

SOCI 511
Social Movements and Collective Action
Winter 2012

Wednesdays, 9:35-11:25
in Leacock 819

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30pm.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar provides an introduction to the major topics and issues in the study of social movements and contentious politics. Instead of attempting the impossible task of surveying the entire field, we will concentrate on the main theoretical approaches and assess their contributions through the discussion of in-depth case studies. We will address the following questions: What is a social movement? Why and how do people become involved in protest? How do they experience collective action? What are the forms and strategies of social protest? To what extent and how does the political-institutional and cultural context shape collective action? What role do organizations play in this process? How are coalitions formed and sustained over time? What factors contribute to the transnationalization of collective action? To what extent and how do social movements matter? We will move from the micro to the meso and macro levels.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Weekly Readings:

This is a reading-intensive course (between 100 and 200 pages a week). All students are expected to complete weekly readings so as to have a better grasp of the subject matter and participate in class discussions.

The following *required* books are available at the university bookstore and on reserve at the library:

- a) Javier Auyero, *Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition*, Duke University Press, 2003.
- b) Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- c) Maurice Pinard, *Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.

- d) Raka Ray, *Fields of Protest. Women's Movements in India*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- e) Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

I have also placed the *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* on reserve at the library; it surveys the main topics and provides good bibliographical references.

In addition to these books, there are *required* articles in PDF format that can be downloaded from the course website.

2) Class Discussion:

Insofar as this is a *seminar* rather than a lecture, class discussion will be a central element. No discussion, no class. We will not have time to discuss *every* single point of the readings. We will focus instead on the main contributions of each reading; the goal is not to do an exegesis but to compare and contrast the different theories, approaches, and findings, and assess their value added (epistemic gain and explanatory leverage). Your contribution to class discussion will be evaluated on the basis of *Participation* and *Reaction*.

2.1) Participation:

All students are expected to *attend* class regularly and *participate* in class discussions.

Participation will count for **10%** of the final course grade. If you attend all classes but do not say a word, you will not get more than 5/10 for participation.

2.2) Reaction:

All students are required to write brief weekly reactions to the readings. Comments/questions can either focus exclusively on one particular reading or compare readings and draw parallels.

Reactions should be approximately **150 word-long** and emailed to me by **6pm on Tuesday at the latest**. I will then copy and paste all Reactions on a single document and send them to the entire class. All students are expected to read everybody's Reaction before class. The first Reaction will be due on **Tuesday January 24**.

Reactions will *not* be graded. By simple virtue of sending out your Reaction *on time*, you will get 1%, for a total of **10%** of the final course grade.

3) Papers:

3.1) Review Paper:

All students are expected to write one review paper during the term. Review papers should be structured and written like a book review that one can read in academic journals (e.g., *Contemporary Sociology*) and between 750 and 1,000 word-long double-spaced (the length matters). See the Appendix at the end of the syllabus for guidelines.

B.A. students must write the review paper on *one of the five books discussed in class*. The paper must be handed in at the beginning of the class during which we are supposed to discuss the book. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

M.A. and Ph.D. students must write the review on a book of their choice not discussed in class and published within the last two years (2010 and 2011). The book must focus on social movements or contentious politics and should be related to the topic on which students are planning on writing their term paper. I will have to approve the book. Papers are due in the mailbox of the Sociology Department (Leacock 712) on **Monday February 27** (late papers will be penalized: -2% a day). Students will receive feedback on their paper so that they can improve it and send it to a journal for publication.

The Review Paper will count for **20%** of the final course grade.

3.2) Term Paper:

Each student will have to write a term paper. The latter can (1) focus on a specific social movement organization, protest event, or social movement, (2) compare two organizations, events, or movements in a single country or across countries, or (3) discuss a general theoretical issue. If your paper focuses on one of the theories or movements discussed in class, you are expected to go beyond class discussions and readings.

You must submit a one-page proposal by **February 6** and papers are due in the mailbox of the Sociology Department (Leacock 712) by Monday **April 16 before 4pm** (late papers will be penalized: -2% a day). Papers should be 20 pages, double-spaced, with 2.5cm margins.

The Term Paper will count for **60%** of the final course grade.

4) Summary:

Assignment	Percentage
Participation	10%
Reactions	10%
Review Paper	20%
Term Paper	60%
<i>Total</i>	100%

* Make sure to include references to sources in the text, even when paraphrasing. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

* In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in *English* or in *French* any written work that is to be graded.

* In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

COURSE OUTLINE

1) Overview of Course (January 11)

2) Definitions and Paradigms (January 18)

Doug McAdam. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 5-59.

Alberto Melucci. 1985. "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements." *Social Research* Vol. 52 (4): 789-816.

Craig Calhoun. 1993. "New Social Movements' of the Early Nineteenth Century." *Social Science History* Vol. 17 (3): 385-427.

David Snow. 2004. "Social Movements as Challenges to Authority: Resistance to an Emerging Conceptual Hegemony." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* Vol. 25: 3-25.

3) The Role of Emotions and Grievances (January 25)

Maurice Pinard. 2011. *Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta. 2000. "The Return of the Repressed: The Fall and Rise of Emotions in Social Movement Theory." *Mobilization* Vol. 5 (1): 65-83.

Deborah B. Gould. 2002. "Life during Wartime: Emotions and the Development of ACT UP." *Mobilization* Vol. 7 (2): 177-200.

*** First Reaction due on Tuesday January 24 before 6pm**

4) Identity, Frames, and Repertoires (February 1)

Francesca Polletta and James Jasper. 2001. "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 27: 283-305.

David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden, Robert D. Benford. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* Vol. 51 (4): 464-481.

Charles Tilly. 1993. "Contentious Repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834." *Social Science History* Vol. 17 (2): 253-280.

Marc W. Steinberg. 1998. "Tilting the Frame: Considerations on collective action framing from a discursive turn." *Theory & Society* Vol. 27: 845-872.

5) Case Study 1: Experiencing Collective Action in Argentina (February 8)

Javier Auyero. 2003. *Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition*. Duke University Press.

*** Brief presentation of Term Paper proposals in class**

6) Mobilizing Resources (February 15)

Michael Lipsky. 1968. "Protest as a Political Resource." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 62 (4): 1144-1158.

John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 82 (6): 1212-1241.

J. Craig Jenkins. 1983. "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 9: 527-553.

Marshall Ganz. 2000. "Resources and Resourcefulness: Strategic Capacity in the Unionization of California Agriculture, 1959-1966." *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 105 (4): 1003-1062.

*** February 20-24: Study Break**

*** February 27: Review Papers are due (only for M.A. and Ph.D. students)**

7) Networks and Coalitions (February 29)

Roger V. Gould. 1991. "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871." *American Sociological Review* Vol. 56 (6): 716-729.

Margaret Levi and Gillian H. Murphy. 2006. "Coalitions of Contention: The Case of the WTO Protests in Seattle." *Political Studies* Vol. 54: 651-670.

Suzanne Staggenborg. 1986. "Coalition Work in the Pro-Choice Movement: Organizational and Environmental Opportunities and Obstacles." *Social Problems* Vol. 33 (5): 374-390.

8) Political Opportunity Structures and Fields (March 7)

David Meyer. 2004. "Protest and Political Opportunities." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 30: 125-45.

Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper. 1999. "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory." *Sociological Forum* Vol. 14 (1): 27-54.

Elizabeth Armstrong and Mary Bernstein. 2008. "Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements." *Sociological Theory* Vol. 26 (1): 74-99.

Marcos Ancelovici. 2011. "Bourdieu Meets McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly: Toward a Field Theory of Contentious Politics." Unpublished Manuscript, Department of Sociology, McGill University.

Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam. 2011. "Toward a General Theory of Strategic Action Fields." *Sociological Theory* Vol. 29 (1): 1-26.

9) Case Study 2: The Civil Rights Movement (March 14)

Doug McAdam. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 65-234.

** March 21: Class Cancelled*

10) Case Study 3: The Indian Women's Movement (March 28)

Raka Ray. 1999. *Fields of Protest. Women's Movements in India*. University of Minnesota Press.

11) Mobilization Beyond Borders (April 4)

Sidney Tarrow. 2005. *The New Transnational Activism*. Cambridge University Press.

12) Social Movement Outcomes (April 11)

Marco G. Giugni. 1998. "Was It Worth the Effort? The Outcomes and Consequences of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 24: 371-393.

Mario Diani. 1997. "Social Movements and Social Capital: A Network Perspective on Movement Outcomes." *Mobilization* Vol. 2 (2): 129-147.

APPENDIX: Guidelines for Review Paper¹

Reviews provide an opportunity to survey in a systematic way a book in which you are interested.

Every non-fiction book has certain architecture. A large argument is based upon the coherent linking together of several smaller arguments, each of which is argued through the exposition of some empirical findings that support the point.

As you read, you should bear in mind four things:

1. What is the really big argument that the author is trying to make?
2. What are the smaller arguments that the author claims add up to the big argument? Are you convinced that the big picture is equal to the sum of these smaller arguments?
3. What types of evidence does the author provide to demonstrate his/her thesis? Are you convinced these data really prove the points claimed for them? Could you make a different point with the same data?
4. On what assumptions and paradigms does the author build? Where does he/she stand in current debates?

Here is a *potential* structure for the paper:

1. Introductory paragraph. What is at stake here? Locate the work and the author in bigger debates and controversies.
2. Get to the point right away (about 1-2 paragraphs). What is the big point and why should we care? Quite often, the author of the book will tell you why they think you should care. If you are convinced, you can use their reasoning.
3. What are the smaller arguments that compose the book and the evidence that the author uses to make his/her case? (3-4 paragraphs). Enumerate them in a way that the reader can follow the plan of the book, but avoid a lengthy blow-by-blow account of its contents (such as: Chap. 1 covers A; Chap. 2 covers B; etc.). Present them in a way that the author would find fair.
4. Does it add up for you? (3 paragraphs). Are you convinced? State your criticism clearly and honestly (certainly do not be embarrassed to be critical), but try to remember that someone worked hard on this book. Avoid personal attacks and trivial polemics; be constructive.
5. Concluding paragraph. Here you can exit by returning to the biggest issues that are at stake and highlight the main contribution(s) of the book. Avoid ending with empty recommendations (e.g., "More research is needed..." or "I recommend this book to people who like books").

¹ Thanks to Eran Shor for suggestions.