

Sociology 3141 - 001

Social Movements in the U.S.

Fall 2019

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Welcome to what I hope will be a pertinent and intriguing investigation into the important role of social movements in U.S. society. Social movements are, without a doubt, one of the most exciting topics for sociological inquiry. They are conspicuous and contentious social happenings. By their very nature, social movements challenge fundamental aspects of society. Indeed, it is difficult to find a significant U.S. social issue in which social movements are not involved on one or both sides. Environmental protection, civil rights, animal rights, abortion rights, labor rights, gun rights, family values, economic inequality, globalization are but a few an array of social issues around which social movements have emerged and organized. Social movements continue to serve as vital, non-institutional, mechanisms for change - and collective reactions to change - and have been /continue to be key actors in the U.S. political process.

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a sociological understanding of past and present social movements in the United States; their organizational structures, ideologies, support-base, strategy and tactics, resources, discourse framing, multi-organizational fields of action, political opportunity structure, social control agents / authorities, etc.. We will also become familiar with a wide range of sociological theories that attempt to explain the origins, dynamics, and activities of social movements. Finally, we will highlight the central role of social movements in the changing sociopolitical landscape in the United States.

Specifically, we will address such questions as: Under what kind of historical conditions do social movements arise? What is the life cycle of social movements? Who joins social movements? Why do some social movements succeed and others fail? How is movement success measured or defined? How have movement issues and tactics changed over the past century? What are the strengths and weaknesses of centralized and decentralized organizational forms?

In C.W. Mills' classical formulation, the sociological imagination involves seeing the connections between broad social structures, emerging historical moments, and individual biographies. This way of seeing the social world has particular relevance in the case of collective action. Social movements provide some of the most vivid examples of individuals recognizing shared social concerns and uniting with one another at a certain historical moment to change the workings of society in some manner. A broader understanding of these ubiquitous social phenomena highlights the relationship between (perceived) social inequality, social movements, and the shape of contemporary society.

The three books I have chosen for this course were written and designed to facilitate your understanding of the many dimensions of social movements. Please make a commitment to read the assigned material before class. The authors have worked hard to make a number of complex ideas as understandable as possible. You must do a little work as well. You will be expected to have read and assimilated the required readings for each class meeting. The reading assignments should be done before the topic is discussed in class. These three, required texts are available for purchase or rental at the UMC Bookstore.

The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement by Aldon Morris

Social Movements by Suzanne Staggenborg

Globalization and Social Movements by Valentine Moghadam

Grading:

Your grade for this course will be based on the following criteria: class engagement (20%); six exams (10% each / 60% total); and a SMO research project & presentation (20%). **SEE DETAILS BELOW.** In determining final grades I do use the "+, -" grade-system.

* *Class Engagement* (20% of the final grade): Your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities is an essential component of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material for each class meeting and come ready to talk, share, apply, refine, and/or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. I strongly encourage you to make every effort to become a "regular member" of this class. Each student will be expected to co-facilitate (along with me) one class meeting this semester. Please bring your book(s) to each class meeting.

*Six (6) *Exams* (10% ea. / 60% of final grade). Exam Dates: 9/13; 9/27; 10/18; 11/8; 11/22 % final exam date TBD

**Social Movement Research Project* (20% of the final grade). Project topic and criteria will be discussed in-class. This project will be due in-class on 12/9/19, and presented in-class on 12/9/19 and 12/11/19.

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Exams:

Aug. 26, 28, 30 - Introduction to the Study of Social Movements

Sept. 2 No Classes / Labor Day

Sept. 4 thru Sept. 27 The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement (reading-schedule determined in class)

(Exam 1 9/13; Exam 2 9/27)

Sept. 30 thru Nov. 8 Social Movements (reading-schedule determined in class)

(Exam 3 10/18; Exam 4 11/8)

Nov. 11 thru Dec. 6 Globalization and Social Movements (reading-schedule determined in class)

(Exam 5 11/22; Exam 6 date TBD)

Dec. 9 & 11 Social Movement Project Presentations

Technology in the classroom: I want all of my students to be fully engaged in every minute of every lecture and recitation. As such students should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices at the start of class. Laptops and tablets are not allowed during lecture and recitation unless you have a written accommodation from disability services

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, *please speak with me to arrange alternative date and time*. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#)