SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

Fall 2016

Political Science 226
Haverford College

Steve McGovern       Office: Hall 105
Phone: 610-896-1058 (w)      Office Hours: Th 9-11
smcgover@haverford.edu      (and by appointment)

Course Description

A social movement consists of individuals acting collectively with some degree of organization and continuity, and at least partially outside of established political processes and institutions, to bring about societal change. Mass protest has been a vibrant part of American political history from the start, but it has attracted more and more scholarly attention in recent decades as ordinary citizens have “taken to the streets” to advance causes about which they feel passionately. Often, their efforts have made a difference. In the realm of civil rights, women’s rights, environmental protection, abortion, taxation, religion, peace, and economic inequality activists have played a vital role in reshaping American society, culture, and politics.

Some of the central questions we will consider in this course include: Why do social movements emerge from time to time? Why do some succeed while others fail? Why do some individuals actively participate? Why do certain movements remain outside the political system while others gradually blend in? How are movements organized? What strategies and tactics have been effective in producing change? How do movements interact with other key actors such as the media and the state? And what impact have movements had on politics and society in the United States?

In sum, this course seeks to expose students to the major concepts and issues in the study of social movements. Drawing upon a rich body of social movement theory over the past four decades, students will then engage in their own research project by examining one or more social movements while attempting to address a theoretical issue of particular interest and importance.

Requirements

Class participation 20%
First analytical paper 20%
Second analytical paper 30%
Research paper (12-15 pages) 30%

Texts


All other assigned readings will be available through Moodle.
Topics and Readings

Week 1

I. Introduction to Course

II. Facilitating Conditions

A. Societal Strain and Discontent

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Bourgeois and Proletarians” in *Social Movements*, eds. Steven M. Buechler and F. Kurt Cylke
Doug McAdam, Ch. 1, *Political Process and the Politics of Black Insurgency*

Week 2

B. Resources and Organizations

John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory” (Ch. 16, G&J)
Jo Freeman, “The Women’s Movement” (Ch. 2, G&J)
John D’Emilio, “The Gay Liberation Movement” (Ch. 3, G&J)
Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce, and Penny Lewis, “Occupy Wall Street” (Ch. 4, G&J)
Doug McAdam, Ch. 2, *Political Process and the Politics of Black Insurgency*

Week 3

C. Political Opportunities

Doug McAdam, Ch. 3, *Political Process and the Politics of Black Insurgency*
J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow, “Farmworkers’ Movements in Changing Political Contexts” (Ch. 26, G&J)
Roberta Ann Johnson, “Mobilizing the Disabled” in *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies*, ed. Jo Freeman
Stuart A. Wright, “Patriots, Political Process, and Social Movements” and “The Gun Rights Network and Nascent Patriots: Rise of a Threat Spiral” in *Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombings*
Week 4

D. Political Opportunities (cont’d)

Doug McAdam, Chs. 4-9, Political Process and the Politics of Black Insurgency
Film in class: “Eyes on the Prize: Ain’t Scared of Your Jails”

Week 5

III. Recruitment

A. Rational Self-Interest

Mancur Olson, “The Free Rider Problem” (Ch. 6, G&J)

B. Social Networks

Doug McAdam, “Recruits to Civil Rights Activism” (Ch. 7, G&J)

C. Grievances (Reconsidered)

Steven M. Buechler, “The Strange Career of Strain and Breakdown Theories of Collective Action” in Social Movements, eds. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi
Film in class: “Eyes on the Prize: School Busing in Boston”

First Analytical Paper Due

Week 6

D. Framing

1. Making Connections


2. Limitations of Framing

Charlotte Ryan and William A. Gamson, “Are Frames Enough?” (Ch. 13, G&J)
E. Emotions

Deborah B. Gould, “The Emotion Work of Movements” (Ch. 24, G&J)
Classic Protest Songs: A List (Ch. 15, G&J)

Research Paper Proposal Due

Week 7

FALL BREAK

Week 8

IV. The Cultural Turn

A. Social Movements in a Postmaterial Society

Ronald Inglehart, “Changing Values in Post-Industrial Societies” in The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics

B. Collective Identity


C. Social Movements in a Material Society

Gabriel Hetland and Jeff Goodwin, “The Strange Disappearance of Capitalism from Social Movement Studies” in Marxism and Social Movements, eds. Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky, and Alf Gunvald Nilsen, eds.

V. The Spatial Dimensions of Protest

Week 9

VI. Sustaining Commitment

Eric L. Hirsch, “Generating Commitment among Students” (Ch. 10, G&J)
Film in class: “If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front”

Week 10

VI. Strategies and Tactics

A. Radical v. Moderate Tactics


B. Tactical Innovation

Vivian Gornick, “Consciousness” in Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader, ed. Barbara A. Crow
Verta Taylor, Katrina Kimport, Nella Van Dyke, and Ellen Ann Andersen, “Tactical Repertoires: Same-Sex Weddings” (Ch. 25, G&J)

C. New Targets


Week 11

VII. Internal Structures of Social Movements

A. Leadership and Organization


B. Coalition Building


C. Factionalism


Week 12

VIII. External Influences

A. The State

Lesley J. Wood, “Policing Waves of Protest” in *Crisis and Control: The Militarization of Protest Policing*

B. The Media

Edwin Amenta, Neal Caren, Sheera Joy Olaskey, and James E. Stobaugh, “Movements in the Media” (Ch. 27, G&J)

Week 13

C. Countermovements


**Research Paper Due**

VII. Globalization

Stephen Lerner, “Global Corporations, Global Unions” (Ch. 30, G&J)
Jackie Smith, “The Transnational Network for Democratic Globalization” (Ch. 18, G&J)

Week 14

IX. The Decline of Movements

Frederick D. Miller, “The End of SDS and the Emergence of the Weatherman: Demise through Success” in *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties*, eds. Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson
Film in class: “Rebels with a Cause”

Week 15

X. The Impacts of Movements

William A. Gamson, “Defining Movement ‘Success’” (Ch. 35, G&J)
David S. Meyer, “How Social Movements Matter” (Ch. 36, G&J)
David Naguib Pellow and Robert J. Brulle, “Environmental Justice” (Ch. 37, G&J)

**Second Analytical Paper Due at End of Exam Period**