

SOCIAL ISSUES AND MOVEMENTS

Instructor: Leontina Hormel

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What are social movements? Why do they happen? What keeps them going? Why do some social movements disintegrate? Who gets involved in social movements? How do media affect the public's perception of social movements? How do social movements try to portray themselves? (Do they care?)

These are among the many questions that social theorists grapple with when examining the rise and fall of social movements. We will acquaint ourselves with some of theoretical perspectives posed by academics in this topic. Over the term, we will grapple with how movements mobilize people into action. We will consider the pros and cons of spontaneous (disruptive) movements versus the formalization of movements. Questions will arise over what types of strategies seem most effective in "getting the word out" to the public. For instance, is it more effective to deface property rather than to rely on pacifism? We will also look at the decline of popular movements and whether such decline can be avoided. The anti-globalization movement will be central to our discussions, although other movements will be discussed in relation to our readings; such as, labor, civil rights, right wing, feminist, environmental, and gay-lesbian.

Besides learning the "academic" approach to the above questions, this course strives to link the boundary between theory and practice. Students will have the opportunity to make use of various course themes by participating in a group project. The goal of this group project is to make each student think about the necessary steps toward organizing an effective movement around her/his concerns. However, most importantly, the project is an opportunity to learn how to communicate and coordinate with others- a crucial skill if one is to effectively participate in any social movement.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Text: (the only text you are required to purchase for this course.)

Kuumba, M. Bahati. 2001. *Gender and Social Movements*. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press.

Remaining readings will be on electronic reserve, and are not available as hard copy at the reserve library (the library policy does not allow for both forms). Thus, try to read ahead so that you have time to pull up the readings, print, and read. **To log on to e-reserves: username = "spring04"; password = "daisy"**

Please use Blackboard as a discussion tool in this course. We encourage lots of student interaction.

GRADING:

The best thing you can do to maintain a good grade in this course is to keep up with the readings. Reading assignments generally will not exceed 100 pages per week. **Note:** There will be no final exam in this course and no assignments due during finals week.

Group Project (30 %): Students will be placed in groups by the beginning of the second day of the term. These groups will work together, in and outside of class, during the term. Groups will be required to choose a social issue and to organize a movement around that issue. In order to complete this project, groups will need to,

- * define their movement's social issue(s)
- * name and define their group's purpose and goal as it relates to the above issue(s)
- * develop literature/brochures that could be distributed to the community (substantiating these ideas through research of literature and with community organizations)
- * develop symbols and slogans that can be associated with the group's movement
- * develop an itinerary of events that the group's movement could initiate in order to disseminate their message and to mobilize membership
- * present the above ideas and materials before the class by the end of the term
- * each group member must submit a 2-page project summary (This will be described later in the term, and is the only element of the group project that will be graded according to individual effort - excluding level of participation.)

During the last 2 weeks of the term (**May 25th, May 27th, June 1st, June 3rd**), each group will introduce their movement's purpose and goals before the class. Groups will need to submit a packet of all written materials to me for evaluation. Note: Please inform me of any difficulties that arise within your group (for instance, if a group member is not contributing to the group project). Groups will be given opportunities to meet in class each week in order to plan the tasks listed above.

2 Short Essay Assignments (20% each): Students will be assigned two essays (typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins) over the term. Both essays will be assigned at least one week before they are due, and specific instructions will be discussed at this time. Assignments will be due on the following dates: **May 18th and June 4th**. Essay topics will test students' understanding of the course readings, lectures, discussions and group projects. Late essays will only be accepted if I approve it in advance. All late essays that have not been approved in advance will be automatically marked down one grade for each day following the due date.

Participation (30%): Because discussion and group participation are integral to fulfilling course expectations, students will be graded on their level of participation. Participation will be graded in various ways:

- * oral discussion in class
- * in-class assignments (mainly in relation to the group project)
- * additional newspaper and magazine articles related to the course that are brought in by students

Note: Daily attendance will not be taken in this class, however, it will be taken during each discussion session for the group projects and during any in-class assignments. Attendance is mandatory during weeks 9 and 10 for group presentations. Group project grades for individual students will be significantly reduced for regular absence from group meetings in and outside of class. If you are facing a heavy workload this term, I urge you to reconsider if you can meet the rigorous time commitments expected in this course.

Class Conduct

The subject matter in sociology courses tends to be sensitive, since it usually challenges some aspect of our personal experiences. This course is no exception. I encourage students to be open about their thoughts related to course materials and to ask questions. In doing so, please remember that not everyone in the room may agree with you and that it is best to express respect for differing viewpoints. Members in our class are also asked to speak personally with me or Donna if there is a sense of intimidation or disrespect within the classroom.

Please also be aware that students are expected to follow the guidelines below. Because this is a large class setting in which mild incidents can be rather disruptive, I will be enforcing these as strictly as possible. If any individual repeatedly ignores these guidelines, s/he will be told to leave the class for that day.

- Doors will be closed 5 minutes in to the class period. If you arrive and the doors are closed, then it is too late to attend class. Please talk with me if you have schedule conflicts.
- Unless I am notified before class, students may not leave class early.
- Turn off cell phones and any other portable electronics (i.e., radios, cd players, headphones) during the class period. If you are waiting for an important call, please let me know before class.
- It is not acceptable to read newspapers and other materials during class that are not related to the course.
- Always treat class members (students and instructors) with respect. Please do not talk with neighbors during lectures and discussions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (March 31 and April 1):

Tuesday

- Introduction to course expectations
- Connecting personal biography to social issues

Thursday

- What are social movements?
- First meeting with student groups: any shared identities and interests?

Week Two (April 6 and April 8)

Reading: M. Bahati Kuumba, Chapter One "The Social Movement as Gendered Terrain", pp. 1-22

Tuesday

- Social Issues: i.e., International Systems of Inequality (Why the World Bank, IMF, WTO and FTAA?)
- Kuumba: Gendered Mode of Analysis
- Brief group meeting: How are you going to deal with inequality within your group? How do group members feel about the issues of inequality raised in lecture today?

Thursday

- Film, "The Fourth World War"
- Students record reasons behind the international anti-globalization movements. Write down areas in the film that are unclear. Why do the film's creators call this "The Fourth World War"? Prepare notes (for your own use) over weekend for discussion on Tuesday.

Week Three (April 13 and April 15)

Reading: Smelser, Chapter 3, "Structural Strain Underlying Collective Behavior", Chapter 4, "The Nature of Collective Behavior" - **e-reserves**

Tuesday

- Social Issues: Discussion about the Fourth World War
- Lecture: Historical discussions of collective behavior: Adam Smith, Karl Marx, the V.I. Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg debate
- Lecture: Smelser's approach to collective behavior: a reaction to structural strain

Thursday

- Lecture: Smelser continued...
- Discussion: How would Smelser talk about the anti-globalization movement?
- Group meeting: Have we agreed upon a social issue (or issues) that we would like to mobilize around? If so, does each one of us have a coherent understanding about these issues? Where are the gaps? What is our course of action for learning (researching) more about this issue (or issues)? (If no consensus exists regarding shared social concerns, be sure to notify your group's organizing counselor - Donna or Leontina.)

Week Four (April 20 and April 22)

Reading: 1. John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory" - **link to reading available on Blackboard**
2. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Chapter 3, "The Industrial Workers' Movement" - **e-reserves**

Tuesday

- Lecture: Resource Mobilization Theory
- Discussion: How is Resource Mobilization different from Collective Behavior approach?

Thursday

Week Five (April 27 and April 29)

Reading:

Tuesday

Thursday

Week Six (May 4 and May 6)

Reading:

Tuesday

Thursday

Week Seven (May 11 and May 13)

Reading:

Tuesday

Thursday

Week Eight (May 18 and May 20)

Tuesday

- **ESSAY ONE DUE**

Thursday

Week Nine (May 25 and May 27)

Tuesday

- **SOCIAL MOVEMENT PRESENTATIONS BEGIN, mandatory attendance**

Thursday

- **SOCIAL MOVEMENT PRESENTATIONS, mandatory attendance**

Week Ten (June 1 and June 3)

Tuesday

- **SOCIAL MOVEMENT PRESENTATIONS, mandatory attendance**

Thursday

- **SOCIAL MOVEMENT PRESENTATIONS END, mandatory attendance**

Friday

- **ESSAY TWO DUE FROM 3 P.M. TO 5 P.M. AT MY OFFICE: 623 PLC, LATE PAPERS WILL BE REDUCED BY AN ENTIRE GRADE FOR EACH DAY LATE (NO ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9)**