

**Sociology 411**  
**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**  
**UNC @ Chapel Hill**  
**Fall 2020**

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### **OVERVIEW OF COURSE**

Why do people protest and organize to change the world around them? Most of the time people follow the rules, obey authorities, and put up with situations – even situations they consider unjust and immoral. Yet, in some cases, people join together to press for change. Why do people sometimes protest but more often not? How do movements work, and why do some succeed while others fail? Studying social movements allows us to examine much broader questions too. These include questions about the nature of power, conflict, political authority and legitimacy, and social change.

This course examines the origins, dynamics and consequences of social movements. Over the semester, we will explore a wide range of topics including: the emergence of movements, recruitment and leadership, interactions of movements with the media, political authorities and the broader public, tactics (e.g. nonviolent direct action, litigation), and the factors contributing to the success and failure of movements.

We will learn about many historically important social movements. In the first half of the class, we will study movements that are part of the black freedom struggle in the U.S. including the civil rights, black power, and black lives matter movements. In the second half, we will focus on additional cases and topics including social media, the growth of right-wing movements, and the impact of pro-democracy movements across the globe.

### **COURSE GOALS**

The major goals of this course are:

- Understand, apply, and evaluate major theoretical perspectives on the study of social movements
- Develop greater knowledge of important historical and contemporary social movements
- Understand the motivations and goals that lead people to participate in movements
- Understand the major social forces that shape the origins, dynamics, and consequences of movements

### **CLASS MEETINGS**

This class will combine synchronous and asynchronous components. I will divide the class into two groups for weekly seminar meetings. Starting in the second week, I will meet with half of the class on Tuesday and the other half on Thursday. We will assign everyone to a seminar group at the end of the first week. Outside of these discussions, you will access mini-lectures, class activities, and videos that will comprise the remaining portion of our regular class time. By meeting in smaller

groups, we will be able to have deeper and more engaging discussions, and you will have the flexibility to do other course-related activity at times that are most convenient for you.

Each week, I will post questions on sakai prior to class meetings to guide your reading and prepare for our class. The questions will ask you to reflect on important themes and questions as you do the reading. You will post your responses to these questions by noon on your seminar day to prepare for discussion.

We will work to create an environment where diverse individuals can learn and interact in a positive and affirming way. To accomplish this, we will value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of everyone in the class. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. We will seek to be respectful of one another and avoid language that might create a harmful or unproductive learning environment. Inevitably, we will have disagreements with the readings and with one another, and we should work to understand why we disagree and how we can learn from this diversity. If you have concerns about specific comments or the tone of a conversation, please reach out to me.

## **READING**

This course has six books that are available at the campus bookstore and online booksellers. You can access digital copies through the UNC library (details on sakai):

- (1) Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (Free Press)
- (2) Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (Oxford)
- (3) Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Haymarket Books)
- (4) Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Teargas* (Yale University Press)
- (5) Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford)
- (6) Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works* (Columbia University Press)

Additional materials will be available on sakai as PDF files or as links to resources on the internet.

## **MEETINGS AND CONTACTING US**

I will hold office hours on Tuesday and Thursday 4-5, and the Jacob Conley (Teaching Assistant) will be holding office hours on Wednesday 4-5. You can sign up for meetings slots ahead of time. If you have a conflict at that time, email us about arranging an alternative time.

## **REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS**

This course is designed as an upper level seminar where we will read and engage with the leading ideas and debates about social movements. The assignments will support this by preparing everyone for class discussion

Attendance/participation	20%
Reading reflection	20%
Biography/organization paper	20%
Media paper	20%
Final essay/exam	20%

Attendance and participation (20%): This portion of your grade will be based on regular attendance and participation in weekly seminar meetings. You will need to be present, prepared, and engaged in these meetings.

Reading reflection (20%): Each week I will post questions related to the reading and topic for the week. You will post a response on sakai by noon on the day of our class meeting.

Biography/Organization Paper (20%): You will analyze an important activist or movement organization. I will provide a list of possible cases and books on sakai. You may propose other cases, but you must have alternative books approved by me at least one week before the deadline. Estimated length is 5-6 pages. This will give you an opportunity to study a movement of interest in greater depth. Due September 18.

Media Paper (20%): For this paper, you will collect and analyze media coverage of protest and social movements to address major debates about the media and movements. Estimated length is 6-7 pages, and you will do a brief in-class presentation on your findings. Further details will be provided in class including strategies to collect and analyze data. Due October 28.

Final Exam/Essay (20%): The final exam format will be a take home essay that ties together major themes in the class. We will discuss details in class. Date: TBA

## **GRADES**

The grading scale for this course is: A=100-94; A-=93-91; B+=90-88; B=87-84; B-=83-81; C+=80-78; C=77-74; C-=73--71; D+=70-68; D=67--61; F=60 and below.

## **POLICIES**

Sakai will be used for announcements and to make copies of the syllabus, handouts, and assignments available to you. You should check sakai regularly for announcements related to course assignments and schedule. There may be changes to our schedule and due dates as semester progresses. I will keep you updated on any changes and let you know as early as possible,

If you have an extraordinary set of circumstances that make it impossible for you to meet a deadline, contact me prior to the deadline. Extraordinary circumstances might include a serious illness or death in your family, but it would not include personal travel, extracurricular activities, or fulfilling the requirements of other courses.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. [See the ARS Website for contact information: accessibility.unc.edu.](https://accessibility.unc.edu)

## **HONOR CODE**

Your participation in this course is covered by the UNC Honor Code (<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/students>). If you have questions about any forms of academic dishonesty please see me, and I will be happy to clarify. You should be especially attentive to plagiarism. The UNC Writing Center has a handout that describes what plagiarism is, why it should be avoided, and how to avoid it. Link: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/plagiarism/>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	MAIN READING	OTHER MATERIALS	MAJOR QUESTIONS
1	Aug 11 and 13	Introduction	Tilly, "Social Movements as Politics" (sakai)		What are social movements? What are the major questions sociologists try to answer about movements?
2	Aug 18 and 20	Origins	Morris, <i>Origins</i> , Chs 1-6		What are the systems of power and domination that movements challenge? Given their limited power, how do disadvantaged groups organize to create change?
3	Aug 25 and 27	Tactics, leadership, and organization	Morris, <i>Origins</i> , Chs 7-11	FILM: <a href="#">Ain't Scared of Your Jails</a>	How do movements coordinate protest to disrupt power relations?
4	Sept 1 and 3	Becoming an activist	McAdam, <i>Freedom Summer</i> , 1-3		Why do some people take on huge risks and make major sacrifices to fight for the causes they believe in? Why do some people stand on the side lines?
5	Sept 8 and 10	Persistence of activism	McAdam, <i>Freedom Summer</i> , 4-6	Film: " <a href="#">Freedom On My Mind</a> "	What is it like to be an activist? How does activism impact a person's identity, relationships, and life?
6	Sept 15 and 17	From civil rights to BLM	Taylor, <i>From Black Lives Matter</i> , Chs 1-4		How has the black freedom struggle evolved from the Civil Rights to Black Power to Black Lives Matter? How has this struggle been shaped by changes in the broader culture, politics, and economy?
7	Sept 22 and 24		Taylor, <i>From Black Lives Matter</i> , Chs 5-7	Film: " <a href="#">Whose Streets?</a> "	What impacts is Black Lives Matter having on policing and on the broader society?
8	Sept 29 and Oct 1	Networked activism	Tufekci, <i>Twitter and Teargas</i> , Chs 1-4		How has the rise of social media changed the way people protest and get involved in social movements?
9	Oct 8 and 10	Social media and movements	Tufekci, <i>Twitter and Teargas</i> , Chs 5-9	Film: TBA	How do contemporary technologies enable and constrain activism? What can activists do to overcome constraints or limitations?

10	Oct 15 and 17	Right wing social movements	Skocpol and Williamson, <i>The Tea Party</i> , Chs 1-3	Film: <a href="#">Unborn in the USA</a>	How do movements by more privileged groups work? Who joins right wing movements and why?
11	Oct 22 and 24	Movements, the news media, and political parties	Skocpol and Williamson, <i>The Tea Party</i> , Chs 4-6		How do contemporary right wing movements interact with the news media, political parties, and the government?
12	Oct 29 and 30	Why civil resistance works, Chs 1-3	Chenoweth and Stephan, <i>Why Civil Resistance Works</i> , Chs 1-4	Film: TBA	What is civil resistance? How do nonviolent and violent campaigns differ and why?
13	Nov 3 and 5	Comparing successes and failures, Chs 4-8	Chenoweth and Stephan, <i>Why Civil Resistance Works</i> , Chs 5-8		How and why do movements succeed? Can apply these lessons to other movements?
14	Nov 10 and 12	Did social movements influence the 2020 elections?	TBA		
15	Nov 17	Wrap-Up			