

JSIS 498D: Social Movements and Revolutions

Spring 2013, Thomson 217

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Why do people join mass protests at the risk of physical harm? Why do these movements sometimes result in revolutions? This course will introduce students to some of the best books from sociology and political science in order to answer these and other questions.

Current events in the Arab world will lurk in the background of our discussions. By any measure, 2011 was a dramatic year of historic importance, but there were revolutions—believe it or not—before the Age of Twitter. To gain better insight into the events of recent years, we will consider how scholars have sought to comprehend and explain social movements and revolutions past. Although the events most often associated with the word *revolution* include the “great” ones—the French, Russian, and Chinese, for example—this course focuses mostly on the late 20th century.

This is a “books” course. The books will look at social movements and revolutions from different theoretical perspectives, emphasizing individual, structural, cultural, or organizational factors, and employ case studies from different parts of the world. By the end of the course, students should be able to apply these approaches to current events.

Reading

With the exception of the first two weeks, we will be reading all or part of seven books, which are available from the U-bookstore or online, and will be on 4-hour reserve at Odegaard. Students are strongly encouraged to buy the books and bring them to class, even if it's a digital version.

- Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, 1999
- Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, 2011
- Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, 2002
- Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*, 2004
- Roger Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*, 1995

- Scott Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-led Protests in Central Asia*, 2010
- Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising*, 2013

Reading should be completed by the dates below:

April 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidney Tarrow, <i>Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics</i>, 1998. Introduction (1-9), Chapter 5 (71-90) • Mark Irving Lichbach, and Alan S. Zuckerman. <i>Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure</i>, 1997, Chapter 9, “Social Theory and Comparative Politics” (239-76) [in that order] <p>Available on https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/srad/29600/</p>
April 16	<i>The Magic Lantern</i> , all
April 23	<i>Why Civil Resistance Works</i> , 3-91, 119-171, 220-27
April 30	<i>Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State</i> (1-102, 443-59)
May 7	<i>Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State</i> (271-384)
May 14	<i>The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran</i> , all (1-172)
May 21	<i>Insurgent Identities</i> (1-95, 153-94)
May 28	<i>Weapons of the Wealthy</i> (1-103, 131-66)
June 4	<i>The Arab Uprising</i> (1-130, 146-159)

Assignments

Class participation. It is essential that students complete the reading before class, so that we can have a thoughtful, stimulating discussion. Students should take notes on the reading and come to class with things to say about it. Your comments need not be earthshattering but they should be yours, reflecting your thoughts as you did the reading. In particular, you should be responding to the author’s claims and assessing them in light of what we have read before.

Discussion leaders. Each week, starting in Week 3, 2 or 3 students will be responsible for leading discussion. This will involve a providing a brief background to and synopsis of the reading, linkage to previous discussions, and some questions to provoke class discussion. Then, with occasional nudging from me, the students will facilitate interaction within the class. The students should arrive with notes and a list of questions or comments that can come in handy to keep discussion alive.

Short papers. Everyone will write 4 short papers of 3-4 pages, on one of the books assigned every two weeks. That is, students must write on April 16 or 23; April 30 or May 7; May 14 or

21; and May 28 or June 4, and turn the paper in at the end of the class in which we discuss it. I'll be looking for progress over time. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

The paper is not a summary. It should have two parts of roughly equal length: (1) critique of the book and (2) cumulative reflection.

1. What specific question(s) is the author trying to answer? What is the author's foil? That is, what existing debates is s/he addressing and how does s/he purport to contribute to the debate and advance cumulative knowledge? What is the author's theoretical approach? How does the author use evidence? What are potential or actual weaknesses in the argument?
2. How does this book fit in with previous readings? Does it agree or disagree with previous authors, or is it speaking to different issues? Where are we now in our search for enlightenment? What have we learned about social movements and revolutions? What questions remain unanswered? What would you like to learn more about?

Final paper. In 5-6 double-spaced pages, apply concepts and theories from class to a recent social movement or revolution that we have not discussed in depth. Select a case, either from the Arab Spring or another protest movement, and gather sources on *what* happened so that you can explain *why*.

Using class readings, try to explain *some aspect* of the case. (Narrowing the question is critical. Don't assume that your objective—the "dependent variable"—is obvious.) Think about the appropriate level of analysis and theoretical approach for your question. How well do the theories you selected explain why what happened, happened? Does one theory work best, or can you use pieces of different theories? Which, of those you selected, fail to explain the case, and why? Does your case conform to the type of case the author purports to explain, or does it lie outside the scope? What, if anything, is missing from our understanding of what transpired, and what questions would you want to ask if you were investigating the case first-hand to write your own book? Write in an analytical, professional style for an audience that has not read the books.

The final paper is due June 11 at 5 pm.

Grades

The grades will be broken down as follows:

Participation: 20%

Leading discussion: 10%

Short papers: 40%

Final Paper: 30%