Comparative Political Behavior: Social Movements and Revolutions
Political Science 552 -- Fall 2004

Monday 9 a.m. -12 p.m.

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Office Hours: W 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION.

This course will explore the nature of social movements and revolutions. We will look at the major theories that sociologists and political scientists have created to explain the development and outcomes of social movements and revolutions. How do we explain why people participate in revolutions or social movements? Why is it that some people never revolt although observers would say they are as bad off as others that do? What sorts of factors determine the tactics people will use once they decide something must be done? Can governments repress revolutions or social movements? What determines whether a social movement or revolution is successful?

In examining these questions we will read theoretical works, quantitative studies comparing many different social movements or revolutions and case studies of particular social movements and revolutions. By the end of this course, you should have a good grasp of the theoretical debates about social movements, the methods which have been used to study revolutions and social movements, and you will have cursory knowledge of several different revolutions and social movements ranging from the French revolution to the American Civil Rights Movement.

REQUIRED READINGS.


Skocpol, Theda. 1979. States and Social Revolutions. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Also available at the bookstore is:

McAdam, Douglas; McCarthy, John; and Mayer Zald. 1996. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

We will also be reading selections from books and numerous articles. I have some copies that I can make available to students, and we will discuss the distribution of articles on the first day of class.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES.

Student Responsibilities: The class will meet Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This course will be in seminar format which means that each individual student is responsible for completing the readings prior to the class meetings, and for contributing to the discussion of the material. For this reason, participation in class discussion is a significant portion of your final grade.

Grades: Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

a) class participation is worth 20% of your total grade. In order to get above a B grade in class participation, you must participate regularly in the class discussions.

b) serving as class discussion leader and writing an analysis of that week’s readings (for a total of 15% of your grade). See the description below.

c) one mid-semester comprehensive-style exam worth 25% of your grade. This exam will contain 4 essay questions. You will choose 2 of these essay questions to answer in the three hour period.

d) one research proposal paper and proposal presentation worth 35% of your grade. These papers are due Monday, November 29th by 4:00 p.m. Because papers will be distributed to fellow students, late papers will be penalized!!

e) written comments on other students’ research proposals. You will be graded on the care and clarity of your reviews. Your job as a proposal evaluator is worth or 5% of your grade.

SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS

The point of seminar discussions is really to allow us to work through difficult readings, to connect them to various bodies of works (e.g. the social movement literature, comparative politics paradigms, democratization literature), and to brainstorm on potential future research projects. When reading, you should focus on the major issues. The questions below represent, what I think are the major questions that we should be addressing, but each week there may be more specific questions that we need to add to this list.

1. What are the major theoretical concepts? How does the author(s) definition differ from those used by other authors? How are those concepts measured in the analysis? Is this measurement appropriate?
2. What is the major question or puzzle is the author trying to address? How does it fit in with the other literature that we have read?
3. What methodologies does the author(s) employ to address the major question? Why is it appropriate? Are there ways the author(s) could have realistically improved on the issue?
4. What conclusions does the author(s) draw about the puzzle or question he is trying to address? Which conclusions are particularly surprising given the literature?
5. What possibilities for future research are raised by the piece? Where are the theoretical or empirical questions that are left to be answered? What new data might be brought to the question?
LEADING A CLASS SESSION

For each week of readings, one person will be responsible for starting the discussion with a 10 minute presentation. The point of the introduction will be to identify the key discussion questions which will orientate the class discussion, provide a brief overview of how the readings are connected, and tie the week’s readings in with previous readings. In so doing you may need to give a one-sentence overview of individual pieces, but the point of the presentations is NOT to provide in-depth summaries of the work or answer the questions described above. This presentation should also last for no more than 10 minutes.

In addition, on the day you are designated a class discussion leader, you must also turn in a 4-5 page paper analyzing the day’s readings. These papers should be 4-5 pages and should analyze the body of works, which means you may critique the works, agree or disagree with the main arguments (giving some argument to support your opinion), or interpret them in light of other works you have read in the course or current events. A good paper will provide some insight into the readings by showing how it is connected to the other literature on social movements, by discussing theoretical or methodological flaws and achievements that might lead to future research, or by analyzing the usefulness of the theoretical or methodological approach in understanding other events. This paper may also serve as a place to begin to develop ideas for further research.

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Research proposals are an important part of our work as scholars. As we seek funding for a research project we are often asked to provide a description of our research plans that explains its significance and the methods we plan to use to a wide audience of scholars. Research proposals typically include an explanation of the research question (or hypothesis), the significance of this question to the larger subfield, and a plan of how you will study this question. That plan should include discussions of what sort of data you will use, how you will collect or find these data, and how exactly you will measure the important concepts involved in answering your research question.

The research assignment in this class is to write such a proposal. You are limited to twenty double-spaced pages of text (not including bibliography). Your research proposals should be written AS IF you were going to complete the research. That means you must be able to carry out the research you propose. For example, you should not propose interviewing participants in the student movement in China, if you do not speak Chinese.

Your written proposal will be judged as would grants on the relevance of the basic question to the field, and the soundness and quality of the research design. As part of the research proposal you must present your proposal to the class on and answer questions from your fellow students. Your presentation and "defense" of your proposal is part of your grade on the research proposal.

Sometime during the semester you should make an appointment to see me to discuss this paper. The topic of the research must in some way relate to the material or subjects covered in class.
**Tentative Schedule and Readings**

**Week 1  9/6  I. Introduction and What are we Studying?**


    2. Theories of Relative Deprivation & Mass Behavior


    Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198006%2945%3A3%3C357%3ASMBMAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8


**Recommended Readings on Deprivation/Grievances:**


Recommended Readings (continued):


Week 2  9/13  Rational Choice Perspectives and Formal Models


Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28198511%2991%3A%3C522%3AATOTCM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A


Recommended Readings:


**Recommended Readings (continued):**


**Week 3**  
9/20 Resource Mobilization Theories of Social Movements

*I. Theoretical Overview*


*II. Empirical Research*


**Recommended Readings:**

Recommended Readings (continued):


Week 4 9/27 Political Opportunity Structure


Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199410%2959%3A5%3C678%3ASTHL%22O%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W

Week 5 10/4 Frames, Culture and Collective Identity


Recommended Readings:


Week 6  
10/11  (Wednesday after Fall Break) Social Movements Transnationally


Recommended Readings:


Week 7  
10/18  Concepts in Development: Cycles of Protest


Recommended Reading:


Week 8 10/25 In-class exam

Week 9 11/1 A Synthesizing work on Movement Outcomes


Recommended Reading:


Week 10 11/8 Movements and the State

Recommended Readings:


Week 11 11/15  Week 11 11/17  Protest Participation in a Comparative Perspective


Recommended Readings:


Week 12  11/22  McAdam, Doug. Freedom Summer, pp. 1-240 and Appendix A.

Recommended Readings:


Week 13  11/29  Proposal Defenses
Week 14  12/6  Proposal Defenses
Bibliographies on Other Topics *:

New Social Movements


The Women's Movement:


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* The works above in no way constitute a complete list of references on these topics. They are merely pieces that I have come across or that are well-known within the field (i.e. often cited).


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**The Civil Rights Movement:**


The Environmental and Anti-Nuclear Movements:


Labor Union Movement:


