Soc. 750 Seminar in Social Movements Syllabus

Course Aims: This seminar will explore the range of contemporary sociological approaches to the study of social movements, paying particular attention to the interplay between theoretical perspectives and research questions, on the one hand, and between methodological approaches and substantive research, on the other hand. The seminar will provide an overview of the current state of knowledge and theorizing about social movements in sociology, with a strong focus on preparation for doing research on social movements and writing for sociological publication. The study of social movements cuts across several social science disciplines. While we will read widely, the emphasis of the course will be on the questions and approaches that sociologists bring to the subject, and the ways that the study of social movements mirrors contemporary theoretical and methodological issues found throughout the discipline. The study of social movements also relates to many subfields within sociology, and the seminar will welcome this diversity of interest and approach. The seminar may be repeated for credit, so that graduate students who conduct independent research on a social movement topic can participate at various stages of their research and the class can be enriched by their growing research experience. Students who attend the seminar are expected to participate fully, whether they are enrolled for credit or not.

Course Requirements: You are expected to complete assigned readings and related brief assignments on time, so you can participate effectively in class discussion. In addition to assigned basic readings and general participation in class discussion, you will ground your thinking throughout the semester in the study of a particular social movement or social movement organization, on which you will write your research paper. Your research topic should be selected by the third class session, in consultation with the instructor, and should include consideration of what form the seminar paper will take (a self-contained study for the course alone; a sub-section of an on-going research project; or a research proposal for a larger project to be undertaken as a thesis or dissertation). You are expected to conduct independent research (which may be documentary research, direct observation, or interviewing) on your chosen movement, and to contribute observations based on this research to class discussions. Your independent research will culminate in a research paper, which is to be submitted in a full draft for the instructor's critique in early November, presented in class near the end of the semester, and then submitted in revised, final form at the end of the semester. You will be evaluated on your contributions to class discussion and timely completion of short assignments (reading questions, topic submission, brief proposal.), and on the quality of the paper draft, seminar presentation, and final paper based on your independent research.

Texts:


Course pack available at Professional Image, 2633 S. King St. (course pack)

Other journal articles available online through UH library (online) as noted

Deadlines:

September 8 Selection of movement for independent research
September 15 Brief research paper proposal due (one page)
November 3 Research paper draft due
December 8 Final research paper due
Readings and Class Schedule

August 25. Introduction: Changing Understandings of Collective Behavior and Social Movements

September 1  Studying Social Movements and Collective Behavior
**Commit to general research topic in class (what movement, organization, or phenomenon you will study)

Readings:

September 8. Opportunities: When, How, and Why Social Movements Arise
Readings:

September 15 Mobilizing Structures I. Resource Mobilization and Political Process Models
**One page research paper proposal due at beginning of class (what you will study, how, and why)

Readings:

September 22. Mobilizing Structures II: Social Networks
Readings:


McAdam, Doug and Ronnelle Paulsen, “Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism” American Journal of Sociology 99:640-667. (online)


September 29. Framing Processes
Readings:


October 6. Collective Identity and Culture in Social Movements
Readings:


October 13. Social Movement Dynamics I: Strategies and Tactics
Readings:

McAdam, Doug, “Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency” American Sociological Review 48: 735-754. (online)


October 20 and 27 No class; instructor out of town. Use the time to prepare your research paper, and we will make up one of the sessions with an extra class during exam period.

November 3. Social Movement Dynamics II: Protest Cycles
**Draft of Research Paper due at start of class.
Readings:


Zwerman, Gilda, Patricia G. Steinhoff, and Donatella della Porta, “Disappearing Social Movements: Clandestinity in the New Left Protest Cycle in the U.S., Japan, Germany, and Italy” Mobilization, 5:1 (Spring, 2000) 83-100. (course pack)

November 10. Social Movement Dynamics III: Intra-Movement Dynamics
Readings:


**November 17. Control and Repression**

Readings:


Gillham, Patrick F. and John A. Noakes, “’More than a March in a Circle’: Transgressive Protests and the Limits of Negotiated Management” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 12 (4) 341-357. (online)


**November 24. Transnational Social Movements and Globalization**

Readings:


**December 1. Student Presentations**

**December 8. Student Presentations**

**Final Draft of Research Paper Due at beginning of class**

*We will hold an extra class during finals week to complete the student presentations*
Additional Suggested Readings on Various Topics:

Problems of Research on Social Movements

Resource Mobilization


Critiques of Resource Mobilization Theory


Political Process and Political Opportunity


Framing Processes

Culture and Collective Identity


Protest Cycles


Collective Behavior


Transnational and Global Social Movements

See also the bibliographies at the end of each reading, particularly those that are overviews of a topic.

*Mobilization: the International Quarterly Review of Social Movement Research* is the official journal of the Collective Behavior and Social Movements Section of the American Sociological Association. It is a good place to start looking for contemporary work in the field.

Some of the recent work of participants in the Collective Behavior and Social Movements Section of the American Sociological Association also appears in the book series Social Movements, Protest, and Contention, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Many of the volumes derive from conferences and workshops sponsored by the section on particular topics in social movements.

*Sociological Abstracts* provides bibliographic information and abstracts of books, journal articles, and paper presentations in the field of sociology, including good coverage of work on social movements that appears in a wide range of publication outlets. Search by a particular topic or keyword related to social movements.