

Making Effective Change: SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZING & ACTIVISM

Fall, Winter, Spring 2012-13

Sophomore-Senior, 16 credits/quarter

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Social movements don't just happen. They emerge in complex, often subtle ways out of shifting historic conditions, at first unnoticed or underestimated. Social movements--across the political spectrum--push us to examine a wide array of questions about ideas, communication and organization, and how people are inspired and mobilized to create change. In this program, we will explore what individuals and communities can do about whatever issues are of most concern to them.

This program will examine methods of community organizing that educate and draw people into social movements, and methods of activism that can turn their interests and commitment into effective action. Key to this will be how movements construct and frame their strategies, using a toolkit of tactics. Our foundation will be the contemporary U.S. scene, but we'll draw on historical roots and lessons from the past, as well as on models from other countries. It will be crucial for us to look at the contexts of global, national and regional movements, and how they shape (and are shaped by) events at the local scale.

In fall quarter we'll undertake a comparative exploration of strategies and tactics of various social movements in the U.S. and abroad, and critically analyze their effectiveness and applicability. We'll explore movements based around class and economic equality (such as labor rank-and-file, welfare rights and anti-foreclosure groups), as well as those based around identities of race, nationality and gender (such as civil rights, feminist, Native sovereignty, LGBTQ, and immigrant rights groups). The program will also examine movements that focus on life's resources, from environmental justice to health, education and housing. Our examinations and explorations will take us across the political spectrum, including lessons from how populist movements effectively reach and mobilize disillusioned people, including right-wing populist movements, such as the Tea Party, pro-life/anti-choice and anti-gay movements, and anti-immigrant, anti-indigenous, and other white supremacist organizations.

During winter quarter, we'll explore the ways that movements emerge and grow, focusing on themes that cut across organizations, and developing practical skills centered on these themes. Our discussions will include how movements reflect and tell people's stories (through interviews, theater, etc.). Central to our work will be an examination of ways to communicate with people from different walks of life, using accessible language and imagery (through personal interaction, popular education, alternative media, etc.). We'll critically examine how groups use mainstream institutions to effect change (such as press releases, research centers, legislative tactics, etc.). We'll examine and critique the use of the internet and social media in networking people, and share

innovative uses of culture (film, audio, art, music, etc.). We'll assess the effectiveness and creativity of actions at different scales (rallies, direct actions, boycotts, etc.). Finally, we will look at relationships between social movements with different organizing styles, and how they have built alliances, as well as the internal dynamics within organizations.

Spring quarter will be a time for in-depth work through different types of projects: comparative critiques of movement strategies, critical social history of a movement, direct work with a local or regional movement, critical exploration of movement literature, or development of media, including such possibilities as social media, short film pieces, photography, web pages, photovoice, and podcasting. Throughout the program, our work will be shaped by a range of community organizers, activists and scholars. Projects will use community-based research and documentation, with a view toward the sharing and presenting of work, in connection with partners and collaborators.

Fields of Study: American studies, communications, community studies, geography, history, law and government policy, law and public policy, leadership studies, media studies, political science, sociology and sustainability studies.

Preparatory for studies or careers in: non-governmental organizations, advocacy, public policy, law and legal rights, education, public health, alternative justice systems, graduate school in social science, history, law, geography and political economy.

Required Reading:

The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle (TV Reed)

Pedagogy of the Poor (Baptist & Rehmann)

Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement (Barbara Ransby)

The Accidental American: Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization

(Rinku Sen & Fekkak Mamdouh)

Will to Resist: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan (Dahr Jamail)

The Quest for Environmental Justice (Robert Bullard)

Several reading packets as listed in the schedule that you will find on Moodle at

<https://moodle.evergreen.edu/course/view.php?id=2823>

(access via my.evergreen.edu or moodle.evergreen.edu, then bookmark the page)

***If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please contact your advisor immediately. Applicable students may also register with Access Services for documentation and verification of appropriate accommodations. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Contact Access Services in Library 1407-D, (360) 867-6348.

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change; updates of syllabus on Moodle supersede the printed syllabus.

Program Schedule

Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
10-1 Lecture/Film LH 01	10-1 Lecture/Film/Workshop SEM 2 E1105	10-1 Lecture/Film SEM 2 E1105
2-4 Seminar SEM2 E2107 (A), E2109 (Z), E3107 (L)		2-4 Seminar SEM2 E2107 (A), E2109 (Z), E3107 (L)

Assignments:

CUMULATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW: In order to help facilitate careful and critical reading, each student will compose one full single-space page (500-600 words), *not just a paragraph*, with review of and reflections on the readings from each seminar, due at the beginning of each seminar (beginning the first Friday). The page should include an abstract, reflections, analysis, questions and/or discussable comments for each seminar's reading. These thoughtful comments will be useful for beginning the seminars, and should be brought to seminar. They should be detailed, and refer or respond to specific passages or aspects of the reading (not vague, general observations). These discussion pages will have your name and the seminar date, since *they will constitute your attendance in the seminar*, and verify that you have completed and reflected on the reading. Students must always bring the reading itself to the seminar (and any assigned readings to all-program meetings). They should be posted on Moodle by the start of seminar (Moodle records the time of your posts for faculty). You need to respond to posts by two other students' in your seminar (from either day) by the following Monday at 5 pm. All Moodle posts should be directly copied and pasted from another document into Moodle.

ACADEMIC STATEMENT: This quarter we will begin working on the academic statement by writing a narrative of what you bring to this class and what led you here. Like the academic statement your narrative will be between 600 and 750 words. In your narrative statement, you will summarize and reflect carefully on your "political and social education," what or who has influenced you and led you to believe what you believe. You will begin to work on the statement early in the quarter, then develop and revise it over the course of the year under the guidance of your seminar faculty. The final version may form the basis of your academic statement which becomes an important part of your transcript.

RESEARCH PROJECT: The research project is a survey and analysis of a particular social movement, and an organization and person within that movement. It is in three sections, ranging from the general (the entire social movement), to the more specific (a single organization), and the individual (an interview with a member of the organization). The topic is determined by which seminar you are assigned; each seminar will focus on two of our biweekly themes for the purposes of the project, to make it easier for each thematic group to meet. You may choose one of the two topics in your seminar, as long as the numbers of the Seminar Thematic Groups roughly divide in half:

Lin seminar:	Gender/Feminism/LGBTQ;	Environmental Justice
Zoltan seminar:	Antiwar/International Solidarity;	Indigenous Sovereignty
Anthony seminar:	Class/Economic Justice/Labor;	Race/Ethnicity/Immigration

It is preferable to choose a movement and organization in which you have not personally been involved, so your attention is focused on the goals, strategies and tactics, rather you're your experiences or personalities. You will

meet in seminars as two separate Seminar Thematic Groups, to work on avoiding overlap and repetition in your projects, and prepare for the “Learning Movements” Forum on the last day of class. But all your writing will be individually developed, and your projects will be evaluated as individual work.

Part I: Social Movement Directory (due Wednesday, Oct. 3 on Moodle, and hard copy to seminar leader on Friday). The first part of your research involves a very simple gathering of information about organizations within the social movement, which will be compiled as a class directory and released to the campus community. You will use the internet to find and research 15 organizations, 10 of which challenge the existing society to change (progressive, radical, etc.), and 5 of which defend the social *status quo* (conservative, right-wing, etc.). Select a diverse range of interesting groups that are currently active and prominent, whether on a local, regional, national or global level. Use your research to familiarize yourself with the interesting range of goals, strategies, tactics within the movements, and any internal debates. You will list the organization name, website, the group-defined mission or goals (3-5 lines only), mailing address, phone, and email, using this exact format:

Redirection Project

<http://www.redirection.org>

Since 1964, the Redirection Project has used community education and engagement to redirect the anger of white working-class/middle-class citizens away from the wealthy class, and toward minority communities, gays and lesbians, immigrants, and foreign enemies. The Project holds firearms trainings, English as an Only Language (EOL) instruction, and classes in British cooking.

1776 Ronald Reagan Boulevard, Suite 1A, Arlington, VA 22201

(571) 555-1212

aynrand@redirection.org

Part II: Organizational Analysis (due Wednesday, October 31 on Moodle as an attachment, and hard copy to seminar leader on Friday). You will select one of the organizations you found for Part I, and write an 7-8 page analysis of it (12-point double-spaced, stapled). Students within your thematic seminar group should not overlap on the organizations. Your analysis will answer these specific questions, which should be subheadings within your paper:

1. What are the overall values, mission, and goals of the organization?
2. What is the primary scale of its work (local, regional, national, global)?
3. How does it fit into the larger social movement, in terms of its ideology and/or approach?
4. What are its main strategies, or campaigns to reach its goals?
5. What are its main tactics, or tools to implement its strategies?
6. What have been some notable victories or successes (be specific with years/places).
7. What have been some notable failures or shortcomings (be specific with years/places).
8. What are some interesting internal debates, or debates with other groups or tendencies within the movement, that have emerged from these successes or failures?

This part of the project may help you in the future to write a funding proposal, or recruitment brochure on a group. At the end of the paper (not included in the page length requirement) you need to have at least 5 sourced

graphics, such as a logo, photos of group events, cartoons about its actions, or its newsletter or website graphics that communicate its ideas. The graphics should be compelling, easily recognizable or readable, and of good quality. Each graphic needs to be accompanied by a short caption explaining its details, year, place, larger context, and source:

This Redirection Project demonstration in 2007 at the U.S. Department of Health and Social Services opposed health care for U.S. citizens with foreign-sounding names (Source: www.redirection.org/funnynames)

Part III: Interview (due Wednesday, November 28 on Moodle, and hard copy to your seminar leader on Friday). The third part of your project will involve an 5-7 page interview with a leader or member of your selected organization, conducted by e-mail, phone, or in person. (You will include contact information for this person, so they can be contacted if needed by program faculty.) This person will be someone who has been active in the group, and has detailed knowledge of its activities and ideas. You will draw on your research from Part II to ask *why* the group determined its goals, strategies, and tactics, and *how* it dealt with internal and external debates, successes and shortcomings, and social dynamics. You can submit a list of questions, but they should be informed and specific (showing you did your Part II research), not vague or too open-ended. If you are conducting an oral interview, you are *not* required to transcribe the entire interview, but you should record the interview so you can transcribe useful direct quotations, and paraphrase some of your interviewee’s other observations. *You will need to start early in the quarter to make contacts with multiple people* via email or phone, to make sure you have one to interview! Interviews are internal to our program, so will *not* be published.

Social Movements Fair (Friday, December 7, Library 2200-entryway). You will have a chance on the last day of class to present your findings to your fellow students and the campus community in our Social Movements Fair. Each Thematic Group will have tables to present posters with readable text and graphics (drawn from Part II) on the organizations within the social movement, or some sort of other visual presentation (slides, video, etc.) and/or performance about the organization that draws from your research. You must be prepared to explain your visual presentation, in a form of popular education, and especially to answer numerous questions from faculty and fellow students. Discuss the form of your presentation with both your thematic seminar group and faculty seminar leader.

Part I: Social Movement Directory	By October 3 (Week 2)
Identify organization	By October 5 (Week 2)
First draft Academic Statement	Due October 10 (Week 3)
Identify interviewee	By October 26 (Week 5)
Part II: Organizational Analysis	Due October 31 (Week 6)
Final Fall Draft Academic Statement	Due November 7 (Week 7)
Interview complete; transcribed quotes	By November 14 (Week 8)
Part III: Interview	Due November 28 (Week 9)
Social Movements Fair	December 7 (Week 10)