Purpose of the Course
This course examines the field of social movements through major theoretical positions and illustrative studies. Questions concerning the origins, dynamics, and impacts of social movements will be addressed. Early weeks of the semester will focus on major theoretical approaches. Particular attention will be devoted to structural, cultural, rational actor, social psychological and relational/network theories. Much of the semester will be devoted to key analytic questions concerning social movements including micromobilization and recruitment, strategy, leadership, organization, the state and repression, diffusion, mass media, and outcomes/success.

Along the way, we will have the chance to read about a broad array of social movements. In addition, we will consider various strategies available for studying social movements – including historical and comparative methods, surveys of organizations and individuals, experiments, analyses of events, ethnographic fieldwork, and qualitative interviews.

Course Requirements
Class meetings will be organized as discussions. I will circulate reading questions for each class session. For class meetings, two students will be responsible for preparing a brief presentation responding to selected questions about the week’s reading. Typically, I will take a few minutes at the beginning of class to comment on the week’s themes and topics with an eye toward locating our reading in the broader field. Discussion leaders will then have an opportunity to reflect on the readings. These comments might include critical comments about the reading, identification of further questions to pursue, reflections on the applicability of concepts and theories in the reading to other cases, and so forth. Your comments should focus attention on key analytic questions and areas for debate and discussion. Each student will comment on readings for two class sessions during the semester. Following the class meeting you will write and post to Blackboard a brief summary of your in-class comments and further insights that emerged from the class discussion.

In addition to the class presentation(s), the other major requirement is a research proposal. Your proposal will be developed through an initial statement of your research question and empirical
case (due Friday, February 9th), an initial draft along with a presentation on March 19th, and a final version due at the end of the semester. If appropriate, this paper should include the findings of preliminary research. The goal for this assignment is a proposal suitable for a master’s paper, grant/fellowship application, or dissertation. The first part of the assignment will be a description of your research questions.

Course grades will be based on class participation throughout the semester (25%), presentation (25%), and the research proposal (50%).

Reading
The following books have been ordered:


All other readings will be available through Blackboard.
**Course Schedule**

**January 22**

Introduction
What is a social movement? When did the social movement emerge? How is it similar and different from related phenomena such as resistance, riots, interest groups, and so forth? What are the central questions in the field?


Recommended:

Sidney Tarrow. 1998. *Power in Movement*, Chs 1 and 4

**January 29**

Structuralist Theories: Power and Resources
How do broad social, economic and political changes shape the rise, development and decline of movements? To what degree are challengers capable of generating their own leverage and to what degree are they dependent on electoral realignments, support from allies, political crises, elite support, and so forth?


Recommended:

**February 5**

Culturalist Theories: Culture, Injustice and Identity
How are movements shaped by popular beliefs, understandings, and practices? What are the cultural obstacles to mobilization? To what degree does movement emergence depend on pre-existing identities, the transformation of existing ones, and the creation of new ones?

February 12

Interest, Values and Emotions
Why do people participate in movements? How do interests, values and emotions shape (and how are they shaped by) participation?


February 19

Relationships
How does an individuals’ embeddedness in relationships shape the likelihood of participating in movements? How do movement organizers mobilize through networks? How do the relationships people bring to movements matter, how do they shape emergence and ongoing development of movements, and how do movements transform relationships?

February 26

Strategy in Movements
What is strategy and how can we study it? Are some leaders, organizations, and movements able to develop better strategy, and, if so, what determines this?


March 5

Building and Sustaining Organizations
How and what kinds of organizations facilitate the emergence of movements? What drives growth and change in populations of movement organizations? Does professionalization advance or undermine a movement’s collective power?


Recommended:

March 12

SPRING BREAK

March 19

Project Presentations
March 26

Leadership and Authority in Social Movements
What are the factors internal and external to movements that shape who becomes leaders in social movements? What are the impacts of leaders and leadership in social movements? What are the different ways that authority is constituted across movements and what difference does this make?


Gamson et al. Encounters with Unjust Authority (selection)


April 2

Diffusion and the Dynamics of Movements
How can we explain the dynamic aspects of movements including the ways that ideas, tactics, and information spread rapidly in the midst of popular struggles? What implications does the contingent and dynamic aspects of movements pose for generalizing across cases?


Recommended:


April 9

Social Control and the Repression of Movements
What are the main forms of social control and repression that movements encounter? When does repression “work” to undermine movements and when does it “backfire” escalating movements?


April 16

Mass Media and Movements
How does the mass media shape the leadership, tactics, diffusion, and consequences of social movements?


Recommended:

Can movements generate enduring consequences; if so, how do they accomplish this?


**Studying Social Movements**

The following selections specifically address questions about studying social movements and collective action, and they may be helpful as you think about strategies appropriate for your own research. As you can see, a large amount of this literature addresses problems and debates specific to the collection of ‘event’ data. However, there are additional items below related to network analysis, interviews, case studies, and surveys. The first book is the best single source because it includes chapters on many different methods from field work to formal models.


