

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Sociology 27—Spring 2015

(Gen Ed Credit for *US and the World*)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Emerson 105

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

Social movements have long been driving forces behind political, social, and cultural change. From the Civil Rights movement of the 60s to the recent "Arab Spring," the extraordinary mobilization of ordinary people is routinely credited with fundamentally re-shaping societal institutions--the polity, the economy, religion, gender, race, and even the environment. But can we really define and study something as ephemeral as social mobilization? Do we know how social movements begin? Why might they become revolutionary? When and how are they likely to make a difference in the societies they target? This course examines these questions within the sociological literature on collective action. Theories of social movements are applied to a series of case studies around the globe including Iran, El Salvador, Chile, and Nigeria, among others. We will pay particular attention to US mobilizations, including recent movements like the Tea Party, Occupy, and Black Lives Matter. Students will be required to apply course readings to the collective action case of their choosing throughout the semester; this may be a movement they are reading about, or a movement in which they are actively participating.

This course meets three times per week. Twice a week we come together as a full class for lectures; once a week we break into smaller groups for section discussions. Sections will be scheduled after shopping period has ended.

***Please note: This class is a Gen Ed course in the "US and the World" category.***

## COURSE GOALS

We have two goals for scholars in this course. First, we want scholars to gain a solid understanding of social movement theory. To achieve this goal, we will guide scholars through the "big ideas" in social movement analyses, from resource mobilization theories, through political process models, to the cultural turn, and beyond. These theories will be introduced in lecture, and will be regularly demonstrated with case studies. Second, we want scholars to learn how to apply social movement theory to a particular case of social mobilization. To achieve this goal, section leaders will support scholars in identifying, investigating, and theorizing a case that is of particular interest to them.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lecture Participation:

Scholars are introduced to social movement theories in lecture. Scholars are expected to attend every class, read the assigned books prior to class, and participate intelligently in class discussions.

### Section Participation:

Scholars will learn to apply social movement theory to specific cases in their weekly section. This will be accomplished in two ways.

First, scholars will practice applying social movement theories to the case study books assigned for each course segment. These are the same books that you will be writing about for your theory essays.

Second, each scholar will select a specific social movement to analyze in section across the course of the semester. Scholars may work alone, or in small groups as approved by their section instructor. Scholars will collect, analyze, and evaluate primary or secondary data about their chosen movement. Scholars will also be required to regularly discuss their case study—and how existing theories may or may not help them understand this case—in section. This collaborative process will not only help scholars access and organize more information about their case than they could alone, but they will also come to understand that good scholarship is almost always a collaborative process, and that ideas are sharpened and creativity is heightened through interaction with others.

Section participation is graded on attendance, intelligent participation in class discussions (especially scholars' active participation in "workshopping" the cases of other students), independent analysis of scholars' case studies, and performance on weekly memos as assigned by the section instructors.

### Section "Workshopping":

Each scholar will use the information they independently gather and analyze to "workshop" their case once over the course of the semester. "Workshopping" can be thought of as a presentation in section with an emphasis on soliciting feedback rather than lecturing peers. When workshopping their case, scholars should first tell the rest of the class about their case study, and second discuss whether and how the theories they've analyzed in lecture can help them understand their case. Scholars are not expected to have all the answers when workshopping their cases; sometimes, the best workshops arise because the presenter(s) just asked marvelous questions! The date of each "workshop" will be determined in consultation with your section instructor. Workshops will be scheduled per case, not per person. In other words, if you are working on your case study as a group, then you will only need to do one workshop for the entire group.

### Two Theory Essays:

This course is divided into three theoretical "segments." At the end of each theoretical segment, scholars will be assigned a short (2-5 page) essay assignment that applies the theories presented in lecture to the "case study" books for that segment. Scholars must answer the essay question for *only two of the three course segments*. Each theory essay question will be handed out in lecture one week before it is due. *We will only grade the first two essays turned in*; scholars may not

answer all three essays with the hope of choosing the best two grades for their final course grade.  
**Please note: late theory essays will NOT be accepted.**

### Take-home Final Exam:

The most important assignment of the semester is a **take-home final exam, due Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.** In this final exam, scholars are asked to independently apply social movement theories to different aspects of the case they have been studying all semester long. If scholars actively read, engage in course discussions, and complete their case study research all semester long, then they will be well prepared to excel on the final exam.

Specific directions for each assignment will be handed out in class.

### **GRADING**

Final course grades are assigned according to the following distribution:

Lecture Participation	5%
Section Participation (including weekly memos)	20%
Section “Workshopping”	5%
Two Theory Essays (out of 3 options)	30%
Final Take-home Exam	40%

### **READINGS**

Please purchase or borrow the following six texts for use in this course:

1. Kurzman, Charles. 2005. *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*. Harvard University Press.
2. Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod. 1999. *Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest inside the Church and Military*. Princeton University Press.
3. Bail, Christopher. 2014. *Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream*. Princeton University Press.
4. Viterna, Jocelyn. 2013. *Women in War: The Micro-level Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford University Press.
5. Bob, Clifford. 2005. *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Eliasoph, Nina. 2013. *The Politics of Volunteering*. Polity Press.

The above six books are the only readings required of you this semester.

Optional Lecture Articles: For each weeks’ lecture topics, we will upload the articles on which the lecture is based to the course iSite under the heading “supplemental readings.” You *may* reference these readings if you believe it would help you better understand the lecture information, and better

prepare for your section work and theory essays. However, you are *not* required to read the on-line articles.

## **ORGANIZATION OF LECTURE**

The semester is divided into six segments, each which reviews a major theoretical approach to social movement scholarship. They are:

- Macro-level theories
- Meso-level theories
- Cultural theories
- Micro-level theories
- Transnational theories
- Protesting, Volunteering, and Activism

Scholars will read one book for each segment, or six books total. At the end of every two segments, scholars will have the opportunity to answer an essay question in which they are to apply the theories from lecture to the case studies presented in the two books corresponding to the segment. Scholars must answer two (and only two) of the three theory questions provided.

We believe that scholars learn best through *using* theory, rather than just *reading about it*. We have therefore purposefully kept the assigned readings in this course to a minimum. Scholars are expected to begin reading the assigned “case study” book at the beginning of each segment, and to finish that book prior to its discussion on the last day of that segment (specific dates can be found on the course schedule, below). We do *not* ask scholars to read the theory articles that are reviewed in the lecture, because we expect that they will spend their extra time independently researching their chosen case. However, if scholars find that they are struggling to understand some particular component of the theory as presented in lecture, they may always access the documents on which the lecture is based through the course iSite. These documents are listed as “supplementary” readings.

Lectures are interactive and require scholars to engage with the day’s topic

## **ORGANIZATION OF SECTIONS**

Sections provide scholars with the opportunity to critically engage social movement theories by applying them to a case study of their choosing. During the first few weeks of section, instructors will help each scholar choose a case of particular interest to him/her. Scholars may work on a case individually, or they may “team up” in small groups to research the same case.

Next, instructors will help scholars learn how to best investigate their chosen case using both academic analyses and media reports. At least one week will be dedicated exclusively to learning how to efficiently conduct research through the Harvard library system.

In the remaining weeks of section, scholars will take turns “workshopping” some aspect of their case with the rest of the class. This means that a scholar will briefly discuss their case and its application to a particular assigned theory in front of the rest of the class. We anticipate that these mini presentations will be approximately five minutes long. Then, the rest of the class will respond to that presentation by asking questions, providing feedback and making suggestions. This feedback could consist of anything from, ‘the thing I think is most interesting about your case is...’ to ‘I think your case really challenges X theory by...’ Each student is expected to workshop their case at least once throughout the semester.

Workshopping cases occupies at least half of each section meeting. The other half of section is typically used to clarify questions from lecture, and to discuss the assigned book readings.

Remember! The final take-home exam in this course requires each scholar to apply social movement theories learned in lecture to their particular case. This means that all Section activities are specifically designed to prepare you for the final exam. Whether you are using Section to research your own case, workshop your own case, or see how others are applying theories to their cases, you will in essence be practicing the exact skills you will need for a successful showing on the final exam. Scholars who engage thoughtfully and enthusiastically in Section activities each week will be exceedingly well-prepared for the final exam—and more importantly, for critically and creatively analyzing the use of theory and ideology in their daily lives, long after this class has ended.

## **RESPECT**

Whether in lecture or in section, it is critically important that we create and maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to experimentation, exploration, and personal development. Each scholar must be comfortable asking all of their questions and presenting their opinions. Sometimes the simplest questions are the hardest to answer, and lead to the best class discussions. Sometimes the most polarizing discussions lead to the greatest theoretical insights. To this end, all comments, suggestions, and feedback will be presented and received in the spirit of learning and with a genuine intention to help each other learn. Respect for each other is imperative, even (and especially) when we discuss polarizing issues.

## **COLLABORATION**

In section, students *may* collaborate when researching their social movement cases. They may share articles they find. They may share their ideas about how a particular theory does or does not apply to their case. They may also share their ideas about what new theoretical questions their case might inspire, or what existing findings it might challenge. However, students *may not* collaborate in writing any of their written assignments. Once an assignment has been distributed, all theory essays, case histories, and final exams must be written independently and without consulting others about its content. Course instructors of course understand that different students may present similar ideas in their essays, precisely because they have developed these ideas together, collaboratively, through course discussions and workshops. No student will be charged with plagiarism because they wrote about an idea that was collaboratively developed, unless there is some indication that this idea was copied rather than collaboratively inspired.

## **LECTURE SCHEDULE**

(Sections begin the week of February 9<sup>th</sup>. Details will be provided in lecture).

January 26\_(SHOPPING): Course Introduction

January 28 (SHOPPING): Establishing the Questions

What is a social movement? What is a revolution? What is sociological theory, and why should it matter to me?

### **SEGMENT ONE: MACRO-LEVEL THEORIES**

Case Study Book: Kurzman/Iranian Revolution

February 2—Early Theories of Social Mobilization

February 4—Political Opportunity

February 9—No Class, Snow Day

February 11—The PPM and Framing

February 16—No Class, President's Day

February 18—Critiques of the PPM, Start Organizations

### **SEGMENT TWO: MESO-LEVEL THEORIES**

Case Study Book: Katzenstein/Faithful and Fearless

February 23—Organizations and Networks

February 25—Networks

March 2—Leadership and Ecology

March 4—Tactics, Strategies, and Targets

*\*\*\*MARCH 9—THEORY ESSAY #1 DUE AT START OF LECTURE\*\*\**

### **SEGMENT THREE: CULTURAL THEORIES**

Case Study Book: Bail/Terrified

March 9—What about Culture?

March 11—Moral Shocks and Emotions

March 16-March 18—No Class, Spring Break

March 23—Narratives and Identity

March 25—Media and Discourse

**SEGMENT FOUR: MICRO-LEVEL THEORIES**

Case Study Book: Viterna/Women in War

March 30—What about the individuals? Introduction to Freedom Summer

April 1—Leadership and Agency

April 6—Movement Outcomes

April 8—Comparing Freedom Summer to Teach for America

*\*\*\*APRIL 13—THEORY ESSAY #2 DUE AT START OF LECTURE\*\*\**

**SEGMENT FIVE: TRANSNATIONAL THEORIES**

Case Study Book: Bob/Marketing of Rebellion

April 13—Transnational Advocacy Networks

April 15—Movie

April 20—My Boomerang Won't Come Back

**SEGMENT SIX: VOLUNTEERISM, ACTIVISM, and SOCIAL MOBILIZATION**

Case Study Book: Eliasoph/Politics of Volunteering

April 22—Humanitarianism as mobilization?

April 27—Fighting for Social Change, but how?

April 29—Wrapping Up and Looking Forward

*\*\*\*MAY 1st—THEORY ESSAY #3 DUE BY 1:00 p.m. in VITERNA'S MAILBOX\*\*\*  
(Sixth floor, William James Hall)*

May 1<sup>st</sup>—possible make-up class, please keep the 1-2 slot available.

**FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE:**



(Paper copy due to Viterna's mailbox on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of William James Hall prior to 1:00 p.m.)

Final Take-home Essay Exam: May 15<sup>th</sup>  
(Paper copy due to Viterna's mailbox on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of William James Hall prior to 1:00 p.m.)

## SECTION INFORMATION:

### Teaching Fellows:

Theodore Leenman (Head TF)  
[leenman@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:leenman@fas.harvard.edu)  
Office hours: Lamont Cafe, Monday 2-4

Jonathan Solarte  
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Monday 4-5, Tuesday 3-4

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### Section Plan (Subject to alterations)

Section #	Dates	Plan	Book
1	February 11/12	Introductions Case Study Discussion	
2	February 18/19	Sales Pitches	Kurzman
3	February 25/26	Workshop Sign-up	Katzenstein
4	March 4/5	Library Visits (Lamont)	
5	March 11/12	Workshopping	Bail
6	March 25/26	Workshopping	
7	April 1/2	Workshopping	Viterna
8	April 8/9	Workshopping	

9	April 15/16	Workshopping	Bob
10	April 22/23	Review Session	Eliasoph