

ANT 263: Social Change and Social Justice  
Fall 2009, MWF 10:30-11:20am, Chambers 1027

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This course examines issues in social activism from both a theoretical and an ethnographic perspective.

How do social activists think about and make social change happen? By examining theories and issues in social

justice, from macro-level issues in the international arena to local mobilization for community issues, this course will introduce students to social movement and civil society theory. Topics include: the structural ramifications of social and cultural change; the intersection of civil society organizations and formal political institutions; and the role of new media and information technologies in mobilizing people to effect change. This course is **not** a community-based learning course, but will instead analyze social movements, community activism, and the cultural practices of community groups.

Although a significant portion of the course readings are from an anthropological perspective (a comparative examination of particular social and cultural micro-processes that are presented in ethnography), the theories on civil society, social justice, and social movements will be drawn from many academic disciplines. Case studies, drawn from both local and global examples, will focus on different issues including health care, environmental activism, housing and poverty, gender/sexuality rights, and cyberactivism. We will also read about the lives of selected activists to better understand what is involved in mobilizing for social change.

### Course Readings

Nash, June 2005. *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Duncombe, Stephen 2003. *Cultural Resistance Reader*. New York: Verso.

Optional: Adams, Maurianne, et.al. 2000. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge. (library only)

Additional articles will be available on Blackboard.



## Course Requirements

### *Class Participation: (10%)*

The most important work in this course is to be prepared for each class; this means having thoroughly read the material and being prepared to discuss particular points from the reading. Readings are due on the day listed in the class schedule. We are not a TV; discussions in class are an important part of exploring anthropological topics. Films will be shown regularly throughout the course and are an important component of the course; they are a required part of the course material. Remember, there is no such thing as a dumb question or comment – if you do not understand something that we present in class, do not hesitate to either ask us in class or find us during office hours.

### *Discussion Board: (10%)*

**Each week**, students will write a brief reaction towards an idea prompted by the reading; you should feel free to write whatever you feel is relevant. They are due Sunday at midnight each week (it will automatically close at midnight). Prior to our meeting on Monday, we also expect you to have reviewed what your peers have written – you may respond to what they have written, but we expect all exchanges to be as civil as if they were said in person during the seminar meeting. **LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

### *Group Project: Case Studies (10%)*

Groups will generate case studies that apply previously read theory to a contemporary issue that can be found in popular media (i.e., newspapers, television, radio, internet). The group will be responsible for providing readings/links to the wider seminar in a timely manner (at least one week prior to discussion) through Blackboard. Seminar participants will be expected to have reviewed this material, and be active in discussion that is led by the group. A more extensive description of the generation of case studies will be available in a handout to be distributed in class. We will make the selection of group members.

### *Group Project: Leading of Case Study Discussion (10%)*

Groups will also be responsible for leading discussion of theoretical readings. At the minimum, each group should be prepared to: 1) overview the general theoretical framework discussed by each author; 2) identify key concepts/terms integral to the theoretical framework; 3) situate the theoretical framework in relation to other approaches that we have read; 4) critique the assumptions and limitations of the theoretical framework; and 5) suggest possible areas where the theoretical framework can be applied.

### *Short Essay: Lessons from an Activist (10%)*

Students will write an individual paper on the lessons learned from the life and approaches of a historical social activist (as selected from a list to be provided). This paper (no more than five pages) should situate the activist in his/her wider sociopolitical and cultural context, and examine and critique the strategies taken by the activist. Note: this is not a biographical review, although key elements of the activist's life should be present to help explain the thinking behind the strategic decisions, organizational structures and practices, or approaches to social mobilization taken by the activist. A more extensive description of this paper, in addition to the list of activists, will be available in a handout to be distributed in class.

*Proposal for Change: (50% total):*

This is divided into four different parts that will be due at different times throughout the semester. We will distribute individual handouts for each of these assignments.

- **Proposal (5%).** No more than one page (prose), this assignment will contain the social justice issue being addressed, methodology/action, and a tentative bibliography.
- **Literature Review (10%).** Students will compile a selected bibliography on their research topic and write a 5-7 page paper reviewing the literature on their chosen topic. Students must first get approval on their topic from the instructors.
- **Research Paper (25%).** The capstone for this class will be the semester-long proposal for change (no more than 20 pages), based on a topic that students will select after consultation with us. This proposal must include outside research, either library or fieldwork-based.
- **Poster (10%).** During the final week of class, students will present their proposal for change in the form of a poster; during poster sessions, students must also be prepared to answer questions from class participants. Posters may also be displayed for comment from the wider campus.

While we encourage group discussion of class material and peer-critiques of written work, all papers for this seminar must in the end be your own individual work. All work is subject to the Davidson College Honor Code as stated in the student handbook.

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

We are committed to providing accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you are a student with a disability that is documented in the Dean of Students office, please identify yourself to us early in the semester so that we can learn how we can work best with your learning style. Our conversations will remain confidential.

**Course Schedule** (subject to modification)

24 Aug	Course Introduction
26 Aug	Thinking about Social Justice <b>Readings:</b> Rawls <i>A Theory of Justice</i> excerpt (available on Blackboard) Adams et.al. excerpt (available on Blackboard)
28 Aug	<b>Readings:</b> Selznick essay (available on Blackboard)
31 Aug	Civil Society, Civic Engagement, Social Capital <b>Readings:</b> Hall essay (available on Blackboard) Gellner excerpt (available on Blackboard)
2 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Walzer essay, (available on Blackboard) Frankenberg essay (available on Blackboard)
4 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Putnam essay (available on Blackboard) Dyreson essay (available on Blackboard)
7 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Dunscombe reader Section 2

9 Sep	Social Movements
	<b>Readings:</b> Nash volume, Introduction Dugas essay (available on Blackboard)
11 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Edelman essay (Nash volume) Bowie essay (Nash volume)
14 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Stephen essay (Nash volume) Kasmir essay (Nash volume)
16 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Duncombe reader Section 3
18 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Toth essay (Nash volume) Rutherford essay (Nash volume) <b>Assignment:</b> Proposal due
21 Sep	Strategies and Processes for Social Activism and Civic Engagement
	<b>Readings:</b> Pharr, Collins, Haro & Love essays (available on Blackboard)
23 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> Bobo et.al., excerpts from Organizing for Social Change (available on Blackboard)
25 Sep	Deliberative Democracy <b>Readings:</b> distributed via internet
28 Sep	Understanding Activists
	<b>Readings:</b> (TBD, selected by guest lecturer)
30 Sep	<b>Readings:</b> (TBD, selected by guest lecturer)
2 Oct	<b>Assignment:</b> “Lessons from an Activist” short essay due
5 Oct	Theories and Practices in Student Activism
	<b>Readings:</b> Rhoads excerpt, (available on Blackboard) Wasserstrom essay (available on Blackboard)
7 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Levine article (available on Blackboard) Barrios article (available on Blackboard) Peretti article (available on Blackboard)
9 Oct	<b>Case Study:</b> Student Activists (readings provided by Riemer and Lozada) <b>Assignment:</b> Group 1 submit readings for next week
12 Oct	Fall Break – No Class
14 Oct	Case Study: Housing and Poverty
	<b>Readings:</b> Appadurai article (available on Blackboard) NCH Fact Sheets 1, 2 and 3 (available on Blackboard)
16 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Group 1 selected, available on Blackboard
19 Oct	Case Study: Environmental Activism
	<b>Readings:</b> Albro essay (Nash volume) Sylvain essay (Nash volume) <b>Assignment:</b> Group 2 submit readings for week
21 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Kirsch essay (Nash volume) <b>Assignment:</b> Literature Review due

23 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Group 2 selected, available on Blackboard
26 Oct	Case Study: Health Care <b>Readings:</b> Farmer excerpt (available on Blackboard) Susser essay (available on Blackboard) <b>Assignment:</b> Group 3 submit readings for week
28 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Biehl essay (available on Blackboard)
30 Oct	<b>Readings:</b> Group 3 selected, available on Blackboard
2 Nov	Case Study: Gender and Sexuality Rights <b>Readings:</b> Lorber, Kimmel, and hooks essay (available on Blackboard) <b>Assignment:</b> Group 4 submit readings for week
4 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> Reddy essay (Nash volume) Railla and Fiske essays (in section 6 of Duncombe reader)
6 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> Group 4 selected, available on Blackboard
9 Nov	Case Study: Cyberactivism <b>Readings:</b> Gurak & Logie excerpt - Internet Protests (available on Blackboard) <b>Assignment:</b> Group 5 submit readings for week
11 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> Stoecker article (available on Blackboard) Peretti article (available on Blackboard)
13 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> Group 5 selected, available on Blackboard
16 Nov	Reflecting on Social Change and Social Justice <b>Readings:</b> Duncombe Reader Section 8
18 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> Excerpt from bell hooks <i>Teaching Community</i> (available on Blackboard)
20 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> TBD
23 Nov	<b>Readings:</b> TBD
25-27 Nov	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b> – Have a good holiday
30 Nov	Making Change Happen Poster Session 1 (Union)
2 Dec	Poster Session 2 (Union)
4 Dec	Poster Session 3 (Union)
7 Dec	<b>Assignment:</b> Proposal for Change Due