

**SOC 7160 Special Topics: The Power of Social Movements**  
**Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba**  
**Three credit hour course - Winter 2015 – Mondays 2:30 – 5:15**  
**Room: Isbister 335**

**Instructor:** Annette Desmarais, PhD

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will analyze the strategies, tactics, forms and sites of resistance that social movements use in their efforts to effect social, economic and political change in various countries.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The **goal** of the course is to engage in an advanced study and analysis of what social movements are, how they work, and how they effect social change. The course **objectives** are as follows:

- To examine various concepts used in the analysis of social movements;
- To examine specific social movements and analyze their contribution to social change;
- To explore ways of measuring the significance and impact of social movements; and
- To explore the relationships between local/national social movements and transnational social movements.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This is a graduate seminar course. Students must read the assigned readings and come to class prepared to engage in discussions of this material. When film is used, students are expected to view these attentively and take notes to be better able to engage in informed discussion about different elements of social movement theory and experience portrayed in the film(s).

The seminars will be free flowing while at the same time involve focused and informed discussion. Throughout the course students will be asked to engage in the seminars by discussing what they found to be the most interesting and/or important arguments, themes and issues addressed in the readings. At times students may be given different readings so that we can cover more and different aspects of social movements. In these cases students will be asked to present to the class the key arguments in their assigned readings. Students will also be expected to lead parts of the seminars. They will be given a one week notice prior to having to lead a seminar.

Since this is a seminar course students either make or break the course. That is, students' individual and collective engagement -- in discussion of the readings, films and material presented by the instructor -- will make this course the best it can be. Remember that this

is a course geared to have students articulate their informed thoughts, critiques and analysis of different elements of social movements as we progress throughout the term.

Although students will spend the great majority of the time in seminar discussion, at different times throughout the course I will provide some context to help situate the specific themes/issues, conceptual frameworks, or theories that we are examining. These interventions are geared specifically to help frame the seminar.

**COURSE CONTENT** - *Some parts of this syllabus are subject to change. That is, the sequence of themes and topics will undoubtedly change as we go through the course.*

The course is divided into different units each addressing various themes related to the study of social movements. Throughout the course we will examine specific social movements to better understand different elements of social movement analysis and theory. But, in going through this material we will keep in mind social movements and social change are complex and messy. As the editors of a recent edition of *Antipode* stated “Social change is usually not well organized, coherent and easily defined – and nor should it be. We are simultaneously in, against and beyond capitalism.” (Castree, Chatterton, et al. 2010, p. 6).

This means that many aspects of social movements and social change cannot be easily divided into and studied separately in bounded units like they are listed below. Consequently, we should expect some fluidity – after all, social movements “move”, and we will most certainly move back and forth from one unit to another in our efforts to analyze social movements and their impact.

### ***WHAT ARE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?***

January 12: Introduction to the course

*Note: We will meet until 5:15 so that we can also take a look at our first social movement in action: Chico Mendes and the Rubber Tappers’ Union in Brazil.*

Defining a social movement

The practice of framing

Forming a collective identity

### ***CONCEPTUALIZING RESISTANCE***

Forms of resistance: violence versus non-violence

Collective Action and Protest

Domination and the arts of resistance: Everyday forms of resistance

Building alternatives = resistance

Cultural dimensions of social movements

### ***STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION***

Gender dimensions of social movements

The benefits and pitfalls of litigation

Engagement and negotiation versus strategic disengagement and mobilization

Does leadership matter in social movements?

## **GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW – FROM LOCAL TO TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS**

Cross-border collective action  
The intricacies and politics of solidarity  
Global Justice Movement: A movement of movements  
What makes a transnational movement successful?

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

Throughout the course I will provide the references (and/or links) to all required readings. Because these references will be listed on a weekly basis you need to regularly check D2L for updates. The following required text for this course is available in the U of M bookstore:

Kino-nda-niimi Collective. 2014. *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement*. Arbeiter Ring Publishing: Winnipeg.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

February 16-20: Mid-term break – no classes are held this week  
March 19: Last day for voluntary withdrawal from this course without academic penalty

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Contribution to discussion	30%
Questions	10%
Discussion/reflection paper one (Due 2:30pm, February 23, 2015)	20%
Major paper (Due 2:30pm, April 13)	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

#### **Contribution to seminar discussions (30% of final grade)**

Students' primary responsibility is to read the assigned readings, to think about the issues and arguments presented in the articles, and to come to class prepared to discuss these in an informed manner. Since the course also entails viewing some films, students are expected to watch these films carefully, to take notes during the films, and to then discuss the films while also linking the films to the readings.

Students are expected to participate fully in discussions of the assigned readings – this demands more than just quickly skimming the reading. You need to have a very good understanding of, and be able to engage with the authors' argument(s) and the evidence used to defend the argument(s).

Active and engaged participation in this class demands preparation and contribution. Here are some tips to help you prepare and contribute effectively.

**a/ Preparation:** There are three stages to critical reading: 1/ writing a short summary of the article so that you understand and remember what you have read, 2/ providing a succinct critique in which you articulate your own ideas and reasoning about the issues raised in the reading, and 3/ formulating thoughtful questions based on the readings that you then raise in the seminar discussions.

**b/ Contribution:** Your contributions must be directly related to the topic(s) being discussed. It is the quality of your contributions to the class discussions that really counts. Contributions should demonstrate that you:

- have critically read the materials and viewed attentively the films, and are able summarize and engage with key arguments and points made;
- raise thoughtful questions as a result of the readings, films and discussions;
- link ideas from different readings and films studied throughout the course,
- lead a portion of a seminar, and
- interact with your fellow classmates in a respectful manner.

Students must attend all classes. Your contribution grade will be determined based on attendance (you can't contribute if you are not in class) and the criteria discussed above. I will assign a grade out of 10 for each week and your final contribution grade will be a compendium of these weekly grades. Periodically I will provide you with these so that you know how you are doing. The best way to get a good grade is to read all of the required material, watch the films attentively and take notes, come to class prepared to explore the readings and films, and take an active part in the discussion. Of course, you also have written work to prepare (discussed below).

### **Questions (10% of final grade)**

To help foster discussion students will come to class with at least two written questions about the readings to be discussed during the weekly seminar. The questions should be thoughtful and help lead to further examination of the course readings. The questions should also attempt to make links between various readings and films. It is always a good idea to preface a question with some sort of introduction/context that helps frame it. The questions must be sent to me at [Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca) by 12:00 noon of each Monday that the class meets. Bring a copy of these questions with you to the seminar. Along with the questions you should also include the date, the title of the seminar, your student number and name.

### **Critical Discussion/reflection paper (20% of final grade)**

You are required to submit an 8-page (double-spaced) critical discussion/reflection paper of the readings and films viewed prior to February 23. Please feel free to discuss this paper with me before starting on it if you still have questions after reading the description provided here.

The focus of the discussion/reflection paper is to explore the course readings and films. It is not a summary of the readings; nor is it simply your own ideas about the readings. **A discussion/reflection paper is like a think piece. Discussion papers must do two**

**things: they must provide an assessment of the major arguments in the readings/films and they must frame those into an overall approach or argument about the readings.** The discussion papers should not be a catalogish summary of each article, but rather you should weave your discussion of the articles into an overall argument or approach. A good discussion/reflection paper, therefore, must take a sophisticated approach in summarizing the salient points of the readings, relating the readings/films to each other. It should also critique the readings (note critique does not necessarily mean to criticize) by talking about how the approach in individual readings either helps us or does not help us understand the issues and by telling the reader how your opinion about the issues has been reflected in, is opposed to, or has been deepened or altered by the readings.

For the discussion/reflection paper you are **not** expected to do any further reading in addition to the readings examined, or films viewed, in the course. You are expected to spend some time thinking about, and linking, the various elements of social movement theory and experiences that we have explored in the course. Remember that your paper should use the readings and films to make a cogent argument in clear and eloquent language.

The discussion/reflection paper is due on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:30pm. This paper must meet the following specifications:

- typed on 8.5" x 11" paper,
- 8 – 10 pages in length (not including the bibliography and end notes if these are used)
- double spaced lines using Times New Roman 12 pt font
- be submitted through D2L and to my e-mail: [Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca)
- You must include an additional page (the title page) that contains the title, your name, the prof's name, and the course number. **Remember to number the pages.**

### **Major reflection/discussion paper (40%)**

For the final assignment students write a major reflection paper that integrates reflections/critical analysis of the readings and films that we have examined throughout the course to analyze the Idle No More movement that is explored in the book *The Winter We Danced*. This assignment is a major think piece that allows you to reflect on the course material as a whole as you proceed to analyze the Idle No More movement. One of the ways to approach this is to think of what tools the course has given you to be able to successfully analyze the Idle No More Movement.

*Please note that the PhD students in the course will have the option of doing the same assignment as the Masters student (i.e. the major reflection/discussion paper) or writing a research paper on the movement that they are investigating as part of their PhD program. The PhD students choosing this option will need to discuss this with me by February 9th. The writing of a major research paper that fits into your PhD research will need to be approved by me as a result of you submitting a short proposal (approximately three paragraphs) accompanied with a bibliography.*

*Also note that international students who have not been in Canada for a significant amount of time since and including 2012 should consult with me to see how best this assignment can be altered.*

The due date to submit the final assignment is 2:30pm on April 13, 2015. The major reflection or research paper must meet the following specifications:

- Be typed on 8.5" x 11" paper,
- 20 pages in length. Additionally, you will need to include a title page (that contains the title, your name and student number, my name, and the course number) and the list of references.
- Double-spaced lines using Times New Roman 12 pt font
- Remember to number the pages
- Submitted through desire2learn and to Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca

*Please note that it is not acceptable to submit a paper, or portions of a paper, that you have written for another course as this is a form of academic misconduct.*

### **Due Dates**

All due dates are final. Late papers will be penalized 5% per day late. No papers will be accepted if they are submitted five days or more after the due date. Exceptions will be made only in the case of acceptable circumstance (i.e. serious illness) and acceptable documentation. In the event of such a case the request for an extension must be made before the due date. Unfortunately, computer failures do not fall in the category of acceptable circumstances.

### **Some basic rules established by the University of Manitoba and the Faculty of Arts**

In assigning letter grades for the course, the following scale will be used:

A+	90% and over	Exceptional
A	80 - 89%	Excellent
B+	75 - 79%	Very Good
B	70 - 74%	Good
C+	65 - 69%	Satisfactory
C	60 - 64%	Adequate
D	50 - 59%	Marginal
F	less than 50%	Failure

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

University policy on academic integrity will be enforced. A full description of academic integrity matters, including plagiarism and cheating, can be found in Section 8 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements of the University of Manitoba.

The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is **suspected of being plagiarized** to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

**DISPOSAL OF TERM WORK:** Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

**USE OF CELL PHONES AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS:** While the use of cell phones (and texting) has become a regular feature of our everyday lives, *students should refrain from using their cell phones during class time.* Similarly, while students are welcome to bring a laptop computer to class for the purpose of recording notes from the lectures and discussions, *the use of laptop computers for checking emails or surfing the Internet during class time is not permitted.*

**ABSENCE:** The university recognizes the right of all students to observe recognized **holidays of their faith**, which fall within the academic year. With instructor discretion, necessary arrangements can be made to ensure studies are not jeopardized. The instructor should be notified of a student's intended absence in advance and at least three weeks' notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.