Social Movements (SOCY S216)
Summer 2020, Session B (June 29 – July 31)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM, Online via Zoom

Instructor: Roger Baumann (roger.baumann@yale.edu)

Summer 2020 Online

This summer’s Social Movements class is moving online! Normally, this class would meet in a typical Yale classroom, where we would interact face-to-face for about three hours, two mornings per week. That time includes a combination of interactive lectures, hearing from guest speakers, larger group discussions, smaller group breakouts, and watching and discussing parts of several films together. Fortunately, Yale’s resources for online learning allow us to do all of these things remotely. We will use Yale’s Learning Management System, Canvas, to organize our online learning experience. Lectures and discussions will happen live, during our scheduled class time, on the Zoom platform.

The books we’ll be reading are widely available online in digital and hard copy formats. Please purchase or rent a copy of each of the six books listed below under “Readings.” All other supplementary reading materials will be available to download from Canvas.

If you have any questions about the online format, or any other aspect of the course, feel free to reach out by email.

Description

This course is about how people act collectively to challenge the status quo of powerful political, social, economic, and cultural systems that resist change. Social movements that challenge such systems vary widely in terms of their group identities, social locations, strategies for action, particular demands, and tactics. In order to better understand social movements, we will begin broadly with some key questions: What are social movements and how do we approach the task of defining them? What tools do we need to analyze how movements work? And how can we appreciate how and why some movements succeed in achieving their goals while others apparently fail?

In this intensive 5-week summer course, we will focus on one case study per week, using each case to work through a set of concepts that will help us understand particular social movements and how movements work more generally. We will pay attention to how movements operate both inwardly (oriented towards their own members and potential members) and outwardly (oriented towards opponents and others). Our primary empirical focus will be on social movements within the United States, but we will also pay close attention to the ways that collective behavior and protest in the U.S. matters globally.

Our study of social movements will move back and forth between abstract concepts and particular case studies. Our primary empirical case studies are: 1) The U.S. civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s; 2) Organized Labor in the 20th century; 3) Identity-focused movements that emerged from the 1960s, especially the gay rights and LGBTQ movements; 4) Populist movements during the
Obama presidency (The Tea Party movement and its challengers); and 5) #BlackLivesMatter and the Movement for Black Lives.

We will approach these movements by paying attention to concepts like: Solidarity, Organization, Mobilization, Identity, Resources, Framing, Collective Memory, Narrative, Networks and Organizations, Forms of Protest, and Performance.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this class, you will: (1) Understand a range of approaches that sociologists and scholars of collective behavior use to define, categorize, and analyze social movements, (2) Be experienced in applying a range of analytical tools to rich empirical case studies of social movements from the 20th and 21st centuries, (3) Have a firm grasp on how cultural explanations of protest and social movements relate to other approaches that emphasize the structural, material, and rational aspects of collective behavior, and (4) Have interacted with contemporary social movement activists in order to better understand their motivations, their approaches to organizing, protest, and other activities.

Class Format

The class format will be a mix of lectures, discussions, and debates. The lectures will orient you to the material for each session, helping to identify the main arguments and the significance of each reading with respect to the overarching themes of the course. Our discussions will help you process the readings and apply them to the broader questions the course explores and to your own intellectual interests. We will also spend some time in class on other activities—like watching parts of films, hearing from guest speakers, etc.

You will be responsible for reading the material assigned for each class session. We will spend much of our time discussing these specific readings and it is imperative that you come to class having read the materials for the day and prepared to discuss them. Each week we will focus on one major book reading, sections of our text (Protest by James Jasper), and several shorter supplementary readings. The textbook readings, shorter articles, and other supplementary materials are assigned for specific days. You should work on reading the weekly book throughout the week so that you are prepared to complete the weekly assignment based on that case study. These assignments are due on the Monday of each week of class following the first week at noon.

Attendance and Participation

Because of condensed format of a summer course and discussion-based component of this class in particular, student participation is absolutely essential. We will spend much of our time in class discussing the readings and other relevant topics. You are expected to come to class having done the readings and should be prepared to discuss the material, its implications, and related questions. As this is an intensive summer class, full attendance is imperative. Absences will only be excused for unforeseeable exigencies. Please see below for further details on participation grading.

When we’re online, there are a number of ever-present distractions available to us. I ask that you do what you can to minimize distractions during our online meetings (e.g., turn off your phones, close
your email, etc.) Our meeting times will be enriched significantly if we all give each other our full attention as much as possible.

The central topics of this course—including race, religion, politics, and sexuality—are difficult and personal to many. This class will be a place open to all perspectives on these topics within the limits of civility and respectful engagement. By civility and respectful engagement, I mean that we will all commit to listening to each other, practicing charity in interpreting each other’s views, positions, and experiences, and speaking to each other with appreciation and respect. That being said, we will all benefit most in an environment that is open to freely and critically investigating difficult ideas related to how our topics of study. We will not always agree with each other on matters that tend to be highly divisive, but we can agree to make an honest effort to understand each other’s views and to treat each other with the utmost respect.

Course Requirements

**Participation** — Attendance and active participation are key components of this class. Much of our time together will be conversational in nature and this will require regular active engagement from you during our meetings. You must come prepared to discuss the readings each day and will participate regularly in small and larger group discussions and debates on the material.

**Presentation** — Beginning in Week 2, we will have a student led group presentation on the second day of the week. This presentation will be based on the book reading for the week and will explore and elaborate on some aspect of the week’s empirical case study. By the end of the first week, each student will be assigned a group.

**Weekly Assignments** — Each Monday of the class after the first week, you will have an individual assignment due. These assignments will be primarily focused on the material from the previous week, but there will be a cumulative aspect and you will be asked to incorporate insights and information from previous weeks in each assignment. We will discuss the topics and format of these assignments in the first week of class and you will get detailed assignment guidelines each week.

**Grading**

- Participation and Attendance: 20%
- Group Presentation: 10%
- Weekly Assignments: 70%
  - Week 1: 10%
  - Week 2: 10%
  - Week 3: 10%
  - Week 4: 20%
  - Week 5: 20%
Class Policies

Late Assignments — Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day.

Academic Integrity — Cheating and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will be handled appropriately within the University’s guidelines. If there is any doubt about what constitutes cheating and academic dishonesty, please consult the University’s resources on this or ask the instructor.

Special Accommodations — Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this course are encouraged to meet with the appropriate disability service provider on campus as soon as possible. All appropriate accommodations will be made according to University policies.

Contacting the Instructor — Email is the best way to be in touch. We will email you back within 24 hours.

Readings

The following books will be our primary texts for the course. Please purchase or rent them from wherever you prefer to buy your books. Additional Readings will be linked from the syllabus and/or uploaded to the ‘Files’ section of the course site.


Course Schedule
(Note: This schedule of topics is subject to change; Please refer to the most recent version of the syllabus posted on Canvas as the course start date approaches)

Week 1: Introduction and the Civil Rights Movement

Weekly Book

- Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer*

Films:

- Selma (2014)
- Freedom Summer (PBS, 2014)

Day 1 (Tuesday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Introduction (Doing Protest)*, Chapter 1 (*What Are Social Movements?*)

Day 2 (Thursday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: and Chapter 2 (Meaning)* and Chapter 3 (*Infrastructure*)

Recommended

- The Spread of U.S. Slavery, 1790-1860 (Interactive Map)
- ‘Before Rosa Parks, There Was Claudette Colvin’ (NPR)
- ‘The Body of Emmett Till’ (YouTube, 8 min, *Includes Graphic Images*)

Week 2: The American Labor Movement

Weekly Book

- Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss, *Hard Work*

Films


Day 1 (Tuesday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Chapter 4 (Recruiting)*
Day 2 (Thursday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Chapter 5 (Sustaining)*

Recommended

- “Changed Lives: NOLA” (YouTube)
- “30 Years of Local 34” (YouTube)
- “Cleve Jones” (YouTube)
- “One Job Should Be Enough” (Unite Here)

Week 3: “New” Social Movements and the LGBTQ Movement

Weekly Book

- Lisa Stulberg, *LGBTQ Social Movements*

Films

- Milk (2008)
- Stonewall Uprising (PBS, 2010)

Day 1 (Tuesday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Chapter 6 (Deciding)*

Day 2 (Thursday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Chapter 7 (Engaging Other Players)*

Week 4: Populist Movements

Weekly Book

- Ruth Braunstein, *Prophets and Patriots*

Films

- The Edge of Democracy (Netflix, 2019)

Day 1 (Tuesday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Chapter 8 (Winning, Losing, and More)*
Day 2 (Thursday)

- James Jasper, *Protest: Conclusion (Humans as Heroes)*

Week 5: The Movement for Black Lives

Weekly Book

- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*

Day 1 (Tuesday)

- An Xiao Mina, *Memes to Movements*, Chapter 3.3 - 4.3 (pg. 64-95)

Day 2 (Thursday)

- No Reading

Recommended

- Sybrina Fulton & Tracy Martin, *Rest in Power* (Excerpts)
- How to Deal with the Police: Parents Explain (YouTube)
- Hell You Talmbout/Say Their Names (YouTube)
- Rest In Power: The Trayvon Martin Story (TV Documentary Series)
- Mapping Police Violence (Website)