

## **Social and Economic Justice**

Sociology 290

Spring 2012

sej.web.unc.edu

Tuesday 1-12:15am

303 Woollen Gym

TA: TBD

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9-11am Wednesday and by appointment

This course focuses on the use of non-violent protest to achieve social and economic justice. Specifically, how did people come to see mass protesting as an effective means to secure justice? Who participates? What kinds of non-violence are there? What movements have used non-violence? When does it succeed?

From Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, the last twelve months have highlighted the contemporary importance of movements for social justice. In many ways, these movements are part of a much larger tradition of mass mobilizations. We will examine prior social justice movements in the US such as the abolitionists and the farm workers. We will also look internationally at several successful and unsuccessful attempts to use nonviolence to achieve social justice, including examples from South Africa and the Philippines. For comparative purposes, we will also look at movements that used more assertive tactics, like those of the Earth Liberation Front.

By the end of the course, I hope that you will develop the tools for critically analyzing instances of social and economic justice and what can be done about. In particular, I expect that you will be able to have a thorough understanding of contemporary social justice movements, where they came from, why they do what they do, and what impact they are likely to have.

This is a core-required course in the minor, Social and Economic Justice. If you are not pursuing the minor, please see the web page for a background: <http://sociology.unc.edu/undergraduate-program/social-and-economic-justice-minor>. If you are a SEJ make sure to tell me so that I can make sure you get credit for this course.

### **Stuff you have to do**

Students are expected to do the assigned reading, attend class, and participate actively in class discussions. Class time will usually build on the readings, sometimes review them, but never replace them. All of the readings are on the course website,

sej.web.unc.edu. You are expected to have read them before class. Often, there will be in-class group assignments that require the readings to have been completed. You should always bring the assigned reading(s) to class. This way when I ask a question, instead of staring blankly, you can flick through the pages, looking for an answer. It makes the silence much less uncomfortable for all of us. Since all of the readings are online and I expect you to bring them to class, feel free to print them out double-sided with two pages per sheet. I understand that this costs money and kills tree, but since I'm not making you spend a \$100 on books, I think your wallet and the environment still come out ahead.

*Class participation (20%):* The class will succeed or fail based on student participation. I will occasionally lecture, but I firmly believe that without participation, or at least the threat of participation, you won't learn much. Good participation: Demonstrates excellent preparation: analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.); offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further; contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.; and demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.<sup>1</sup>

Concretely, if you come but do not talk, you will receive a D for participation. If you occasionally answer a question that does not demonstrate you did the reading, this is a ticket to a C. If you participate frequently and demonstrate you did the reading, you get a B. If you do all that, plus regularly provide focused analysis and engage with other students in a constructive manner, you get an A. I anticipate that the average discussion grade will around a B, but I hope for all As.

It is your responsibility to make sure that the TA and I know who you are. If we don't know who you are, you won't get a good participation grade. We will provide you with your tentative participation grade halfway through the course and upon request so that you know where you stand.

*Reaction journal (25% of final grade)*

In order to assist you in processing the course materials, you should routinely write in a course journal your observations, speculations, questions, reactions, conclusions, and connections related to the course.<sup>2</sup> I expect that you will average 400 words a week, or approximately 5,600 words.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on:

[http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching\\_Concerns/Spring\\_1996/TC\\_Spring\\_1996\\_Maznevski.htm](http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Spring_1996/TC_Spring_1996_Maznevski.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Based on <http://www.minotstateu.edu/sociology/pdf/guidelines.pdf>

I am not looking for your notes. Instead, I want your thoughts and analysis based on the course materials. Focus on observation (to what extent is what read or talked about match up with how things operate in the outside world?); connections (how is this course material related to other courses?); speculation (why did certain events happen?); disagreements (where are the authors wrong?); questions and potential answers (what is confusing?). This should be your reaction to the materials.

You should begin each entry with the date and a general description of what the day's topic was (e.g. "2/21 – Gandhi"). Your writing should be more formal than your notes, but less formal than an essay or paper. Your grammar and spelling should not distract the reader. The best times to write in your journal are immediately after class and immediately after you have finished the readings. If you write then, the words will most likely come quickly and fairly engaged. A good place to start is often, "The thing that I found most interesting was [x]. The reason it was interesting was..." or "The thing that most confused me was [x]. I thought that..."

You should write your journal in a Google Document. In order to do that, create an account with Google, if you don't already have one. Go to docs.google.com and "create" a new "document". Rename the document to "SEJ Journal" followed by your first and last name by clicking on "Untitled Document" and typing in the new name. Finally, share the document by clicking on the blue "Share" box. You should share it with me ([neal.caren@gmail.com](mailto:neal.caren@gmail.com)).

We will grade your journal three times throughout the semester. You won't know ahead of time when will do this. The first will be worth 5% of your final grade, the second and third checks will each be worth 10%. Reaching 5,600 words does not guarantee you an A, but you do lose points if you have fewer words than you should when you are graded. Each time, we will be looking at the extent to which you are thoughtful consistently: (1) engaging with class readings; (2) lectures and films; and (3) applying the concepts either in your daily interactions or by critically analyzing media reports.

#### *Blog post and presentation (5% of final grade)*

The class will be updating a blog—[sej.web.unc.edu](http://sej.web.unc.edu)—with posts on social and economic inequality. Once during the semester you will be required to update the blog with current events related to movements against inequalities and policies impacting inequalities. For the blog, you will be responsible for creating a succinct summary of justice related news since the class last met. This must be posted before class starts. You will also be required to present this information to the class in a four to five minute presentation. Your presentation will start class that day, so you must be prepared by 11:00am. This project is joint with one other student, but you will receive your own grade. We will pick days on the second day of class.

### *Exams (30% of final grade)*

There will be a take home midterm (due February 21<sup>st</sup>) and a take home final (due May 1<sup>st</sup>). Both will require you to think critically about the materials that you have read and that we have discussed in class. Each is worth 15% of your final grade.

### *Analytic paper (20% of final grade)*

Before the last day of class, you should submit a 2,000 to 2,500-word paper that analyzes a contemporary social movement for social justice that engages in nonviolent protest. The movement that you select could be large (e.g. Occupy Wall Street) or more modest (e.g. Occupy Durham). It could taken place in the US (e.g. protests against the execution of Georgia Davis), abroad (e.g. the Tunisia revolution), or be transnational (e.g. Students Against Sweatshops). You should be prepared to discuss your case and sources in class by February 28<sup>th</sup>; hand in a list of sources by March 27<sup>th</sup>; and an outline of your paper on April 10<sup>th</sup>. This will explain in a handout.

### *Final Grade*

A grade of 93 $\frac{1}{3}$  and above will qualify for an A; 90 and above A-; 86 $\frac{2}{3}$  and above B+; 83 $\frac{1}{3}$  and above B; 80 and above B-; 76 $\frac{2}{3}$  and above C+; 73 $\frac{1}{3}$  and above C; 70 and above C-; 60 and above D; and below 60 is an F. The grading system for this course heavily rewards those who keep current with the readings, attend class, and pay attention.

Grades will posted on the course website. You can find yourself using the first six digits of your PID.

### *No Deals*

The grading system described above will be used for everyone. No exceptions. If you are going to miss class because of an athletic event, you should let me know in advance via email so that you can make up any in-class work. You can't take any of the exams late or early unless you have a really good reason. If you think you have a good reason, contact me ahead of time. If you notice that a posted grade is missing or wrong, please let me know as soon as possible.

### **Stuff I have to do**

I'm responsible for giving you the opportunity to learn all you can about social and economic justice. I'll try to make coming to class worth your time and money. If you email me, I'll try to respond quickly. If you want to chat, stop me after class, come by my office hours, or set up an appointment. I'll do my best to communicate clearly what my expectations are for receiving good grades for each assignment and for the course overall. I'm also responsible for making sure that your grade is fair, although the TA will be doing most of the grading. We will work to let you know your grades quickly so that you know how you are doing in the course throughout the semester. The TA will be available to meet with you to discuss why you were given a specific grade, or anything else related to the course

## **Films**

In addition to the readings, lectures, we will be watching several films in this course. In addition to being historical records of social and economic injustices and movements to combat injustices past and present, many of these films provide unique chances to explore the emotional intensity of social movement participation. They are also required viewing. You will be expected to know the content of the films. I'll try and put as many as possible on reserve, but no promises. We will often watch abridged versions of the films in order to have enough time to complete the film and discuss it during the same class period.

## **The one thing you have to buy**

We'll be playing the game "People Power: The Game of Civil Resistance" in class on March 20<sup>th</sup>. You need to buy a copy of the game in advance for \$10 from <http://www.peoplepowergame.com/>. The game runs on both PC and Macs, but does require Adobe AIR, which is free. You should install the game and play the tutorial before the 20<sup>th</sup>. Bring your computer to class that day.

## **Academic Integrity**

Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected. Transgressions will be reported. Don't cheat, plagiarize or otherwise engage in academic misconduct. Familiarize yourself with the University policy on Academic Dishonesty. If in doubt, ask the TA or me. All academic work in this course, including homework, quizzes, and take home exams, is to be your own work, unless otherwise specifically provided. It is your responsibility if you have any doubt to confirm whether or not collaboration is permitted.

## Schedule

Subject to change:

- January 10     *Introductions*
- January 12     *Early thinking about nonviolence*  
Ira Chernus, "The Quakers" and "William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolitionists" ; watch  
[http://www.democracynow.org/2012/1/2/year\\_of\\_global\\_uprisings\\_from\\_the](http://www.democracynow.org/2012/1/2/year_of_global_uprisings_from_the)
- January 17     *19th Century Nonviolence*  
Thoreau's Civil Disobedience ,<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/71>
- January 19     *Early 20th century nonviolence*  
Ira Chernus, "The Anarchists" and "WWI The Crucial Turning Point"
- January 24     *Mohandas Gandhi*  
Dennis Dalton, "Satyagraha meets Swaraj" and Mohandas Gandhi's "Nonviolent Resistance"
- January 26     Dennis Dalton, "Gandhi as Leader"
- January 31     *American Civil Rights movement*  
Aldon Morris's "Beginnings and Confrontation" and "Movement Centers"
- February 02     Aldon Morris's "Movement Halfway Houses"; Robert F. Williams. "Can Negroes Afford to To Be Pacifists?" and Martin Luther King, Jr, " Pilgrimage to Nonviolence"
- February 07     Aldon Morris's "Birmingham" and Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
- February 09     *Who joins*  
Louis Uchitelle, "Why Aren't the Jobless Flocking to Zuccotti Park?" and Ellen Knickmeyer, "Tunisia's Hope Deficit."
- February 14     *For War*  
Che Guevara's "Guerrilla Warfare: A method"
- February 16     *Against War*  
Thich Nhat Hanh, "Love in Action"
- February 21     Training  
Midterm Due; Special Location: 271 Hamilton Hall
- February 23     *Fasting for Justice*  
Randy Shaw's "Cesar Chavez and the UFW" and "UFW Boycott Transformed"
- February 28     *Theorizing Nonviolence*  
John Rawls's "The definition, justification and role of civil disobedience"
- March 01     Gene Sharp's " Power and struggle "
- March 06     Spring Break
- March 08     Spring Break
- March 13     *South Africa*  
Tom Lodge's "The Interplay Between Non-Violent and Violent Actions in Movement Against Apartheid in South Africa, 1983-1994."

March 15	<i>Philippines</i> Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephans's "Philippine People Power Movement, 1983-1986"
March 20	<i>People Power</i> People Power Tutorial
March 22	<i>Serbia</i> Ivan Vejvoda's "Civil Society versus Slobodan Milosevic, 1991-2001"
March 27	<i>ELF</i> Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood, "Ecodefense: A field Guide to Monkewrenching"
March 29	<i>ELF</i> Craig Rosebraugh's "Burning Rage of a Dying Planet"
April 03	<i>Global Justice Movement</i> Chris Dixon, "Five Days in Seattle"
April 05	<i>Justice for Janitors</i> Randy Shaw's "Yes We Cane: Miami's Janitors Struggle for Justice"
April 10	<i>Arab Spring</i> Reading TBA
April 12	Reading TBA
April 17	Shirkey, "The Political Power of Social Media" and Gladwell, "Small Change"
April 19	<i>Occupy Wall Street</i> Reading TBA
April 24	Ashley Sanders, "How the People Got Their Groove Back: What a Bunch of Farmers Can Teach a Bunch of Occupiers About How to Keep on Going"
May 01	Exam (noon)