

# **SOCIOLOGY 411: Social Movements**

## **Fall 2009**

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Classroom: Bingham 108  
Class Meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45

### **OVERVIEW OF COURSE**

Why do people protest and organize to change the world around them? Most of the time people follow the rules, obey authorities, and put up with situations – even situations they consider unjust and immoral. Yet, in some cases, people join together to press for change. Why do people sometimes protest but more often not? How do movements work, and why do some succeed while others fail?

This course explores the origins, dynamics and consequences of social movements from a sociological perspective. Over the semester, we will examine a wide range of topics including: the emergence of movements, recruitment and leadership, interactions of movements with the media, political authorities and the broader public, tactics (e.g. nonviolent direct action, litigation), and the factors contributing to the success and failure of movements.

We will learn about several historically important social movements. For example, we will study recent social movements in Western democracies including the civil rights, women's, environmental, student, antiwar, farm worker, pro-life, and pro-choice movements. In addition, we will look at several social movements from around the globe. Studying social movements allows us to examine much broader questions of social and political theory. These include questions about the nature of power, conflict, political authority and legitimacy, and the relation between human agency and historical change.

Democratic societies depend on the presence of engaged and skilled citizens capable of mobilizing around common interests. As a central component of the course, you will have the opportunity to work with a community partner – an organization that is part of a broader social movement – over the semester. You will work with several other students and leaders of organizations to help design and carry out important activities – like organizing events and recruiting participants. Community partners address a wide range of issues and topics including immigration, pollution, media access, incarceration and prison reform, citizenship rights, and the death penalty.

Working with a community partner is an ideal way to deepen our understanding of movements. We will use this experience to apply and reflect on theories from class, and we will incorporate

discussion of this experience into our class meeting to highlight similarities and differences across social movements.

## **COURSE GOALS**

The major goals of this course are:

- Introduce major theoretical perspectives and debates in the study of social movements
- Learn about important historical and contemporary social movements especially in the United States
- Understand the diverse motivations and goals that activists bring to movements
- Consider the major social forces that shape the organization, tactics and success (or failure) of movements
- Learn to use sociological theories and empirical research to analyze social movements including your own experience as an activist
- Develop analytic, writing, public speaking, and discussion skills

## **COURSE FORMAT**

Each week, I will post questions on blackboard prior to class meetings to guide your reading and prepare for our meetings. The basic format of our meetings will combine characteristics of a seminar and a lecture course. We will use discussion, short lectures, films, and presentations throughout the semester. Discussion will be used to critically evaluate theoretical ideas, case studies, and your service learning experience. Short lectures will be used to help place course readings in relation to the broader historical and sociological scholarship in the field. Your individual success and our collective success hinges on active participation which includes reading course material and reflecting on them prior to class meetings for which they are assigned. I will provide questions that ask you to reflect on important themes and questions as you do the reading. Upper-level courses are most successful when they build a sustained, cumulative conversation among the same participants.

## **READING**

This course has three books that are available at the campus bookstore and online booksellers:

- (1) Doug McAdam. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- (2) Dana Fisher. 2006. *Activism, Inc.* Stanford University Press.
- (3) Arlene Stein. 2001. *The Stranger Next Door*. Boston: Beacon Press.

All additional articles and book chapters will be available on Blackboard as PDF files.

## **MEETINGS AND CONTACTING ME**

You can drop by to meet with me on Thursday during office hours (11-12) or by appointment other days of the week. Email is generally the best method to reach me with smaller questions. Immediately after class is another good time to have short discussions or set up meetings. You can arrange meetings with Tuneka by email.

## **REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS**

Short assignments	25%
Case study	35%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
Final Exam	25%

Short Assignments/Quizzes (30%): There will be eleven short assignments. These will include in-class exercises, short homework assignments to be turned in at the beginning of class, and quizzes. No make-ups or late assignments are permitted. Your bottom grade will be dropped, so you can miss one without adversely affecting your final grade.

Case study and Community Partnership (30%): Through this assignment you will write a case report based on the organization and broader movement you participate in through your service learning project. You will work with a team of three other students. This will allow your group to share resources since you will all be working on the same social movement. Each person's final written work will be graded separately. A small portion of the grade will be based on a final group presentation. To facilitate your project, you will turn in your work in stages throughout the semester. You will also be required to maintain a log of hours outside of class spent working with your community partner organization with a minimum of 30 total hours. Detail regarding the time log and written assignments will be included on separate handouts.

Exams (40%): Our mid-term and final exam will combine identification, short answer and essay questions, and we will discuss the details with example questions later in the semester.

Attendance: Although I do not collect attendance directly and give credit for showing up in your grade calculation, I know from past experience that attendance has a strong correlation to performance in this course. Class will start and end on time.

## **GRADES**

The grading scale for this course is: A=100-94; A-=93-91; B+=90-88; B=87-84; B-=83-81; C+=80-78; C=77-74; C-=73--71; D+=70-68; D=67--61; F=60 and below.

## **POLICIES**

If you have some extraordinary set of circumstances that make it impossible for you to meet a deadline, you must see me prior to the deadline. Extraordinary circumstances might include a serious illness or death in your family, but it would not include personal travel, extracurricular activities, or fulfilling the requirements of other courses.

Blackboard will be used for announcements and to make copies of the syllabus, handouts, and assignments available to you. You should check blackboard regularly (2-3 times a week) for announcements related to course assignments and schedule.

## **HONOR CODE**

Your participation in this course is covered by the UNC Honor Code (<http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html>). If you have questions about any forms of academic dishonesty please see me, and I will be happy to clarify. In this course, you should be especially attentive to plagiarism. The UNC Writing Center has a handout that describes what plagiarism is, why it should be avoided, and how to avoid it. Here's the link: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>

**COURSE SCHEDULE** (\*\* note that we may modify the schedule as needed depending on the pace of the class and the time required for discussion of community partner projects throughout the semester; any changes will be announced in class and on blackboard)

August 25 Introduction to Class

August 27 Social Movements in Historical Context: Definitions and Debates  
Charles Tilly. "Social Movements as Politics," pp. 1-11 in *Social Movements, 1768-2004*  
Rhoda Lois Blumberg. "The Shaping of Black Resistance," pp. 1-15 in *Civil Rights: The 1960s Freedom Struggle*

### **When and Why do Movements Emerge?**

September 1 Origins of Mass Protest  
Aldon Morris. 1981. "Black Southern Student Sit-In Movement: An Analysis of Internal Organization." *American Sociological Review* 46:744-767.  
Marcellus Barksdale. 1986. "Civil Rights Organization and the Indigenous Movement in Chapel Hill, NC, 1960-1965" *Phylon* 47:29-42  
FILM: Ain't Scared of Your Jails

September 3 Spontaneity and Planning in Protest  
Lewis Killian. 1984. "Organization, Rationality and Spontaneity in the Civil Rights Movement." *American Sociological Review* 49:770-783  
\*\* We will also discuss community partner projects at this class meeting.

September 8 Rational Actors and Free-Riders  
Dennis Chong. Selections from *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, pp 1-11 and 133-7  
\*\* We will announce your community partner placements at this meeting and give you time to meet with your group.

September 10 Political Context and Protest Cycles  
Jenkins, J. Craig and Charles Perrow. 1977. "Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946-1972)." *American Sociological Review* 42:249-268.

### **Who Becomes an Activist and Why?**

September 15 Becoming an Activist  
Doug McAdam. *Freedom Summer*. Prologue, Chs 1.  
In Class: Freedom on My Mind (Part 1)

- September 17 Availability, Beliefs, and Relationships  
 Doug McAdam. *Freedom Summer*. Ch 2.  
 Charles Kurzman. “Bin Laden and Other Thoroughly Modern Muslims.” from  
*Contexts*
- September 22 Frames and Worldviews  
 Charlotte Ryan and William Gamson. “The Art of Reframing Political Debate”  
 from *Contexts*  
 Kristin Luker. Selection from *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*
- September 24 The Activist Experience: Commitment, Solidarity, and Collective Identity  
 Doug McAdam. *Freedom Summer*. Chs 3-4.
- September 29 Project Updates & Discussion
- October 1 Radicalization and Activist Careers  
 Doug McAdam. *Freedom Summer*. Chs 5-6.  
 FILM: *Freedom on My Mind* (Part 2)
- October 6 Sustaining Participation: Commitment, Networks and Collective Identity  
 Sharon Erickson Nepstad. “Persistent Resistance: Commitment and Community  
 in the Plowshares Movement,” *Social Problems*  
 Bert Klandermans. “Disengaging from Movements”
- October 8 EXAM

### **How are Movements Organized and What Tactics and Strategies Do They Use?**

- October 13 Do Organizations Undermine or Support Movements?  
 Piven, Francis Fox and Richard A. Cloward. “The Structuring of Protest,” Pp. 1-  
 40 in *Poor People’s Movements*, 1977.  
 Jackie Smith. “The Transnational Network for Democratic Globalization”  
 FILM: This is What Democracy Looks Like!

- October 15 The Rise of Nonprofits and Professional Movement Organizations  
Dana Fisher. *Activism, Inc.* Chapters 1-4 and 6
- October 20 How Do Movement Use Networks to Build Support?  
Mark R. Warren. "A Theology of Organizing," pp. 40-71 in *Dry Bones Rattling*, 2001.  
Malcolm Gladwell. "Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg." *New Yorker*, January 11, 1999.

### **Fall Break**

- October 27 How Political Context and Collective Identity Shapes Strategy  
Robert J. Brym. "Six Lessons of Suicide Bombers," *Contexts*, 2007.  
Mary Bernstein "The Strategic Uses of Identity in the Lesbian and Gay Movement"  
Clay Shirky. "Collective Action and Institutional Challenges," pp. 143-160 in *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, 2008.
- October 29 Successful Leadership, Organization and Strategy in Social Movements  
Marshall Ganz. Selection from *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement*  
FILM: Unborn in the USA

### **How Do the State, Countermovements, and Media Shape Movements?**

- November 3 Religion and Community Conflict  
Arlene Stein. *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle Over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights*, 2001, Chs. 1-5
- November 5 Moral Politics and Countermovements  
Arlene Stein. *The Stranger Next Door*, Chs. 6-10.  
FILM: Ballot Measure 9
- November 10 Project Updates & Discussion

November 12 News media

William A. Gamson and G. Wolfsfeld. 1993. "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528:114-125.

Todd Gitlin "The Media in the Unmaking of the New Left"

November 17 Politics, Repression, and Movement Decline

Doug McAdam. "The Decline of the Civil Rights Movement" from *Waves of Protest*, edited by Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson, pp. 325-348

### **What Impacts Do Social Movements Have?**

November 19 Success and the Consequences of Movements

William A. Gamson. "The Meaning of Success"

David S. Meyer. "How Social Movements Matter"

November 24 Political Legacies: Head Start and Federal Poverty Programs

Kenneth T. Andrews. "The Politics of Poverty," pp. 136-154 in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, 2004

FILM: Given a Chance

December 1 Cultural and Economic Impacts of Movements

Brayden King. "When Markets Become Contentious," from *Contexts*

Francesca Polletta. "Remembering Dr. King on the House and Senate Floor: Why Movements Have the Impact They Do." pp. 141-165 in *It Was Like a Fever*, 2006.

December 3 Presentations

December 8 Presentations

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 17 @ 8 AM