

POSC 358: Comparative Social Movements

Carleton College, Winter 2009



Professor Devashree Gupta
404 Willis Hall
507.222.4681 (office)
dgupta@carleton.edu

Winter Office hours:
Tuesdays 1:00-4:00pm
Wednesdays 11:00-2:00pm

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 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 some of the methodological tools commonly used by social movement scholars. We will also try to bridge the world of theory and practice in a limited way by observing and even participating in real-life movements. By the end of the course, students will have an overview of the core theoretical and empirical debates in the field as well as a base of knowledge that will prepare them for further independent research in this area.

Course Materials

There are three required texts for the course. All should be available at the Carleton bookstore, and should be easy to find on-line as well. All other readings will be available on Moodle.

Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement, 2nd edition (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

James Jasper, The Art of Moral Protest. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Randy Shaw, The Activist's Handbook. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be based on four elements, which will be weighted as follows:

Participation	15%
Reaction papers	20% (2 @ 10% each)
Online journal and presentation	30%
<u>Final paper</u>	<u>35%</u>
Total	100%

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 (1) come to class having done all the readings carefully and critically, and (2) be ready to engage in thoughtful conversations about this material. Please note that attentiveness alone will not be enough to earn you a good participation grade. If you have difficulty speaking in class, please come see me sooner rather than later so that we can discuss possible strategies so you are not surprised by your grade at the end of the term! Unexcused absences, habitual lateness to class, inattentiveness, and disruptive or discourteous behavior during discussion can lower your participation grade, in some cases, precipitously.

As part of the participation grade, students will take turns serving as discussion leaders. Discussion leaders will be responsible for helping guide discussions and raising thoughtful questions that can help us address key controversies, confusions, or interesting insights from the readings. Discussion leaders should prepare a list of 3-5 questions, which should be emailed to me no later than 10pm the day before class.

Reaction papers. Reaction papers (2-3 double-spaced pages) are a chance for you to critique the arguments put forward in some of the assigned readings. They are not article or chapter summaries, though the very first paragraph should briefly review the main ideas that the authors advance. The remainder of the response paper should involve your critical reactions and reflections on the piece, its strengths and its weaknesses. You might want to consider the following kinds of questions as you write these response papers: what is the quality of the evidence presented? Are the assumptions or logical arguments defensible? How do the arguments fit in with other theories or arguments we have encountered in class? Are there conflicting points of view or claims, and if so, which have more merit? Is there a way to reconcile such conflicts? Has the argument changed the way you think about the issue? Please note: there is no possible way you can entertain all of these questions in such a short paper! Use the above prompts to guide your thinking about the piece, even if you don't address all of them in your writing.

Readings that are eligible for response are indicated with an asterisk. You may choose any two readings that are of interest to you; however, you are not permitted to choose readings that are from the day you serve as discussion leader. Papers are due in class on the day when that reading is assigned. Late papers will not be accepted; if you are unable to turn in a response paper on a given day, you will have to choose another reading later in the course.

Online journal. Over the course of the term, you will work in small groups to try your hand at organizing your very own social movement. This is a term-long project that will require you to work together to think about a whole range of issues, including how to recruit supporters, devise an

effective communications strategy, evaluate possible tactics, etc. The exercise is intended to help bridge theory and practice by giving you the chance to engage in the real work of grassroots activism.

The online journal exercise is a chance for you each to update me and the rest of the class about your efforts, to think about the connections between what we are reading and talking about in class with your work as an organizer, and to reflect on your own experiences. Each group will maintain a collective blog about their chosen movement and event; throughout the term, group members will post about their activities. Each individual is expected to post a minimum of five times throughout the term, and each post should be a minimum of 400 words. You may individually choose when to post, though (a) each group should make sure there is at least one update each week, and (b) you may not post more than two blog posts in any single week. Your grade for the online journal will be individual, based only on your own entries. Additionally, at the conclusion of your foray into activism, each group will briefly present on their movement and event to the rest of the class. The journal entries will be worth 25% of your overall grade; the in-class presentation will be worth 5%. Further instructions about these components, and the expectations for your organizing activities, will be handed out in class during the second week.

Final paper. The final written assignment consists of a 15-20 page (double-spaced) research paper on a topic of your own choosing. For those of you who intend to write a comps project based on this class, this paper will serve as the foundation for this larger research project. In order to help you pace out the work, I have set a series of interim deadlines:

Tuesday, January 27	Approval of paper topic (you MUST meet with me before this date to discuss your paper topic. You should not proceed with your research without verbal or written approval.)
Thursday, February 5	Literature review and initial bibliography (worth 5% of your grade)
Thursday, February 19	Optional: paper outline
Thursday, February 26	Complete or nearly complete paper draft
Tuesday, March 3	Peer review comments (worth 5% of your grade)
Tuesday, March 10	Final draft (worth 25% of your grade)

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to come to class regularly and on time. If you are unable to attend due to illness or some other personal matter, you should notify me by email in advance. A pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness will lower your participation grade. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to see me in office hours or to get notes from a classmate. Emailing me and asking “did I miss anything?” is not an acceptable substitute.

Policy on Late Work

Late work will incur a penalty of 1/3 grade per day unless documentation of extenuating circumstances (ill health, family emergency) is provided. Make a note: technology is heartless. Computers crash, printers jam, and files occasionally disappear from disks. It is your responsibility to

plan ahead, to make back-ups of your work, and to leave yourself sufficient time to compensate for mishaps. Technological difficulties will not excuse late work!

Policy on Extensions

Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances involving unforeseen complications or obstacles. Simply having three papers due in a week is not grounds for an extension. You already have information on all the assignments that have fixed due dates. This should be sufficient time for you to plan ahead and manage your workload accordingly.

Policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Both are serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment and will have the case referred to the Dean's Office for further investigation and possible disciplinary action. 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.

Schedule of Readings

The assigned readings come from a variety of sources, though most scholarship is published in either political science or sociology journals. Some of these pieces are more theoretical while others are more empirical; some are going to be a bit dense while others will be fairly approachable. Regardless, it is your responsibility to take each one seriously and read it with care to understand the author's main arguments. Changes to the syllabus, if needed, will be announced in class and posted on Moodle.

(M) = available on Moodle

** = eligible for a response paper

1. Introduction to social movements

January 6—Definitions, history, evolution, and typologies

- No required readings. Instead, familiarize yourself with the syllabus, course requirements, and Moodle. Flip through the required texts and take a look at their tables of content
- OPTIONAL (but recommended): for some background on the historical development of movements, read Tarrow, PIM, ch. 2-4

January 8—Participation and the collective action problem

- Mancur Olson, The Collective Action Problem, Introduction and ch. 1. (M)** *Note: don't get bogged down by the equations. Read for his 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)**

2. Recruitment to activism—why, where, when, and how?

January 13—Organizational factors and networks

- Bert Klandermans (1993). "A Theoretical Framework for Comparisons of Social Movement Participation." Sociological Forum, 8(3): 383-402. (M)**
- Doug McAdam and Ronnelle Paulson (1993). "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism." American Journal of Sociology, 99: 640-667. (M)**

January 15—Social and structural factors

- Eric L. Hirsh (1990). "Sacrifice for the Cause: Group Processes, Recruitment, and Commitment in a Student Social Movement." American Sociological Review, 55: 243-254. (M)**
- Darren E. Sherkat and T. Jean Blocker (1994). "The Political Development of Sixties' Activists: Identifying the Influence of Class, Gender, and Socialization on Protest Participation." Social Forces, 72(3): 21-842. (M)**

January 20—Cultural and personal factors

- Jasper, AMP, ch. 5, 7-9**

3. Social Movement Organization and Strategy

January 22—Organizational Dynamics and Governance

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 8
- Shaw, AH, ch. 3
- Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1977). Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail, selections. (M)**

January 27—Framing

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 7
- Robert Benford (1993). "Frame Disputes within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement." Social Forces, 71: 677-702. (M)**

January 29—Movements and the Media

- Shaw, AH, ch. 5
- William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld (1993). "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 528: 114-125. (M)**
- Vincent J. Roscigno and William F. Danaher (2001). "Media and Mobilization: The Case of Radio and Southern Textile Workers Insurgency, 1929-1934." American Sociological Review, 66(1): 21-48. (M)**

February 3—Contexts and Geographies

- 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)**
- Joel Stillerman (2002). "Space, Strategies, and Alliances in Mobilization: The 1960 Metalworkers' and Coal Miners' Strike in Chile." Mobilization, 8(1): 65-85. (M)**

February 5—FIELD TRIP! (Tentative; details to follow)

February 10—Tactics

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 6
- Jasper, AMP, ch. 10, 11**
- Shaw, AH, ch. 1, 7**

February 12—Violence and non-violence

- James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak, selections. (M)**
- Gay Seidman (2001). "Guerrillas in their Midst: Armed Struggle in the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement." Mobilization, 6(2): 111-127. (M)**

4. Locating Movement in a Broader Environment

February 17—Political Opportunity Structures

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 5**
- Cathy Schneider (1997). "Framing Puerto Rican Identity: Political Opportunity Structures and Neighborhood Organizing in New York City." Mobilization, 2(2): 227-245. (M)**

February 19—Movements and the State

- Shaw, AH, ch. 2**
- Jasper, AMP, ch. 13
- Jennifer Earl (2003). "Tanks, Tear Gas, and Taxes: Towards a Theory of Movement Repression." Sociological Theory, 21(1): 44-68. (M)**

February 24—Movements and Countermovements

- David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg (1996). "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity." American Journal of Sociology, 101(6): 1628-1660. (M)**
- James Jasper and Jane Poulsen (1993). "Fighting Back: Vulnerabilities, Blunders, and Countermobilization by the Targets in Three Animal Rights Campaigns." Sociological Forum, 8: 639-657. (M)**

February 26—Protest Cycles

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 9

March 3—Movement Outcomes

- Tarrow, PIM, ch. 10

March 5—In-class presentations

March 10—Wrap-up and concluding thoughts