

Social Movements in the 21st Century: Innovations in Structures and Strategies

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This course is an introduction to the social scientific study of social movements (and by extension, all forms of non-routine, or contentious politics) using cases from the 21st century. By social movements, I mean those organized collective efforts to promote or resist change in society that rely, at least in part, on non-institutionalized forms of political action (e.g. demonstrations, protest, riots). The study of social movements has grown dramatically for at least the past 25 years in large part due to the turbulence of the 1960s/70s. However, the events of the last couple of years, both in the U.S.—Wisconsin protests, Occupy, Tea Party—and around the globe—Egypt, Syria, Russia—underscore the need to look beyond the 1960s/70s protests to better understand social conflict and change.

Rationale and Objective: Substantively, however, the topic of social movements/contentious politics has a great deal of sociological resonance, quite apart from the historical particulars of the era. This is true at the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis. At the macro, or societal, level, social movements and revolutions are one of the principal forces for social change in modern society. At the meso, or organizational, level, social movements often arise within established organizations (e.g. churches, colleges, unions, community organizations) and spawn formal social movement organizations (e.g. NAACP, NOW, Minnesotans United for All Families) as the movement matures. Finally, at the micro, or individual, level, the study of social movements promises to shed light on one of the most interesting and most foundational of sociological problems: that of emergent action. Normally our actions are governed by normative routines. As anyone who has ever tried to depart from these routines will attest, they exert a great deal of power over us. The interesting question, then, is under what conditions will individuals deviate from these routines and engage in emergent collective action? What kind of individuals, located in which kinds of settings are most apt to do so? And what happens to people who participate compared to those who do not? Given the power of such action to transform the world and those who take part in it, these are important questions worth thinking about.

We'll have the opportunity to consider these and other questions as we consider some significant social movements of the 21st century:

- Tea Party
- Occupy
- Arab Spring
- Same-sex Marriage
- Wisconsin Uprising

In exploring these movements, we will consider several broad questions: What makes these movements distinctively 21st century? In what ways do these movements replicate structures and tactics from the past? In what ways do they diverge? How might movements continue to evolve

into the future?

Assessment and Evaluation: Since the course is designed around the goals of being able to identify and understand the aspects of social movements that have and may continue to evolve into the future, the assignments are intended to help you think about these processes. There will be two short assignments and a final paper. The first assignment asks you to identify a 21st century social movement. What strategies were used to mobilize participants? What tactics were used to convey the message? Did the movement utilize or generate a particular institutional or organizational structure? The second assignment asks you to answer the same questions for a social movement that occurred prior to the 21st century. This will require some individual research that extends beyond the course material, but will set you up for the final assignment. The final paper asks you to look at these two movements side by side. What are the similarities and differences? Is the more recent movement innovative in some respects but not others? What kinds of changes/innovations do you expect to see in future movements?

Notice that over the course of the term you will identify and analyze changes in social movements over time. Sociology is about understanding the ways the people relate to each other; recognizing, and analyzing changes in these relationships is an integral part of that process.

Short assignment 1 (15%):

Identify and describe a 21st century social movement: include mobilization strategies, tactics, organizational strategies/structure (2-3 double-spaced pages)

Short assignment 2 (15%):

Identify and describe a social movement from before the 21st century: include mobilization strategies, tactics, organizational strategies/structures (2-3 double-spaced pages)

Final Paper (50%):

Compare and contrast the movements you have identified in your first two assignments. To what extent is the 21st century movement you've identified innovative? To what extent does it build on social movement tactics or structures of the past? What do you think will happen with future social movements?

(6-8 double-spaced pages)

Each of these assignments is intended to help you think more deeply about the questions that lie at the heart of the course. How do movements start? How do they persist? How are they aided by technological innovation? What are the implications for individual interactions and organizational structures? The assignments work backwards, first asking you to think about a new social movement (assignment 1) and then asking you about a comparable movement from the past (assignment 2). The final paper is your opportunity to compare and contrast these movements and to generate a logical and plausible explanation for any changes that we see.

Participation (20%):

I hold students to a high standard with respect to contributing to the classroom experience. Therefore you should come to class prepared and ready to discuss the readings and questions for each class. Additionally, each student will be responsible for generating discussion questions and

helping lead discussion twice over the course of the term.

In class, be fully engaged: listen and respond to me and (more importantly) the other students. Life is about dialogue, so forming and expressing your opinion in discussion is one of the most important skills you can develop.

The fact that class participation is graded can lead to anxiety. Rest assured that your participation is not graded on whether you provide the right answers, but rather on whether you contribute to a constructive conversation. Please treat each other with civility and respect during our discussions—there are no dumb questions and it's ok to give the wrong answers.

Course Readings

Some of the readings for the course will be taken from the following required books:

Doug McAdam. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. Oxford University Press.
Theda Skocpol. 2012. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford University Press.

The remaining readings in the course will come from articles/chapters distributed electronically or in class.

Course Structure

The following represents a **highly** tentative class by class schedule of course topics and readings. The actual progression of topics/readings will depend on the speed with which we cover course material. (Note: the readings are listed by the date by which they are to be read.)

Topic(s)/Readings

Week 1

Class 1

Intro/Theories of Social Movements

*Sociology of knowledge: introduction to the study of social movements.
Readings: Snow et al. "Disrupting the 'Quotidian'"

Class 2

*Social movement theory: strain, resource mobilization, political process
Readings: Buechler, Steven. "Strain and Breakdown Theories"
McCarthy and Zald "Resource Mobilization and social movements"
McAdam, D. *Political Process*, Intro

Week 2

Class 3

Individual Dynamics of Social Movement Participation

*Deciding to participate:
Readings: Willer, R. 2009. "Groups Reward Individual Sacrifice: The Status Solution to the Collective Action Problem."
Bernstein, M. 1997. "Celebration and Suppression: The Strategic Uses of Identity by the Lesbian and Gay Movement."
Gould, R. 1991. "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871."

- Class 4 *Impact of participation:
Readings: *Freedom Summer*, Chs 3-6
McAdam, D. and Brandt, C. 2009 “Assessing the Effects of
Voluntary Youth Service: the Case of Teach for America”
- Week 3** **Participants and Politics: Tea Party**
*** **Guest Lecture: Dorothy Kronick, Stanford, Political Science*****
- Class 5 *A new kind of movement participant:
Readings: Skocpol, 2012. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican
Conservatism*, Intro-Ch. 3
Neuman, W. 2014. “Slum Dwellers in Caracas Ask, What Protests”
Guillermoprieto, A. 2005. “The Gambler”
- Class 6 *Transitioning from grassroots to institutional presence:
Readings: Skocpol, 2012. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican
Conservatism*, Ch. 4-6
- Week 4** **Movement Evolution: Occupy**
Class 7 *Building a movement:
Gamson, William A. and Micah L. Sifry. 2013. "The# Occupy Movement:
An Introduction." *The Sociological Quarterly* 54(2):159-63.
van Stekelenburg, Jacquélien. 2012. "The Occupy Movement: A Product
of This Time." *Development* 55(2):224-31.
- Class 8 *A movement in cyberspace:
Readings: McAdam, D. “Initiator and Spin-off Movements”
Castells, Manuel. 2002. “Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a
Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age.”
Selections from Grusky, David. *Occupy the Future*.
SHORT PAPER #1 DUE
- Week 5** **Dynamics of Group Activism: Arab Spring**
Class 9 *New modes of mobilization
Readings: Khondker, H. 2011. “Role of the New Media in the Arab
Spring”
Eltantawy and Wiest. 2011. “The Arab Spring| Social Media in the
Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory”
- Class 10 *New technology
Readings: Meek, D. 2010. “YouTube and Social Movements: A
Phenomenological Analysis of Participation, Events and Cyberplace”
- Week 6** **Crafting a Message: Same-Sex Marriage**
Class 11 *A movement on the defensive...
Readings: Soule, S. 2004 “Going to the Chapel? Same-Sex Marriage
Bans in the United States, 1973–2000”

Readings: Caren, N. et al. 2011. "A Social Movement Generation: Cohort and Period Trends in Protest Attendance and Petition Signing."
Stone, A. 2013. *Gay Rights at the Ballot Box*. "Introduction" and "A Winning Streak"

Class 12 *...Changing to the offensive:
Readings: Taylor, V., Kimport, K., Van Dyke, N. and Andersen, E. 2009. "Culture and mobilization: Tactical repertoires, same-sex weddings, and the impact on gay activism."
Stone, A. 2013. *Gay Rights at the Ballot Box*. "Losing at Same-Sex Marriage"
SHORT PAPER #2 DUE!

Week 7
Class 13 **Analyzing Social Movements in Fiction**
*Watch *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*

Class 14 *Discuss movement emergence, symbolism, networks and leadership in *Catching Fire*

Week 8
Class 15 **What Next?**
*Understanding cultural movements and emotion
*Going from "at risk" to collective action
Readings: Rao et al. 2003. "Institutional Change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle Cuisine as an Identity Movement in French Gastronomy."
Readings: Ingram et al. 2010. "Trouble in store: Probes, Protests and Store Openings by Wal-Mart, 1998-2007"
Jasper. 2011. "Emotions and social movements: Twenty years of theory and research"

Class 16 NO CLASS!
FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5 PM!

Additional Notes

Honor Code. All students will be expected to comply with the Stanford University Honor Code. The Honor Code is available for review at honorcode.stanford.edu.

Students with Documented Disabilities. Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an *Accommodation Letter* for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, 723-1067 TTY).

Email Policy. I encourage students to contact me with questions, clarifications and suggestions via email. I am, unless specifically excused, always available on email, but reserve a 24-hour period for

responses. For questions pertaining to paper submissions, note that I will not respond to questions after 10:00 pm of the night preceding the submission deadline.