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PSCI 343.01: Politics of Social Movements

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POLITICS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (Spring 2013)

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Meets: Wednesdays 4:10-6:30

Office hours in LA 350: Wednesday 3-4 and after class for a half hour

Books available for purchase in UC Bookstore:

Michael Kazin. 2012. *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed the Nation*. Vintage

Gar Alperovitz. 2011. *American Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy*.

2nd Edition. Democracy Collaborative.

Raul Zibechi. 2012. *Territories in Resistance: A Cartography of Latin American Social Movements*. AK Press.

Other readings listed can be found on Moodle.

"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

This is a seminar – not a lecture class – on left leaning social movements in the United States and Latin America. Class discussions and the paper assignment will be inquires into movement visions and histories.

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 analytical 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, reflecting on the material, and preparing comments and questions to be contributed in class discussions. We will grapple not only with matters of historical and contemporary interpretation regarding the political power and influence of the movements, organizations, and individuals of the left but also with the value of the ideas they proposed and attempted to realize. One most certainly need not be on the left to take the class, in fact, it will be a much more interesting discussion if we have a diversity of political identities and orientations. However, an interest and willingness to work hard studying the historical and contemporary visions and projects of the left is a prerequisite.

Grading Options

Undergraduate students and students not taking this class for 400 credit must select one of four grading schemes. All students must have a one-on-one meeting with me during office hours or by appointment between March 13 and March 27, at which point we will discuss your class performance to date and you will commit to one of these four options. You cannot change your decision. Graduate students and those taking this class for 400 credit must select Option 2.

Option 1: Class attendance, homework assignments, and contributions to class discussions 100%

Option 2: Paper 50%/class attendance, homework assignments, and contributions to class discussions 50%

Option 3: Take-home final exam 50%/Class attendance, homework assignments, and contributions to class discussions 50%

Option 4: Paper/class attendance, homework assignments, contributions to class discussions/take-home final exam all graded evenly

All assigned readings must be read carefully and analytically **before** the class listed below for discussion. Students must come prepared to summarize the readings and armed with questions and comments from the readings. Length of assigned weekly readings has been purposely reduced so as to allow students ample time to prepare in advance comments and questions for class. Students are expected to attend all classes unless ill or in case of emergency. Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you are absent or late, send me an email explaining it. **Do not explain it to me on the phone, in class, before class or after class.** I am happy to speak with you in my office if you are having personal challenges that are negatively affecting class performance or attendance.

Students are **expected** to think analytically about the material, and to subject the material to rigorous scrutiny in class and in their written statements. Students are **strongly encouraged** to bring outside perspectives and readings as contributions to our conversations. The number of pages of required reading has been limited so as to allow students time to search and read outside readings and bring insights from them to class discussion. Time spent on homework is anticipated to be a minimum of five hours a week.

Graduate Increment: Expectations of graduate students will be higher than for undergraduate students in this class. Specifically, graduate students will be required to read and bring outside perspectives to class discussions on a regular basis. Furthermore, graduate students papers from graduate students will be required to address significant theoretical concerns and will also be required to be 15-20 pages in length.

Participation Evaluation (learning outcomes):

A range. This student is energetic and engaged. This student is highly motivated to make significant contributions to class. This student is consistently well prepared, having read at a minimum the assigned reading, if not beyond. This student's ideas and questions are substantive and generate class discussion. This student may certainly ask clarifying questions but also asks analytical questions and makes analytical comments. Importantly, this student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.

B range. This student participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to class prepared and contributes regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student asks helpful clarifying questions and from time to time asks analytical questions or makes analytical comments. This student shows interest in other students' contributions.

C range. This student meets the basic requirements of class participation. This student is usually prepared and participates occasionally but not on a regular basis. This student's contributions are almost always clarifying rather than analytical and rarely if ever generate class discussion.

D range. This student should not have taken this class. This student rarely if ever meets the basic requirements of class participation. This student misses class often or comes in late, and shows up for class inadequately prepared. The student rarely participates in class discussion or participates in such a way that does not contribute to the quality of the conversation.

Paper Evaluation:

The paper will address a question of critical importance to social movements. The paper must make an argument regarding some important aspect or aspects of the readings. All papers will follow a strict organization. All papers will have these five subheadings.

1. Thesis.
2. Definition of key terms in the thesis.
3. Reasoned explication of the causal relationships contained within the thesis.
4. Evidence that illustrates and illuminates the thesis. Evidence will come from the assigned readings and outside readings. There should be periodic reference to how the evidence presented relates to the thesis and its causal claims.
5. Concluding comments and questions for further reflection and research.

The paper should be 10 – 15 pages, double-spaced. Bibliography required. Footnotes optional – no endnotes.

A range. This paper is outstanding in form and content.

The thesis is original and insightful.

The thesis is well defined and the causal relationships clearly articulated.

The evidence illustrates and illuminates the thesis.

Strong bibliography and use of citations and quotes.

The concluding comments and questions are thought provoking and generate ideas for future pursuit.

B range.

The thesis is interesting but not original or notably important and insightful.

The thesis is well defined and the causal relationships are addressed coherently.

The evidence illustrates the thesis but does not illuminate it in a nuanced fashion.

The analysis is simple with less appreciation for nuance than an A paper.

The paper is reasonably well written and proofread.

C range.

The thesis is not all that interesting.

The thesis lacks clarity.

Key terms in the thesis are not defined well and causal relationships are addressed but not well explained.

There are problems in linking the evidence to the thesis.

The paper may be poorly written or having spelling or grammatical errors. It is clear that the student did not adequately proofread the paper or have help from others in doing so. Weak bibliography and use of readings to support the narrative.

D range.

Poorly written on most if not all fronts.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Part I: Broad historical introduction to left leaning American dreamers and some theory

January 31 Introduction to the class, no required readings

February 6 Kazin, Introduction and chapters one and two: 1820s – 1870s (Pp. xi – 67) AND chapter three of John Nichols, *The “S” Word: A Short History of an American Tradition.....Socialism*. Verso Press, 2011. The title of the chapter is “Reading Marx with Abraham Lincoln” (Pp. 61-99)

February 13 Kazin, chapters three and four: 1870s – 1920s (Pp. 68 – 154)

February 20 Kazin, chapter five: 1920 – 1950s (Pp. 155 – 208)

February 27 Introduction and chapter 1 (Pp. ix – 37) of Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. Vintage Books, 1979 AND chapter 1 (Pp. 3-32) of John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*. University of Illinois Press, 1980

March 6 Piven and Cloward, chapter 4 (Pp. 181 – 263) on Civil Rights Movement

March 13 Kazin, chapters six and seven: 1950s – 2010 (Pp. 209 – 278)

Part II: Contemporary Discontent with and Alternatives to Existing Capitalism in the U.S.

March 20, Alperovitz, Forward, Introduction, and Parts I and II (Pp. v – 109)

March 27 Alperovitz, Parts II and III and IV (Pp. 109 – 240)

April 3 Spring Break

Part III: Latin America

April 10 Zibechi, Forward, Introduction, and Section I and chapter 6 (Pp. 1 – 89)

April 17 Zibechi, Section II from chapter 7 to the end (Pp. 91 – 186)

April 24 Zibechi, Section III (Pp. 189 – 263)

May 1 Zibechi, Section IV and Epilogue (Pp. 267 – 334) First drafts due today (mandatory for those taking the class for 400 credit and graduate students). Drafts handed back, with comments, by close of business May 3.

May 8 Papers and take-home exams due. This date is firm.