I. Course Description

This course will examine the role that social movements play in political life from a comparative perspective. We will consider the major theories that have been developed to explain social movement behavior at both the domestic and international levels. We will also consider a range of empirical cases, both historical and contemporary, that will inform our search for answers to several key questions, including:

* What are social movements, and how do they differ from other forms of political participation?
* Why do people join social movements?
* When are movements most likely to form?
* How do movements choose their tactics and strategies?
* Under what conditions are movements most likely to become socially and politically influential?

Throughout, we will investigate the major debates that characterize this field of study as well as the methodological tools commonly used by social movement scholars. By the end of the course, students will have sufficient introduction to the core theoretical literature and several important case studies to prepare them for further independent research in this area.

II. Course Materials

There are three required texts for the course. All are on order at the Carleton bookstore, and should be easy to find through on-line bookstores.


I have also ordered a limited number of copies of James C. Scott’s *Weapons of the Weak* for the bookstore. The purchase of this text is optional. We will supplement these books with additional readings from other sources, including journal articles and manuscripts in progress. These will be made available via the course’s Moodle site.

III. Requirements and Expectations

Your grade in the class will be based on the following assignments:

1. Participation 150 points
2. Take-home midterm 200 points
3. Research design 100 points
4. Argument/outline 100 points
5. Paper discussant 100 points
6. Final paper 350 points

1. Participation. This course will be run like a seminar, which means that there will be limited lecturing and a great deal of discussion. To work successfully, a seminar requires all students to (a) come to class having done all the readings carefully and critically, and (b) be ready to engage in thoughtful conversation about this material.

As part of the participation grade, students will each take a turn as the “discussion leader” once during the term. The discussion leader will be tasked with preparing several questions based on the readings to start our conversations in class. These questions should focus on sparking debate or discussion by highlighting key controversies, confusions, or interesting insights from the readings. Students will sign up for their turn as discussion leader on a first-come, first-served basis.

2. Take-home midterm. The midterm will assess students’ grasp of the theoretical material in the beginning part of the course. The questions will be handed out at the end of class on Thursday, April 26 and the completed midterm will be due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, May 1. The midterm will consist of four questions, of which students must answer two. The finished product should be no longer than eight double-spaced pages, with proper citations and bibliography. While students are free to consult their notes and readings when answering the questions, they should NOT collaborate with other students on any part of the midterm.

3. Final paper and preparation. For the final assignment, you will write a 20 page, double-spaced research paper on a topic of your own choosing. To ensure that you have sufficient time and preparation for this paper, you will also be required to complete several intermediate steps throughout the term:

   a. Approval of paper topic (0 points). You should plan to meet with me no later than the end of week three (e.g., April 12) in order to discuss possible paper topics. In order to proceed with your research, you must get either verbal or written approval from me.

   b. Research design (100 points). Once you have an approved topic, you should begin with a literature search to familiarize yourself with the theoretical and empirical
resources available, as well as the state of current scholarship on your chosen issue. This background will help you ground your question in existing theory as well as enable you to decide what information you will be able to get from secondary sources and what data you will need to obtain yourself.

The research design will be a summary of this preparation. In a paper of approximately 6-8 double-spaced pages, you should identify: (a) your research question; (b) why this question is important (e.g., why should we care about answering this question? What's at stake?); (c) the state of existing knowledge on the question and where that knowledge is lacking (e.g., a small literature review); (d) your proposed plan for answering the question, including a discussion of your chosen methods and sources of data; (e) an assessment of potential difficulties or obstacles that you might encounter in acquiring or analyzing your data. PLEASE NOTE: At this point in the research process, you are not expected to have an argument or answer to your question — only a sense of how you want to go about doing the necessary research to provide an argument/answer. This paper is due on April 26th.

c. Argument/Outline (100 points). After you have spent some time doing research on your topic, you will start to develop a tentative answer to your original question. For this paper, you will turn in a rough-draft of your core thesis as well as a tentative outline of your paper. This assignment will help me assess whether your argument has an appropriate level of specificity and concreteness, and will also help me troubleshoot any organizational issues in your proposed outline. This assignment should be no more than three double-spaced pages, and is due on May 10th.

d. Rough draft (0 points). With the feedback you receive from the above two assignments, you will be asked to prepare a full rough draft in time for our in-class mini-conference. The rough draft should be, for all intensive purposes, a complete version of your paper, though it is expected that it will not be a final, polished draft — sections may still be underdeveloped and in need of extensive revisions. Depending on your placement in the schedule of mini-conference presentations, this draft will be due in class on either May 22nd, May 24th, or May 29th.

e. Final draft (350 points). The final version of your research paper will be due into Moodle by 5pm on the last day of exams (June 4th). LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. Paper discussant. At the end of the term, we will hold an in-class mini-conference during which all students will present their research papers in progress. Each student will be assigned a student peer-reviewer who will read his/her rough draft and prepare comments and suggestions to be delivered in class. During the conference, each discussant will have 10 minutes to (a) present a quick summary of the paper, including the core question, the argument, and the evidence used in the analysis, and (b) present feedback, pose questions, or probe the reasoning/analysis of the paper. All discussants should also bring with them their marked-up version of the papers, including written versions of their key questions/comments/suggestions to give to the paper’s author. Discussants will be evaluated on their presentation of comments and the quality of their written feedback.
IV. Course Policies

• Policy on late papers: Papers are due on the dates specified above. Late work will not be accepted. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time due to illness, you can get an extension provided you can furnish a note from a doctor or the Wellness Center.

• Policy on attendance and preparation: Attendance is required, and you are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. However, if you need to miss class for some reason, it is your responsibility to get notes from your fellow classmates and, if needed, come to office hours to go over any questions that you may have.

• Policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty: Both are serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. To avoid any semblance of impropriety, please take pains to cite your sources correctly. You are also strongly encouraged to keep any outlines or rough drafts of your papers to document the evolution of your work.

For more information on Carleton’s policy on academic honesty, please consult http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/handbook/academic_regs/?policy_id=21359

• Policy on special needs: If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or learning disability, please come see me during the first week of class to discuss how I might best assist you in meeting the objectives and requirements of this course.

V. Schedule of Readings

The readings for this class come from a variety of sources. For all the assigned readings, you should pay attention to the core theoretical argument being made as well as the methodologies and evidence used to support that argument. Think critically not only about the author’s claims, but how the author chose to verify those claims. Readings on Moodle are noted as [M].

In addition to the required readings for each day, I have also listed a small number of optional readings for those who would like to read more on a particular issue or topic.

Tuesday, March 27 Introduction: Why study social movements?

Optional (but recommended):
* For some background on the historical development of movements, read Tarrow, PIM, ch. 2-4.
* For a very brief overview/preview of many of the course topics, read Meyer, PP, ch. 2

I. Mobilization: When and how do social movements form?

Thursday, March 29—Recruitment and the collective action problem

* Mancur Olson, The Collective Action Problem, introduction & chapter 1 [M]
  (don’t get bogged down by the equations – read for the general argument)
* Edward J. Walsh and Rex Warland (1983). “Social Movement Involvement in the Wake of
  A Nuclear Accident: Activists and Free Riders in TNI Area.” American Sociological Review
  48: 764-780. [M]

Additional Readings:
* Denton E. Morrison (1971). “Some Notes Toward Theory on Relative Deprivation, Social
  703-722. MS 174-189
  Theory of the Critical Mass. III.” American Sociological Review, Volume 53, Number 1,
* Pamela Oliver. "If You Don't Do It, Nobody Else Will: Active and Token Contributors to
  Local Collective Action." American Sociological Review, Volume 49, Number 5, pages

Tuesday, April 3—Ways of overcoming the collective action problem

* Reader, ch. 15-16
  [M]
* Doug McAdam and Ronnelle Paulsen (1993). "Specifying the Relationship Between Social
* Dingzin Zhao (1998). "Ecologies of Social Movements: Student Mobilization during the
  1989 Prodemocracy Movement in Beijing." American Journal of Sociology, 103(6): 1493-
  1529. [M]

Additional Readings:
  Organizations: Italian Left-Wing Terrorism.” International Social Movement Research 1:
  155-169
  Movement Organizations: Agency, Strategy, and Organization in the Movement against
Thursday, April 5—Social movement participants: who joins and why?

* Meyer, PP, ch. 3
* Reader, ch. 6-8

Additional Readings:

Tuesday, April 10—Political opportunity structures and protest cycles

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 5
* Reader, ch. 5, 25

Additional Readings:
II. Operations: How do social movements function?

Tuesday, April 17—Organizational forms and their importance

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 8
* Meyer, PP, ch. 4
* Reader, ch. 26
* Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1977). Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail, selections [M]

Additional Readings:

Thursday, April 19—Movement messages and framing

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 7

Additional Readings:

Tuesday, April 24—Movements and the media

* Meyer, PP, ch. 5
Additional Readings:


Thursday, April 26—Tactical choices, diffusion, and innovation

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 6
* Meyer, PP, ch. 6
* Reader, ch. 20-21

Additional Readings:


Tuesday, May 1—Violence and non-violence

* Martin Luther King, Jr, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” [M]

Additional Readings:

Thursday, May 3—Protest under duress

* James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, selections [M]

III. Movement and Others: Locating movements in a wider political context

Tuesday, May 8—State responses: repression and co-optation

* Meyer, PP, ch. 7

Additional Reading:


Thursday, May 10—Coalitions and counter-movements


Additional Reading:

Tuesday, May 15—Transnational protest

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 11

Additional Reading:

IV. Movements and Outcomes: Do Movements Make a Difference?

Thursday, May 17—Influence and political change

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 10
* Meyer, PP, ch. 9
* Reader, ch. 31

Additional reading:
Tuesday, May 22—Movement change, transformation, and decline

* Tarrow, PIM, ch. 9
* Reader, ch. 12, 29

Additional Readings:


VII. Mini-Conference

Thursday, May 24 Paper presentations
Tuesday, May 29 Paper presentations
Thursday, May 31 Paper presentations