Introduction to Contentious Politics
Political Science/International Studies 667
Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:15-3:30

Instructor: Erica Simmons
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Studies
North Hall 221
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-4:30
esson@wisc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Sanja Badanjak
badanjak@wisc.edu
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description

What explains when, where, and why people come together to engage in acts of political protest? How do we understand the emergence and growth of social movements? Of political upheavals dramatic enough to be understood as revolutions? What explains when grievances foment riots and when they motivate long-term movements for social change? As recent events in the Middle East show, it is difficult to understand politics without taking a careful look at moments when people organize outside of established political institutions to demand change. Through readings, lectures, discussion, and films, this course will introduce students to the main theoretical and empirical themes in the study of contentious politics. We will focus on social movements, revolutions, and riots, addressing both the theoretical literature and specific case studies. The course will touch on a number of 20th century social movements and revolutions but will focus specifically on the U.S. civil rights movement, the 1989 student movement in China, the Mexican Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, The Iranian Revolution, and the Arab Uprising.

Course Expectations:

1) Attend and participate in all course meetings.
2) Thoughtfully engage course readings.
3) Complete all assignments on time.

Grading: There will be 100 points available over the course of the semester. They will be allotted as follows:

1) Class participation. 15 points total. Attendance at every session—lectures and sections—is expected and will be factored into this grade, though you will need to participate regularly and thoughtfully to get full credit.
2) Class discussion questions. 10 points total. You will choose five weeks for which to write discussion questions. Questions are due by 10pm on Monday. Please write 2-4 questions suitable for class discussion and post them on the Learn@UW site in the appropriate dropbox. Your questions should cover the readings assigned for both Tuesday and Thursday (if there are readings for both days) and should reference at least TWO readings (unless there is only one for the whole week). Questions are intended for discussion purposes. They should not have a “correct” or obvious answer. For example, do not write: “who was the dictator that Castro’s forces deposed in Cuba?” Instead, an appropriate question might be “How does Goodwin think that Bastista’s actions influenced the outcome of the Cuban Revolution?” You do not need to answer the question, you simply need to come up with the question itself. Discussion questions cannot be turned in late to receive credit.

***You must write at least one set of questions from Unit I, one set of questions from Unit II, and one set of questions from Unit III.***

We will not accept late questions. Plan accordingly.

3) Response papers. 10 points total. You will choose two weeks for which to write a short (2-3 pages) response paper on the readings. Response papers are intended as a response to the readings— you should discuss and analyze at least two readings assigned for the following Tuesday/Thursday sessions. Be sure to make a clear argument that runs throughout your paper.

You cannot write a response paper during the same week as you write discussion questions. Each paper must be written during a different unit of the course. To be clear, you can write either one paper during Unit I and one paper during Unit III; one paper during Unit II and one paper during Unit III; or one paper during Unit I and one paper during Unit III. It is up to you. Each paper is worth 5 points. They are due by 10pm Monday to the Learn@UW site in the appropriate dropbox.

We will not accept papers questions. Plan accordingly.

4) Unit Tests. There will be three unit tests. One test per unit of the course. The first test is worth 15 points. The second and third tests are worth 25 points. If you have taken my PS/IS 401 course on social movements in Latin America we will replace the first unit test with a short writing assignment.

5) Extra credit. There may be opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. These will be talks or other events on campus related to the course. If you see an announcement for a potentially related event please let Professor Simmons know and she will decide if it is, indeed, a good opportunity for extra credit and then announce it to the entire class. Each extra credit opportunity will be worth 2 points (unless announced otherwise). To get the credit you will need to attend the event and write a 3-4 sentence summary of the event as well as what you learned.
These assignments can be submitted online in a dropbox folder. You can accumulate no more than 6 extra credit points over the course of the semester.

6) Computers. Electronic devices cannot be used during class (e.g. laptops, iPads, smart phones, etc). Please see me if you think you might be exempt from this requirement for medical or learning-related reasons.

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM**

To contest any grade you must submit a request in writing to the instructor. The request must contain a detailed description of why the grade given should be changed.

Students affiliated with the McBurney Center should see me about exam arrangements and any other accommodations by September 17.

Books to purchase


Other readings

All other readings should be available online via Learn@UW. Please notify Sanja immediately if you find that a reading is missing.
Syllabus

Week 1:

Thursday, September 3: NO CLASS
Professor Simmons is speaking at a conference

UNIT I: THEORETICAL THEMES

Week 2: Theoretical Themes

Tuesday, September 8: Introduction to the course and theoretical themes
Defining contentious politics and understanding grievances
- What is contentious politics?
- What questions do we have?
- What moments/episodes do we hope to explain?

Readings:
- Snow and Soule (Chapter 1 and 2 p. 1-63)

Thursday, September 10: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization
Political opportunities

Readings:
- Snow and Soule (Chapter 3, p. 64-86)

Week 3: Theoretical Themes

Tuesday, September 15: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization
Resources

Readings:
- Snow and Soule (Chapter 3, 86-98)

Thursday, September 17: An Overview of Approaches to Mobilization
Frames

Readings:
- Snow and Soule (Chapter 4).
Week 4: Wrap up Overview and Unit Test I

Tuesday, September 22: Critiques of the dominant paradigms and in-class review

Readings:


Thursday, September 24: Unit Test

UNIT II: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Week 5: CASE I (The Civil Rights Movement)

Tuesday, September 29—Movie *Eyes on The Prize* (selections)
Readings:
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*. Ch. 6 (entire--p. 170-208), Ch. 7 (p. 237-238 only), Ch. 8 (p. 239-253; 266-272 only).

Thursday, October 1
Readings:
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*. Ch 9 (p. 273-298—entire), Ch. 10 (p. 299-301, 318-329 only), Ch. 11 (p. 330-342 only).

Week 6: CASE II (Tiananmen)

Tuesday, October 6
Readings (the readings for this week are long, but they are a narrative, so they will go fast):
Thursday, October 8
Readings:

In Class: Movie, *The Tank Man.*
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/

Week 7: Emotions

Tuesday, October 13
Readings:

Thursday, October 15
Readings:


Week 8: Unit Test II

Tuesday, October 20. In-class review

Thursday, October 22. Unit Test II.
UNIT III: REVOLUTIONS

Week 9: Revolutions—Introduction

Tuesday, October 27
Readings:


Thursday, October 29
In-class film, *How Facebook Changed the World*.

Week 10: CASE III—The Mexican Revolution

Tuesday, November 3
Readings:


Thursday, November 5
Readings:


Week 11: Case IV—The Cuban Revolution

Tuesday, November 10
Readings:


Thursday, November 12
Readings:

Week 12: Case V—Iran

Tuesday, November 17
Readings:
- Kurzman, Charles (2004). *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Chapter 2)

Thursday, November 19
Readings:
- Kurzman, Charles (2004). *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Chapter 3)

Week 13: Catch-up session

Tuesday, November 24
Catch up on readings from previous weeks

Thursday, November 26
NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING

Week 14: CASE VI: The Arab Uprising

Tuesday, December 1: The Arab Uprising—Background
Readings:
- Roger Owen. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Chapters 2 and 3.

Thursday, December 3: Arab Uprising—Social Media, Country Cases
Readings:
- Wael Ghonim Revolution 2.0 p. 58-121.
- Haddad, Bsheer, and Abu-Rish (2012). Dawn of the Arab Uprisings: End of An Old Order? Chapters 6, 15, 24, 27 (each is only a few pages as they are reprints of articles from Jadaliyya.
- Tawakkol Karman, “Yemen’s Unfinished Revolution” http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/19/opinion/19karman.html?_r=3&partner=rss&emc=rss&pagewanted=all
- “Tomgram: Juan Cole, Protesting a Pasha-the-Tiger World” http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog//175466/

Week 15: Arab Uprisings and Review

Tuesday, December 8:

In class film: The Square

Thursday, December 10: In Class Review

Week 16:

Tuesday, December 15: Unit Test III