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PSC 343.01: Politics of Social Movements

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POLITICS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber
Political Science Department, course #343
Autumn 2001
Meets: TR 9:40 - 11:00
office hours in LA 355: TR 12:30 - 2:00 (and by appointment)

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Books available for purchase in UC Bookstore:

1. John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (University of Illinois Press, 1980).
2. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail* (Vintage Books, 1979).
3. Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Day Women's Movement Changed America*. (Viking Press, 2000).
4. William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*. (Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1996)

This is a course on 20th century social movements in the United States. What role have social movements had in shaping the politics of power, as reflected in public policy, electoral politics, relations of class, race, and gender, and people's understanding of the world and their place in it? We will repeatedly ask the question, why have particular movements and movement organizations succeeded to the degree they have, and why have they failed to accomplish more?

No assumptions are made regarding students' familiarity with U.S. history, social movements, or social movement theory. I do, however, assume a willingness to work hard to understand the histories of various social movements and the complexity of competing theoretical approaches.

Grading:

Gaventa/Piven and Cloward paper 1/3
Paper #2 1/3
Class attendance, periodic assignments, and contributions to class discussions 1/3

Students are required to read all assigned readings on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. All assigned readings must be read carefully and analytically before the class listed below for discussion. **Students are required to come to class with a written question or statement regarding that day's reading.** I may sometimes ask students to hand these in. Students may miss three classes without explanation. After that, students must bring a typed statement explaining their absence. (Verbal notification, on the phone or in person, is not sufficient.) Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you have a good reason for being late, convey it to me after class.

Students will discover that this course material is controversial, and open to differing interpretations. Students are encouraged to think critically about the material, and to subject the material to rigorous interrogation in class and in their written statements. Students who make efforts to support arguments with outside materials and perspectives will be rewarded.

It may well be necessary, from time to time, to rearrange assignments or alter the schedule. Any changes in scheduling will be announced in class. When you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact either the professor or another student to see what has been missed - and then to work hard to make it up by the next class.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Part I: Why are Social Movements so Difficult to Form: The Powers of Prevention

Gaventa, Preface and pp. 1-44 for September 6

Reread Gaventa, pp. 1-44 for September 11

Gaventa, pp. 47-83 for September 13 (Give special attention to the conceptual issues raised pp. 47-53, 61-76, 80-83)

Gaventa, pp. 84-121 for September 18 (Give special attention to the conceptual issues raised on pp. 84-96, 109-116.)

Gaventa, pp. 125-201 for September 20 (Give special attention to the conceptual issues raised on 141-145, 161-169, 192-195, 199-201.)

Gaventa, pp. 205-261 for September 25

Part II: Four Case Studies and a Theory

Piven and Cloward, pp. ix-37 for September 27

Piven and Cloward, pp. 41-92 for October 2

Piven and Cloward, pp. 96-131 for October 4

Piven and Cloward, pp. 131-180 for October 9

Piven and Cloward, pp. 181-211 for October 11

Piven and Cloward, pp. 211-258 for October 16

Piven and Cloward, pp. 264-301 for October 18

Piven and Cloward, pp. 301-359 for October 23

Paper Writing Workshop on October 25 Bring written outlines or drafts and come prepared for discussion.

Paper #1 due October 30

Part III: Second Wave Feminist Movement vs. The Religious Right

Second wave feminism and the religious right are closely interrelated in contemporary American politics. We will study the two movements together.

Rosen, Preface and Chapters 1 and 2 for November 1

Martin, Introduction and Chapter 1 for November 6

Rosen, Chapters 3 and 4 for November 8

Martin, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 for November 13

Rosen, Chapters 5 and 6 for November 15

Martin, Chapters 5 and 6 for November 20

Rosen, Chapters 7 and 8 for November 20

Martin, Chapters 9, 10 and 11 for November 27

Rosen, Chapter 9 and Epilogue for November 29

Martin, Chapters 12 and 13 and Epilogue for December 4

Guest Speaker for December 6

Paper Writing Workshop on December 11 Bring written outlines or drafts and come prepared for discussion.

Paper #2 due December 13

Social Movements Defined

Social movements can be, and have been, defined in a variety of ways. One of the most crucial distinctions made by many analysts is between movement and interest group. Here are two definitions for your consideration. I would encourage you throughout the class to look for other definitions and/or to develop one of your own.

The defining characteristic of social movements is that they always disrupt. Social movements attempt to disrupt not only public policy, but also the way in which that policy is made. What differentiates social movements from public interest lobbies (Common Cause) or formal interest groups (Sierra Club) is not the "radicalness" of their demands but rather their ability and willingness to utilize noninstitutional forms of political participation. Social movements, by definition, are excluded groups who question the legitimacy of existing decision-making processes and demand that civil society and its representatives (the social movements) be given a greater voice. They often not only want a greater voice within the present system, but insist that the system change fundamentally. By so doing, they threaten existing norms and myths of who makes policy and the hierarchy of that participation. The more prominent the state is in affecting the quality of life, the more likely that it will be the primary focus of critique and confrontation. While private sector representatives (slumlords, polluting factories) may be the target of specific movement actions, the focus of most contemporary social movements in most countries is to reform or revolutionize the state so that it better promotes and defends social movement interests in the dispute (housing policy, environmental regulation). -Paul Haber

"A social movement differs from an interest group in that its members knowingly pursue goals whose benefits are not limited exclusively to those same members. On other words, social movements, as opposed to interest groups, pursue some form of public good. In general terms, the aim of a social movement is to transform society in some way on the basis of the value commitments and ideals of its members, but in a way that also would transform the ideals and commitments of everyone in that society" (Oxhorn 1995:20).