaches on Spaces of Radical Thought and Empire and Resistance. Her research develops a critique towards an increasingly neoliberal understanding of cities as narrow economic spaces and a related erosion of the public space. She is currently looking at the impact of the global financial crisis in cities across Europe. She is also involved in an action-research project to support local market traders particularly in Leeds whose livelihoods are at risk in an increasingly competitive and globalised economy.



**Stuart Hodkinson's** main research and activist work focuses on 'urban enclosure' and public housing policies in Britain. He is specifically interested in understanding how communities can resist and create alternatives to housing privatisation, gentrification and displacement. He is also currently involved in a research project looking into precarity and forced labour among asylum seekers and refugees. A former editor of Red Pepper magazine, Stuart is active in several local campaigns, including Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market (<http://kirkgatemarket.wordpress.com>).



**Paul Waley** teaches on the Empire and Resistance and Spaces of Radical Thought modules. He has a longstanding interest in Japan and East Asia as well as the Balkan region of Europe. He writes on the consequences of neo-liberal urban policies and is currently embarking on a research project on retail food markets in Europe. Paul claims to be the most polyglot geographer in Britain, speaking 6 languages according to some counts.



*For the 2011-2012 session, Dr Sara Gonzalez will be programme manager for the entire year. Dr Paul Chatterton will only be teaching in semester 2, Dr Paul Waley will only be teaching in semester 1 and Drs Stuart Hodkinson and Sara Gonzalez will be teaching in both semesters. Our visiting Professor John Holloway will be teaching in semester 1 only.*

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