

CONF 739: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS -- CONFLICT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND SYSTEM-CHANGE

FALL TERM 2012

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. RICHARD RUBENSTEIN

COURSE SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course is offered on Tuesdays at 1:30-4:20 in Room 467 of Founders Hall. The **instructor** can be reached via telephone at 703-993-1307 or 703-400-7674 (cell) or via email at rrubenst@gmu.edu. His office is Room 646 Truland, and office hours are by appointment. He is available to discuss either course-related matters or other matters of interest to students. All class members should join the S-CAR Community Forum group established for this course: CONF 739: Social Movements.

The **purpose** of the course is to develop our understanding of social movements and movements of mass protest – their causes, dynamics, and consequences – and the possibilities of resolving the conflicts that generate them non-violently. Associated aims are to familiarize students with the ideas generated by social movement theorists; to use these insights to deepen our understanding of serious social conflicts; to explore the implications of these theories for conflict resolution practice; and to do research, make presentations to the class, and write papers on topics of interest to the seminar.

The **style** will be that of a graduate seminar, with students doing readings in common as well as some independent reading. Students will also do a practical research project and will present the results to the class.

With regard to **content**, the structure of the course is as follows:

We begin with an overview of classical and modern theories that have attempted to account for and describe social movements (weeks 1-3). Then, using both theoretical and historical materials, we study social and political revolutions (weeks 4-6) and movements of radical reform and reaction (weeks 7-9); we also view and discuss a film. While students do their fieldwork and report on it, we discuss specific movement strategies, focusing on the issues of violence and nonviolence (week 11), leadership and organization (week 12), and programmatic demands (week 13). We conclude by exploring the possible roles of conflict resolution/transformation in the context of social mobilizations (week 14).

Class **requirements** are as follows: Students are expected to attend each class thoroughly prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, each student will read and review a book and/or essays supplemental to those listed in the syllabus as required. **Grades** will be based on a short essay on an issue discussed in the

course readings and in class (30%), a writeup and oral presentation based on their practical research project (30%), and a final paper of 2000-3000 words (40%). Further specifications for the research project and final paper will be supplied in class. All papers must be submitted on time. It is S-CAR's policy not to grant grades of Incomplete for reasons other than a documented medical or family emergency. Please see the schedule below for relevant dates and deadlines.

With regard to **process**, the structure is as follows: Most class sessions will begin with a short lecture by the instructor followed by class discussion. In certain weeks, there will also be brief student presentations or guest lectures. Students will submit their short essays in October, research writeups and presentations in early November, and final papers in December. All due dates are noted on the schedule below.

Assigned readings are listed in the schedule of classes and assignments, below. Three books are required: Steven M. Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present* (Paradigm Publishers, 2011), Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (Vintage, 1965), and Norman Finkelstein, *What Gandhi Says* (OR Books, 2012). All are available at the Arlington Campus Bookstore. All other readings are posted on the SCAR Community Forum, in the space provided for this course. A list of **recommended readings** is appended to this syllabus.

University Requirements

These are listed immediately below in language suggested by the Provost's Office. We will take time in the first class to discuss any questions that you may have about this material, including questions about plagiarism.

Academic integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU email accounts

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Office of Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Other Useful Campus Resources

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200;
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"
<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;
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<http://caps.gmu.edu>

The UNIVERSITY CATALOG, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Required books are as follows (for order of readings and other details, please see the schedule below). All are available at the Arlington Campus Bookstore. For **assigned articles**, see the schedule of assignments, below. Assigned articles and other materials, as well as comments by the instructor and classmates, will be placed on the S-CAR Community Forum group established for this course.

A partial list of **recommended books** follows. These are not available at the Campus Bookstore but can be found in the George Mason Library system or in the John Burton Library. Check with Rich to see if he has a copy as well.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 28: Intro to course. Read Richard E. Rubenstein, "What is Occupy? A Conflict Analysis Perspective," in SCAR Newsletter. 6:1 (February, 2012), posted to S-CAR Community Forum

Sep. 4: Overview of social movement theories I. Read Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements*, 9-55, 91-98

Sep. 11: Overview of social movement theories II. Read Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements*, 125-227

Sep. 18: Social and political revolutions I. Read Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, 27-147

Sep. 25: Revolutions II. Read Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, 148-264

Oct. 2: Revolutions III: the Arab Spring. Read Perry Anderson, "The Arab World Concatenation," and Hazem Kandil, "Revolt in Egypt," *New Left Review* 68 (Mar.-Apr. 2011), 5-55; sample articles from *Interface* 4:1 (May 2012), "The Season of Revolution," esp. articles by Samir Amin and Bassam Haddad.

<http://www.interfacejournal.net/2012/05/interface-volume-4-issue-1-the-season-of-revolution-the-arab-spring-and-european-mobilizations/>

MIDTERM ESSAY TOPICS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS

Oct. 9: COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY

Oct. 16: View and discuss film by Haskell Wexler: "Medium Cool" (1968)

MIDTERM ESSAYS DUE IN CLASS

Oct. 23: Reform movements I: Class-based movements. Read Piven and Cloward, from *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (Vintage, 1979), 1-40, 96-180

CONFIRM FIELD RESEARCH PROJECTS

Oct. 30: Reform movements II: Identity-based movements. Read Richard E. Rubenstein, from *Rebels in Eden: Mass Political Violence in the United States*, 2-114. If you have time, read Norman Mailer, from *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (New York Review Books, 1968, 2008), 83-223

Nov. 6: Reform movements III: Symbolic issues in left-wing and right-wing mobilizations. Read Woehrlé, Coy, and Manley, from *Contesting Patriotism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 27-92. Explore Tea Party Patriots website, <http://teapartypatriots.ning.com/>, read the Wikipedia article on the Tea Party movement, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_Party_movement, and read Matthew Continetti, "The Two Faces of the Tea Party," *Weekly Standard*, June 28, 2010, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/two-faces-tea-party>. If you have time, read Burghart and Zeskin, "Tea Party Nationalism" (IREH Report, Fall 2010), <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/11246-irehrreport.html>

Nov. 13: Strategic and political issues I: Violence and nonviolence. Read Norman Finkelstein, *What Gandhi Says* (OR Books, 2012); Sidney Tarrow, from *Power in Movement* (Cambridge U. Press, 1998), 96-105

FIRST GROUP REPORTS ON FIELD RESEARCH PROJECTS

Nov.20: Strategic and political issues II: Leadership and organization. Read Colin Ward, "Anarchism as a Theory of Organization," <http://www.panarchy.org/ward/organization.1966.html>; David Graeber, "The New Anarchists," *New Left Review* 13 (Jan-Feb 2002),

<http://newleftreview.org/II/13/david-graeber-the-new-anarchists> "Occupy Movement Must Dump Failed Graeber-Anarchist Leadership: Tarpley on Press TV," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOaPRONd-NY>

SECOND GROUP REPORTS ON FIELD RESEARCH PROJECTS

Nov. 27: Strategic and political issues III: Programmatic demands and policy tactics. Read Sidney Tarrow, from *Power in Movement* (Cambridge U. Press, 1998), 141-175; October Washington DC, "The 99% Deficit Proposal,"

<http://october2011.org/blogs/kevin-zeese/99-s-deficit-proposal-how-create-jobs-reduce-wealth-divide-and-control-spending>

THIRD GROUP REPORTS ON FIELD RESEARCH PROJECTS

Dec. 4: Discuss role of conflict resolution/transformation in the context of mass mobilizations and protest movements. Guest speakers. Concluding overview of course.

Dec. 16: Final papers due by close of business via email to Instructor