History of Social Movements

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Most generally, social movement research is the study of collective agency. It is of widespread appeal to sociologists for engaging in two timeless research questions: 1) Why do individuals and groups attempt social change? 2) What are the outcomes of collective action and how do they transpire? While these questions (somewhat) bookend the beginning and conclusion of the phenomena, many other worthwhile research questions address processes between a movement's naissance and expiration.

While definitions for social movements are both varied and hotly debated, most scholars agree that movements are a type of collective action that are expressly formed to accomplish social change. Movement actors are typically extra-institutional, meaning they do not occupy official positions capable of accomplishing the desired social change in a direct manner. Also, social movements often encounter significant resistance in accomplishing their goals.

This course will provide a theoretical and methodological overview on social movement research from an historical sociological perspective. Emphasis will be placed on historical developments in social movement theory and upon the historical case study method. However, the course will not provide a comprehensive survey of social movements over the course of history.

Centrally, the historical method analyses social theory in light of a particular context, or “case.” On the one hand, a case study presents many characteristics particular to the presented setting. On the other hand, the case must be generalizable and develop social theory that can be supported or refuted in different settings. It is the duty of the researcher to scrutinize the generality of theories or cases.

English will be the only language used in the course.

GOALS OF THE COURSE

Students enrolled will acquire two sets of skills. The first of these skills will be gaining knowledge on the development of social movement theory. This includes an understanding of the field's theoretical history, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of prior research and theory, as well as a means to discover remaining theoretical questions. The second set of skills include attaining knowledge on the conduct of historical methods. This will be accomplished both by reading materials as well as through a guided research project. The reading materials will include both methodological pieces as well as empirical examples in the social movement literature.

PROGRAM AUTHOR / COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Benjamin Lind received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Irvine. His dissertation focused on the growth and spread of strikes and lockouts in the United States during the late nineteenth century. The research emphasized how microlevel economic conflicts transform into macrolevel upheaval. His current research continues to develop theories and findings from his dissertation for general audiences. His general interests are on labor, social conflict, and networks.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Below are the required and additional readings for each week. For each assigned reading, students are expected to understand and discuss the theoretical argument of each article and book chapter assigned on social movements. In addition to the theoretical argument, the students should know how each study collected and used the data available to support or refute social theory. These articles are to serve as theoretical pieces and/or examples of applying historical methodology. After reading the methodological pieces and historical studies, the students should be able to personally apply the knowledge gained for their own empirical work.

An in-depth reading of an article's bibliography and quantitative modeling strategies is optional.

1. **Introduction to Social Movements and Historical Sociology**

This thematic unit introduces the class to the basic principles of historical sociology and social movement research. The unit outlines a set of parameters that describe movement phenomenon, introduces case study research, and overviews historical social research. Students should be equipped to discuss which forms of agency constitute social movements, which ones do not, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of historical and case study research. Further, students should be expected to explain the suitability of such a research design when studying social movements.

Required Reading:

2. Political Context and Opportunity

This thematic unit presents political explanations regarding movement activity. This unit also includes additional readings on theory and logic relating to historical research, continuing the prior thematic unit, yet presented alongside empirical research. Given the nature of political contexts vary greatly across nations, discussion should address matters such as generalizability and case selection. Additionally, students should learn the suitability of using quantitative data to study historical processes, the logic of case comparisons, and the historical developments of political opportunity theory.

Required Reading:

Laslett (1980); Maher (2010); Meyer (2004); Meyer and Staggenborg (1996); Skocpol and Somers (1980)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 109

Additional:

Jenkins and Klandermans (eds) 1995; McAdam (1982), Ch. 3 “The Political Process Model;” Meyer and Minkoff (2004); McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery (2001); Skocpol (1984)

3. Resources and Organization

This thematic unit tackles the concept of how social movements use resources to support their mobilization efforts. Further, it introduces the concept of Social Movement Organizations, a key component to mobilization. Discussion should include an evaluation as to the strengths and weaknesses of resource mobilization theory. Students should have a firm grasp on the implications of resource scarcity and competition on social movements. Further, students should understand the types of inferences from documents.

Required Reading:

Dibble (1963); Edwards and McCarthy (2004); McCarthy and Zald (1977); Soule and King (2008)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 127

Additional:
4. Culture, Media, and Framing

Discursive forms and venues constitute the basis of this thematic unit. These include the media, memory, and framing techniques. Students should consider the ways social movements reach broader audiences. Additionally, this unit should include a discussion regarding the historical contingencies of such means.

Required Reading:

Amenta, Caren, Olasky, and Stobaugh (2009); Armstrong and Crage (2006); Diehl and McFarland (2010); Mariampolski and Hughes (1978); Roscigno and Danaher (2001); Snow (2004)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 157

Additional:

Andrews and Caren (2010); Gamson (2004); Oliver and Maney (2001); Rohlinger (2002); McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith (1996)

5. Recruitment, Participation, and Collective Identity

This thematic unit provides some answers for why and how people join (and stay) in social movements. It also includes one (optional) reading on oral history, as the method is well-suited for the topic. Discussion should consider how varying political contexts, historical legacies, and structural considerations affect one's propensity to join a protest or social movement organization. Students should also learn how narratives and social-psychological considerations affect movement engagement.

Required Reading:

Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribasa (2011); Diani (2004); Polletta (1998); Snow (2001); Yu and Zhao (2006)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 103

Additional:

Bernstein (1997); Blee (2002); Thompson (2000) Chapter 4, "Evidence;"

6. Tactics and Dynamics

The topic for this thematic unit focuses upon social movement activities. Key to this unit are the uses of institutional tactics and subject of social movement targets. Discussion should compare and contrast the effectiveness of tactics.

Required Reading:
7. Protest in Institutions, Institutionalization, and Abeyance

Social movements are not always demonstrating on the street. Also, social movements must adapt when as their circumstances change. This thematic unit considers the ways social movement organizations change form and activities. Discussion should consider the suitability of social movement theories under such circumstances as well as implications for other organizational forms.

Required Reading:

Chang (2008); Martin (2008); Milligan (1979); Taylor (1989)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 92

Additional:

Burstein, Bricher, and Einwohner (1995); Katzenstein (1990); Sawyers and Meyer (1999); Zald and Berger (1978)

8. Political & Beneficiary Consequences

This thematic unit addresses the pinnacle question of social movement impact on policy. Under what circumstances do movements have a role on policy? Discussion should consider what "success" means for a social movement and also the abilities and limitations of social movements to change the state.

Required Reading:

Amenta, Dunleavey, and Bernstein (1994); Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su (2010); Dixon (2008); Johnson (2008)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 108

Additional:


9. Infrastructure, Space, & Multi-Organizational Fields
The thematic unit here questions how social movement organizations interact with each other, local infrastructure, and neighborhoods. What is the nature of social movements’ relationship with their respective communities? Discussion should highlight which types of relationships encourage and impede collective action.

Required Reading:

Andrews (2001); Cunningham and Phillips (2007); Johnson, Agnone, and McCarthy (2010); Lind and Stepan-Norris (2011)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 103

Additional:

Andrews and Biggs (2006); Ganz (2000); Gould (1993); Hedström, Sandell, and Stern (2000); Zhao (1998)

10. Cultural, Economic, & Organizational Consequences

For this thematic unit, the course will focus upon what consequences social movements have beyond policy. These include cultural, organizational, and economic changes that reflect movement activity. Discussion should bring up the precise mechanisms by which a movement may produce such outcomes. Further, what are the similarities and differences between the ways in which a movement affects the polity versus culture?

Required Reading:

Haveman, Rao, and Paruchuri (2007); Isaac (2009); King (2008); Schneiberg, King, and Smith (2008)

Total pages (including bibliographies, tables, figures): 110

Additional:

Earl (2004); Giugni (2004); King and Soule (2007); Klatch (2002); Ludders (2006); McAdam (1989); Meyer and Whittier (1994); Rojas (2008); Whittier (1997)

GRADING

Grades for the course are assigned according to two sets of criteria: class room activities and a paper.

1. Classroom activities account for 50 percent of the final grade. This portion is broken into four parts. The four parts include attendance, participation, responses to readings, and reactions to responses. Attendance will be taken each time the course meets and will account for ten percent of the final grade. "Participation" is a subjective assessment that includes responding to questions and asking insightful comments—it accounts for a total of ten percent of the final grade. Each of the course readings will require a student to give a brief response to it. This includes a synopsis, evaluation, and use for future research. These responses will be worth fifteen percent of the final grade. Lastly, students will be chosen at random to provide a reaction to the initial reading response. The purpose of this requirement
is to build discussion in seminar. These reactions will account for fifteen percent of the final grade.

2. The course paper makes up 50 percent of the final grade. For the course paper, students are expected to create a research design with some preliminary findings. A proper research design should answer the following questions:

   a) What do you want to know?
   b) Why, or so what?
   c) What do you think the answer is?
   d) How are you going to go about answering it and finding out it is wrong?

   (See Zeitlin [2005] in-class handout for elaboration on these questions.)

The paper will be graded across three assignments over the module. For the first assignment, worth ten percent of the final grade, students are to turn in a description of the historic case they wish to study. Beyond a descriptive overview, students must justify the merits of the case according to principles discussed in class. The second assignment, worth ten percent, should contain a research question, applicable theories that may answer the research question, and data sources. It should also reflect comments provided on the first assignment. Lastly, the final paper should improve upon the second paper by responding to the instructor's comments and it should include both preliminary data analyses and a discussion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


