PSCI 443.01: Politics of Social Movements

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"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."  Fredrick Douglass

“What is possible would never have been achieved if, in this world, people had not repeatedly reached for the impossible.”  Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 1918

“Freedom isn't free. It shouldn't be a bragging point that "Oh, I don't get involved in politics," as if that makes you somehow cleaner. No, that makes you derelict of duty in a republic. Liars and panderers in government would have a much harder time of it if so many people didn't insist on their right to remain ignorant and blindly agreeable.”  Bill Maher

**Required Texts (Available in the UC Bookstore, Amazon and elsewhere.)**

After we complete this volume, we will together decide as a class on additional assignments, which may require additional book acquisitions.

**Course Description**
This is a seminar – not a lecture class – on the theory, history and significance of social movements.

Learning Goals:  There are two primary learning goals for this course. The first goal is to significantly bolster students’ knowledge regarding the historical and contemporary significance of social movements. Second, to provide an opportunity for students to develop their writing and verbal skills.

No assumptions are made regarding students' familiarity with this subject. I do, however, assume that all students taking this class will devote considerable time each week reading and/or listening to the material, reflecting on the material, and coming to class with prepared comments and questions to contribute to the conversation.

**Course mechanics**
Class meetings will run for two hours and twenty minutes. I expect you to arrive punctually, with bags unpacked, readings in front of you, and your brain ready to participate, by 3:00 pm. There will be a 10-minute break about half way through each class.

If you have to miss a class for any reason, please let me know by email as soon as you know you’ll be absent. Unexplained absences will reduce your grade by reducing your class participation score.
Homework
There will be some mix of readings, recordings, and videos to study each week. Please do not take this course if you cannot commit at least on average 4-5 hours a week to doing the homework. The educational benefits of the course depend on you doing the homework with a high degree of focus, so you can contribute to class discussions. If you don’t do the assignments, you won’t learn much; if you do read, watch, and listen to them attentively, take good notes, participate actively in class, and focus your best attention on the writing assignments, I predict you will learn a lot. Some of the materials are harder than others; some weeks will require more time than other weeks.

I expect all of each week’s required reading/listening/watching (written materials, podcasts, videos) to be completed well before class, so you have time to digest the materials, think about them, compare and contrast them to each other and other sources of information and insight, and most importantly, to prepare probing comments and questions about them. Last-minute homework will not result in good comprehension or good in-class discussion. The difference in quality between work done with ample time allotted and focused attention contrasted to work done in a hurried fashion at the last minute is palpable. Tip: If you encounter a word, term, or concept that you don’t understand, don’t just gloss over it and hope for the best; instead, look it up through Google search or Wikipedia.

Grading
There will be no tests or exams in this course. Instead, your grade will depend on two kinds of work.

• 60% of grade: class attendance and participation
• 40% of grade: written assignments (these will include written homework assignments that inform your class participation as well as any additional projects to be assigned later in the course.

Class attendance, participation, and discussion points: 60% of final grade
Most of our class time will be spent discussing the required assignments. Sometimes I’ll give little mini-lectures for a few minutes on particular ideas or findings that might need explaining. But for most of each class, I’ll be moderating discussions and debates among you, the students.

So, I expect regular attendance, detailed knowledge of assigned materials, active participation and intellectual engagement, and thoughtful questions and commentaries about the materials. I will keep records of who attends each class, who asks good questions and makes insightful comments, who seem to have done the homework conscientiously, and who contributes to making this class an intellectually vibrant and rewarding experience for the other students.

There will be a homework assignment for each class meeting that will require you to have prepared discussion points. Each discussion point could be a thoughtful comment, question, critique, or comparison to other readings, theories, or findings. It should not just summarize the material’s argument, but it should show that you have understood the material, and developed your own thoughts in response. It should not just be a personal reaction or anecdote vaguely related to the material, but it could relate the material’s ideas to current events, controversies, or real-life issue. The best discussion points are often both funny and intellectually serious.

If you haven’t understood a particular assigned material well enough to prepare a discussion point or answer the question you were asked to answer, you should be ready to say what specific theories, concepts, or findings you found most confusing, and why. If you didn’t understand something after studying it carefully, other students probably didn’t either, and we should discuss and clarify it.

You must write out these discussion points before each class, expressed clearly and concisely enough that you can read them out loud quickly, and written down clearly so you can read them. If you have extremely easy to read handwriting, you may hand them in that way. However, most of you do not and therefore I strongly encourage typing them. Hard to read, let alone impossible to read, homework assignments will be marked down sharply.
I will collect homework assignments at the end of each class, and I will call on students to read them aloud to the class. If I call on you and you are not prepared, your participation grade will be lower for that class. If I call on you and you have a great comment that sparks a lot of discussion, your participation grade will be higher.

If you’re shy, knowing that you have good discussion points written down ahead of time will make it easier for you to speak up without feeling awkward.

The best discussion points (questions and comments) do not just show off how clever you are, but are effective at getting other students engaged in the intellectual life of our class. You’ll learn as the term progresses what kind of interventions are good discussion-sparks and which fall flat.

**Extra Credit Assignment:** locate and interview at least one person who is working within a social movement organization who is making or attempting to make what you believe to be a positive difference. You can do the interview in person or on the phone. Write it up and share it with the class. Please let me know when you would like to contribute this to class so I can plan for it. I encourage you to do this and am more than willing to discuss how to get this done with anyone who wants to do it.

**ASSIGNMENTS (subject to changes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Introduction to the class (no homework)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Day 1 of The Reader. Parts I (Introduction), II (When and Why Do Social Movements Occur?) and III (Who Joins or Supports Movements?) 95 pages, including notes and references.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Day 2 of The Reader. Parts IV (Who Remains in Movements, Who Drops Out, and Why?) and V (How Are Movements Organized?) 110 pages, including notes and references</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Parts VI (What Do Movements Do?) and VII (How Do Movements Interact with Other Players?) 129 pages, including notes and references</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>President’s Day. No class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>Parts VIII (Why Do Movements Decline?) and IX (What Changes Do Movements Bring About?) 72 pages, including notes and references.</td>
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Assignment: (students whose last names begin A-L, answer even numbered questions, the rest odd numbered)
1. Prepare answers to the six discussion questions on pg. 12 and the eight discussion questions on pg. 56.
2. Develop a question or a comment of your own for both Part II and Part III.

Assignment: (students whose last names begin A-L, answer odd numbered questions, the rest even numbered)
1. Prepare answers to the seven discussion questions on pg. 103 and the eight discussion questions on pg. 158.
2. Develop a question or a comment of your own for both Part IV and Part V.

Assignment: (students whose last names begin A-L, answer even numbered questions, the rest odd numbered)
1. Prepare answers to the seven discussion questions on pg. 216 and the six discussion questions on pg. 286.
2. Develop a question or a comment of your own for both Part VI and Part VII

Assignment: (students whose last names begin A-L, answer odd numbered questions on pg. 345 and even numbered questions on pg. 382, the rest of the class do the even numbered questions on pg. 345 and the odd numbered questions on pg. 382)
1. Prepare answers to the five discussion questions on pg. 345 and the nine discussion questions on pg. 382.
2. Develop a question or a comment of your own for both Part VIII and Part IX.
3. A recommendation for what you think we should do next in the class and why. Approximately 2-3 pages. Please address the big themes and questions you wish to advocate for as well as recommendations for specific materials. These documents will contribute importantly to what we do for the rest of the class.
Next: At this point in the class, you will have been introduced to the study of social movements, with a focus around key questions that have been of substantial concern over time to many scholars and students of social movements as well as activists. At this point in the class, we will shift attention to some combination of specific movements, movement organizations, and ideas important to movements and movement organizations.

I have begun the process with a set of materials designed to get us thinking in and around the #MeToo movement. After that, we will determine our collective enterprise together. You will find below a list of candidates. This list is by no means exhaustive and we will welcome additional candidates for our collective study brought by any of the seminar participants. We will also determine together the homework and other written assignments that will accompany this last section of the class. As the professor/seminar facilitator, I will retain the prerogative and responsibility to make final decisions but it is my sincere hope that this determination will be the product of a deeply deliberative and collective process.

March 4 Some materials to get us thinking in and around the #MeToo movement:


2. https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/vox/the-ezra-klein-show/e/52285930
3. https://samharris.org/podcasts/141-metoo-going-far/


Assignment:

1. As objectively as possible, compare and contrast at least two of the interviews with Traister with an answer that would take you 2-3 minutes to share with the class. Focus on what you think is most important in what was revealed in each of the conversations and be prepared to explain why you thought it was important and why others might too.
2. Ask a question, directed either to Traister herself, one of the interviewers, or to the class about the material.
3. Respond to Rebecca Solnit with an answer that would take you 2-3 minutes to share with the class.

March 11
March 18

March 25 Spring break. No class

April 1
April 8
April 15
April 22

Accessibility
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, contact me at the beginning of the semester so that proper accommodations can be provided. Please contact Disability Services for Students if you have questions, or call Disability Services for Students (DSS) for voice/text at 406.243.2243. You may also fax the Lommasson Center 154 for more information at 406.243.5330.
Works To Choose From for Additional Reading in the class (suggestions to get us started):
I have put an * by those that call to me most at this point in time. I will be asking you to consider what speaks to you and together we will decide where to go. You most certainly need not confine your considerations to this list!

---*The hottest book of 2018 in Political Science
This book, while not addressing movements, can be thought of as a sober cautionary tale for those concerned about the future of democratic politics in the US. The argument can be made that its insights should guide movement activities today and going forward. We could assess it in these terms.

---*Drug-Decriminalization and/or the new work with psychedelics
This is intriguing phenomena. This article has a lot of links that could be useful. The most important book on the history of psychedelics is in my view without doubt Michael Pollan’s recent work, How To Change Your Mind, Penguin Books, 2018. He has also done some very informative podcast interviews, including one with Sam Harris and one with Ezra Klein, as well as a number of talks available on YouTube that would make excellent materials.

--Occupy Movement
There are a number of materials out there that we could pick from. One that I am familiar with is Jonathan Smucker, Hegemony How-To: A Roadmap for Radicals. AK Press, 2017. It has the value of being recent and also contains a strong position on lessons learned and things to be avoided and pursued going forward – what works and what does not work when attempting to introduce radical new ideas to a public that transcends true believers. One more we might want to consider is Nathan Schneider, Thank You, Anarchy: Notes from the Occupy Apocalypse. University of California Press, 2013.

--U.S. Labor Movement
There is a huge literature on labor movements. One of the most talked about books within radical wings of the movement is Jane F. McAlevey, No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age. Oxford University Press, 2016. She is a longtime activist and more recently a scholar too who has a very strong point of view regarding which parts of the labor movement are implementing best practices and which are not, with the goal to transform the movement. Interview with MacAlevey. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/10/strike-chicago-teachers-union-public-private-sector

--Movements and Political Parties
Movements in general and movement organizations more specifically have a many important relationships. One of the most important is that between with political parties. One we might want to consider: Daniel Schlozman, When Movements Anchor Parties: Electoral Alignments in American History. Princeton University Press, 2015. This is a challenging read, some would say beyond the capacity of most advanced undergraduates. I do not agree with this assessment but it is a challenging and very scholarly read.

--Left Movement Histories
What has happened in the world of left non-violent direct action since the 1960s? L.A. Kaufman, Direct Action: Protest and Reinvention of American Radicalism. Verso, 2017 attempts to answer this question with reference to a number of important movements and events. Kaufman has spent more than 30 years immersed in radical movements as a participant, strategist, journalist, and observer. I used the book in this class in 2018 and it was cited as the favorite by students, in part because of how engagingly it is written. Other books that address the history of the left include:


Another book that covers a lot of terrain, incorporating more conceptual tools and written a bit more as an introductory text for use in the classroom is Kurt Schock, Civil Resistance Today. Polity Press, 2015. The book has the value also of looking at social justice movements outside the U.S. in addition to U.S.-based movements.
--Movement Ideas
One of the things that most attracts me to movements is that they are often the generators, in addition to being promoters, of cutting-edge critical theory. This book provides a survey of major schools of thought that have influenced the left over the last century: Ben Agger, Critical Social Theories: An Introduction. Oxford University Press, third edition, 2013.

--The Politics of Race
This issue has been central to U.S. history from the beginning to the present and promises to be with us for the foreseeable future. Obviously, much is written about this on an ongoing basis. Here is a brief list of possible materials that we could consider along with additional suggestions. You will note that many of them are not movement specific but rather talk more broadly about the topic. I am fine with this direction if it is the will of the class.

*Ruby Sales. Interview with this civil rights icon on the podcast “Onbeing.” Unedited version, preferable.


Moral Mondays. Here are a few materials we could potentially utilize on this topic: http://www.thenation.com/article/how-progressives-can-and-must-regain-the-moral-high-ground/ Nation magazine article by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II.


Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha Bandele with a forward by Angela Davis, When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir. St. Martins, 2018. This book has been received critical acclaim.


There is also a recent literature that asks white people to look at their whiteness through a racial lens. Here are a couple of materials that we could consider if we elected to pursue this theme:

What I Said When My White Friend Asked for My Black Opinion on White Privilege
This is a young black woman explaining to her white male friend "white privilege“ through her own experiences. Let’s use this as a way of discussing our own experiences of privilege and the opposite (discrimination): race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical characteristics and looks, etc.

A long and engaging interview with the film maker, Deeyah Khan https://samharris.org/podcasts/144-conquering-hate/ The two movies are Jihad and White Right. Jihad is 45 minutes long and White Right is 54 minutes long. Both available on Netflix.


Social Media and Movement Trajectories
This theme has received significant attention in recent years. How does social media change movement politics? A couple of titles that we could consider if we elect this theme are Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Yale, 2017 and Paolo Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. Pluto Press, 2012.

Ralph Nader
Nader has been a household name affiliated with left-progressive change that has garnered more across the isle support than any other person working in the U.S. over the span of the last half century plus. He remains still active into this 80s. He has a long list of materials, including many podcasts and books. If we wanted a book, I would suggest Ralph Nader, *Breaking Through Power*. City Lights, 2016.

The Right

Non-U.S.-based movements
If it is the will of the class to include a section on movements based in countries outside the U.S., I would suggest we address Latin America, since that is the area of the world in which I do original scholarship on movements. Here are just a couple of titles but I could quite easily put together a reading list from which we could select if we choose to go this direction.

*Elisabeth Jay Friedman, *Seeking Rights from the Left: Gender, Sexuality, and the Latin American Pink Tide*. Duke University Press, 2019. This is an exciting volume that investigates and interrogates new self-proclaimed 21st left leaning governments in Latin America through the prism of gender and LGBTQ rights. The relationships between movements and the state. If we decide to study Latin American movements in this class, I think this volume may well be a wonderful way to do it. My main reservation is the lack of knowledge and familiarity many if not most student will have with the region. I could certainly try to mitigate your lack of context, historical and more contemporary, with some lectures and perhaps some additional readings designed to provide context to this focused look at the Pink Tide and movement politics. Here is free access to the introductory chapter: [https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0152-2_601.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Intro&utm_campaign=b-SM_FriedmanF18_011119](https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0152-2_601.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Intro&utm_campaign=b-SM_FriedmanF18_011119)


[https://www.dukeupress.edu/collective-situations](https://www.dukeupress.edu/collective-situations)
Book on arts and social movements in Latin America. First chapter can be downloaded and read for free.

organizing a local militia in Guerrero, Mexico.

Climate Change/Global Warming movements


--Classic Texts
There are a number of classic texts that have been widely read by students of movements. Here are some much read titles:
Charles Tilly & Sidney Tarrow, Contentious Politics. Oxford University Press, 2015. This one is a very challenging read.

--Civic Engagement
Somewhat as a counterpoint to radical in your face movement politics has been a storm of work and commentary on civic engagement. If the class is interested in pursuing this thinking, here is a starting point for considering materials:
Peter Levine, We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For. Oxford, 2013.
Could combine with a video of Alperovitz. There are several located here: https://www.garalperovitz.com/
Gar Alperovitz, What Then Must We Do? Straight Talk About the Next American Revolution. Chelsea Green, 2013.

--Populism
Populism, from the right and the left, has a long history in the US. It is also a framework within which we can understand some instances of radical movement politics. Here is one volume that addresses the topic from a radical democratic perspective: Laura Grattan, Populism’s Power: Radical Grassroots Democracy in America. Oxford, 2016.

--Gay Rights Movement materials that could be considered:
The story, as told by This American Life investigative journalist report, of how the American Psychiatric Association decided in 1973 that homosexuality was no longer a mental illness: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/204/81-words
This is the book to read, in my view, if we want to take a deep dive into the long history of the gay rights movement. Thing is that its 817 pages long. I am up for it if others are. We would have to make a lot of room for it.

This is a serious scholarly long sweep history from 15th century to 1990s by a highly accomplished historian teaching at Harvard. It is not only about gay history but it is about how to read history. Highly recommended.


--Fiction
Movements have of course been addressed in literature and film. Here is one tale of heroic resistance to an authoritarian future. Rivera Sun, The Dandelion Insurrection: love and revolution. Rising Sun Press Works, 2013.