Comparative Political Institutions: Social Movements and Revolutions
Political Science 551 -- Fall 2014

Wednesday 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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319 Pond  and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION.

This course explores the nature of social movements and revolutions. We will look at the major theories that sociologists and political scientists have created to explain the mobilization and outcomes of social movements. How do we explain why people participate in protest or other types of social movements? Why is it that some people never revolt although observers would say they are as bad off as others that do? What sorts of factors determine the tactics people will use once they decide something must be done? Can governments repress revolutions or social movements? What determines whether a social movement or revolution is successful?
In examining these questions we will read theoretical works, quantitative studies comparing many different social movements and case studies of particular social movements and revolutions. By the end of this course, you should have a good grasp of the theoretical debates about social movements, the methods which have been used to study social movements, and you will have cursory knowledge of several different revolutions and social movements ranging from the East German 1989 revolution to the American women’s movement.

**REQUIRED READINGS.**

We will be reading selections from books and numerous articles. For book chapters, I have copies that I can make available to students, and we will discuss the distribution of articles on the first day of class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES.**

Student Responsibilities: The class will meet Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This course will be in seminar format which means that each individual student is responsible for completing the readings prior to the class meetings, and for contributing to the discussion of the material. For this reason, participation in class discussion is a significant portion of your final grade.

Grades: Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

a) Class Participation 15%

b) Class Presentations 20% (2@10% apiece)
c) Two thought papers 20% (2@10% apiece)
d) Pre-proposal with annotated bibliography 5%
e) One research proposal with presentation 30%
f) Comments on other proposals 10%

a) Class Participation: In order to get above a B grade in class participation, you must participate regularly (multiple times each class session in most to all class sessions) in the class discussions. Grades will be assessed both on the basis of regularity of presentation and on the contributions of the comments to the class discussion. Because in a large class we need to provide opportunities for everyone to participate, I will sometimes (respectfully) cut people off to allow participation from a wider range of speakers.

b) Class Presentations: You should sign up for two weeks of presentations. In one presentation, you will present the week’s readings, in the other you will present supplemental readings (either one book or 3 articles). Supplemental readings will be chosen in consultation with me. The presenter's job will be to present a summary of the research (but NOT a critique). In making these presentations, you should present the best case for the readings (i.e. pretend that they are your own) in a format akin to that used in most professional conferences in political science. Each presenter will have about 20 minutes to:

- Summarize the research's theoretical argument, and the literature that supports / gives rise to that argument,
- Discuss the methods used in the research,
- Present the study's findings, and
- Summarize the theoretical, empirical, and policy/normative implications of the research.

Students should use presentation software (e.g. Powerpoint) for the presentations and these should be uploaded to the ANGEL dropbox after the presentation. During these presentations, the professor will act as a “panel chair,” indicating the time that has passed in the presentation. Presenters will be graded on the accuracy, clarity, and completeness of their presentations, as well as their understanding of the major theoretical and empirical contributions of the work.

c) Thought Papers: You are expected to write two papers coordinated with the weekly readings. These papers are due by 8 p.m. the day before the class meets, and you must choose the days in advance. These papers should be around 1500 words in length (not counting the bibliography) and should analyze the works, which means you may critique the works, agree or disagree with the main arguments (giving some argument to support your opinion), or interpret them in light of other works you have read in the course. A good paper will provide some insight into the readings by showing how they are connected to the other literature on social movements, by discussing theoretical or methodological achievements and weaknesses that might lead to future research, or by analyzing the usefulness of the theoretical or methodological approach in understanding other political phenomena. This paper may also serve as a place to begin to develop ideas for further research for your research paper. Some weak thought papers in the past...
have focused on a single work without thinking about the research in the larger context, or discussed only on
methodological flaws without considering theoretical contributions.

d) Pre-proposal with Annotated Bibliography: a one page research description of your research proposal
attached to an annotated bibliography of at least 15 works relevant to the research project is due Tuesday
October 21st at noon. Grades will be assessed based on the thoroughness of the research on related
literature, the quality of the annotated bibliography and its connection to your substantive interests, and the
contribution of the research question to the field of social movements.

e) Research Proposal: You are required to write one research proposal paper and proposal presentation.
These papers are due Tuesday, December 9th by noon. Because papers will be distributed to fellow
students for review, late papers will be penalized!! Students will receive initial paper grades on Friday
December 12th. Those students wishing to increase their grade have the option of rewriting according to the
comments they receive as long as the paper is returned by December 18th at 5 p.m.

f) Comments on other proposals: You will be required to provide written comments on three other students’
research proposals. You will be expected to review the proposal like an evaluator of using the criteria
provided by NSF. You will be graded on the care and clarity of your reviews. These are due at 5 p.m. on
Friday December 12th, although I will ask those people reading papers presented on Wednesday
December 11th to read the paper before the presentation.

SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS

The point of seminar discussions is to allow us to work through difficult readings, to connect them to various
bodies of works (e.g. the social movement literature, comparative politics paradigms, democratization
literature), and to brainstorm on potential future research projects. When reading, you should focus on the
major issues. The questions below represent, what I think are the major questions that we should be
addressing, but each week there may be more specific questions that we need to add to this list.

1. What are the major theoretical concepts? How does the author(s) definition differ from those used by
other authors? How are those concepts measured in the analysis? Is this measurement appropriate?
2. What is the major question or puzzle the author trying to address? How does it fit in with the other
literature that we have read? Why/how is the question important?
3. What methodologies does the author(s) employ to address the major question? Why are they appropriate?
Are there ways the author(s) could have realistically improved on them?
4. What conclusions does the author(s) draw about the puzzle or question s/he is trying to address? Which
conclusions are particularly surprising given the literature?
5. What possibilities for future research are raised by the piece? Where are the theoretical or empirical questions that are left to be answered? What new data might be brought to the question?

**THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Research proposals are an important part of our work as scholars. As we seek funding for a research project we are often asked to provide a description of our research plans that explains its significance and the methods we plan to use to a wide audience of scholars. Research proposals typically include an explanation of the research question (or hypothesis), the significance of this question to the larger subfield, and a plan of how you will study this question. That plan should include discussions of what sort of data you will use, how you will collect or find these data, and how exactly you will measure the important concepts involved in answering your research question.

The research assignment in this class is to write such a proposal. You are limited to twenty double-spaced pages of text (not including bibliography). Your research proposals should be written AS IF you were going to complete the research. That means you must be able to carry out the research you propose, and you must provide significant detail about how you will conduct the research.

Your written proposal will be judged as would grants on the relevance of the basic question to the field, and the soundness and quality of the research design. As part of the research proposal you must present your proposal to the class on and answer questions from your fellow students. Your presentation and "defense" of your proposal is part of your grade on the research proposal.

Sometime before spring break you should make an appointment to see me to discuss this paper. The topic of the research must in some way relate to the material or subjects covered in class. **If you prefer to complete a research paper this semester, please see me.**
Tentative Schedule and Readings

Week 1  8/25  Introduction and to what are we studying


Week 2  9/3  A Week of Golden Oldies


Other Important Classic Readings
Strain/Breakdown:


Resource Mobilization:


Political Opportunity:


Week 3 9/10  More Modern Takes on the Golden Oldies


Recommended Readings:

Week 4 9/17  Political Opportunity Structure


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 5 9/24**  Frames and Culture


Recommended Readings:


Week 6 10/1 Collective Identity, Solidarity and Emotion


Recommended Readings:


Week 7 10/8 Mobilization: Rational Choice Perspectives and Formal Models


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 8 10/15  Mobilization: Individual level analyses**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 9 10/22  Project proposal meetings**

**Week 10 10/29  Movement Institutionalization**


**Recommended Readings:**

**Week 11 11/5  Movement Outcomes:  Influence on other movements**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 12 11/12  Movement Outcomes:  A focus on States**


**Recommended Reading:**


Giugni, Marco; Doug McAdam; and Charles Tilly, editors. 1999. How Social Movements Matter. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


Skocpol, Theda. 1979. States & Social Revolutions. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.


**Week 13 November 19th Movement Outcomes: Influencing other Institutions**


**Recommended Readings:**

Davis, Gerald; Calvin Morrill; Hayagreeva Rao; and Sarah A. Soule. “Introduction: Social Movements in Organizations and Markets.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 53: 389-394.


**Week 14 12/3 Movement Outcomes: Affecting the Individual**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 15 12/11** Proposal Defenses: Panels 1 & 2

**Finals week panel** Proposal Defenses: Panels 3 & 4
Bibliographies on Other Topics •:
The works above in no way constitute a complete list of references on these topics. They are merely pieces that I have come across or that are well-known within the field (i.e. often cited).

**Transnational Movements and Globalization**


**New Social Movements**


The Disability Rights Movement:


The Women's Movement:


The Civil Rights Movement:


The Environmental and Anti-Nuclear Movements:

Labor Union Movement:
**Academic Integrity and Academic Dishonesty**

Along with the Department of Political Science, the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, I take violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students who are uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: [http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml](http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml).

**Disabilities**

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is your responsibility to inform me early in the semester. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.