

SOCIOLOGY 376  
Social Movements and Contentious Politics  
Prof. Maryjane Osa  
Northwestern University  
Spring Quarter, 2006

Office: 515 Clark St., Rm. 22  
Office hours: Wed., 4 – 6 pm.  
Email: m-osa@northwestern.edu  
Tel. (847) 467-6208

Classroom: Harris Hall 205  
Class time: Tu Th 12:30-1:50  
Course website:  
courses.northwestern.edu

*Course description:* This course examines theories and cross-national empirical studies of social movements, collective behavior, and non-institutionalized political action. Case analyses include the Argentine Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, The US Farm Workers' Movement, Chilean Human Rights Movement, and Poland's Solidarity movement, among others.

*Course objectives:* To analyze the major theoretical trends and empirical studies of social movement analysis. Students will study and critique influential works individually and through group discussion. Students will also develop their research, writing and analytic skills by investigating a social movement of their choice. The results of this research will be submitted as a final course project.

*Course requirements:* The final grade will be based on a student's performance on the following: 1) a mid-term exam which will count for 40% of the grade; 2) a final research project worth 40% of the final grade; and 3) a ten minute oral presentation to the class on the topic of your research paper; and 4) class **participation** (not to be confused with class *attendance*) which is 10% of the total. For details on these assignments, please see the hand-out, "Course Requirements and Deadlines." Grading standards and other policies are covered in the hand-out, "Grading and Course Policies."

*Required texts:*

- 1) Arditti, Rita. *Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. ISBN: 0-520-21570-2 (pap)
- 2) Doug McAdam and David A. Snow, eds. *Social Movements: Readings*. Roxbury Pub. Co., 1997. ISBN: 0-935732-86-1 (pap.ed.)
- 3) Osa, Maryjane. *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. ISBN:0-8166-3874-8
- 4) Sidney Tarrow, 1998. *Power in Movement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Additional assigned articles will be available electronically, via Blackboard.*

## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS\*

- 3/28  
Tues. Introduction to the Course
- The Classic Case Study
- 3/30  
Thurs. Read: Arditti, *Searching for Life*, Intro and Ch.1 (1-31)  
Film (in-class): “Malajunta.” (58 min.)
- 4/4  
Tues. Read: Arditti, *Searching for Life*, Ch.2-5 (32-124)
- 4/6  
Thurs. Read: Arditti, *Searching for Life*, Ch.6-Afterward (125-172)
- Contemporary Social Movement Theory I:  
Political Opportunities and Constraints
- 4/11  
Tues. Read: Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 1-25; 54-67, 71-90.  
Lecture: “Introduction to Social Movement Theory”
- 4/13  
Thurs. Read: Ch. 4 in the Social Movements Reader:  
Jenkins & Perrow, “Insurgency of the Powerless,” (37-51).  
Film: “Harvest of Shame” (55 min.)
- 4/18  
Tues. Discussion.
- 4/20  
Thurs. Read: Ch. 8 in the Social Movements Reader:  
Morris, “Black Southern Student Sit-In Movement,” (90-109).
- Contemporary Social Movement Theory II:  
Framing Processes
- 4/25  
Tues. Read: Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 91-122.  
in Reader, Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes...,” (235-251)
- 4/27  
Thurs. Read: Snow and Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance,  
and Movement Participation,” download from Bb.

---

\* This provisional class syllabus is dated March 25, 2006. It will be superceded by the on-line syllabus (on the Blackboard course web site) once classes begin. For current information on class activities *always* check the on-line information. Changes to class schedules will be noted on the “Announcement” page of Bb.

5/2 Tues.	Discussion. Framing exercise (small groups).
5/4 Thurs.	Film.
5/9 Tues.	<b>Mid-term exam (in-class).</b>
	<u>Contemporary Social Movement Theory III: Mobilizing Structures and Cycles of Protest</u>
5/11 Thurs.	Read: Tarrow, <i>Power in Movement</i> , pp. 123-160 Osa, <i>Solidarity and Contention</i> , pp. 1-25.
5/16 Tues.	Read: Osa, <i>Solidarity and Contention</i> , pp. 26-80.
5/18 Thurs.	Read: Osa, <i>Solidarity and Contention</i> , pp. 81 -154
5/23 Tues.	Read: Osa, <i>Solidarity and Contention</i> , pp. 154- 182.
5/25 Thurs.	Course wrap-up.
5/30 Tues.	<i>Reading Period: class presentations may be scheduled.</i>
6/1 Thurs.	<i>Reading Period: no class.</i>

***FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT MUST BE TURNED IN ON-LINE via Blackboard's Digital Drop Box by the scheduled exam time: 5 pm., Friday, June 9. You must have a receipt from Prof. Osa for the paper before you leave campus.***

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

### I. Requirements

#### A. *Mid-term examination.* 40 points.

The exam will be given *in class* on **Tuesday, May 9**. The exam format will be discussed in a week prior to the exam; studying suggestions will be posted on Bb. On the night before the exam, I will hold “virtual office hours” on-line using the “Lecture Hall” feature of Blackboard. Students are invited to log-on to participate in the session.

**It is your responsibility to prepare for and to attend the mid-term examination.** I don't normally allow make-up exams. Giving a make-up examination is not a simple procedure; it is difficult to ensure fairness to the group as a whole when a few individuals are allowed to take the exam according to their own time-table. Therefore, the procedure for making up the test is a bit complex. First, you must call your college advisor and show/explain to him/her the reasons (personal emergency or illness) that caused you to miss the midterm. Then, the advisor must call me to confirm that there was a legitimate reason for your absence. At that point, we will make arrangements for a make-up exam.

#### B. *Final Research Project.* 40 points.

The final project will be a paper that analyzes either an individual movement, or a set of movements involved in a single cycle of protest. You have the option of working individually, or in partnerships of two or three. There are slightly different procedures for each option.

##### Option one: individual research paper.

First, select the social movement that you want to study. Then, do some preliminary research to determine what sorts of materials are available. Your research should include both primary sources (archival documents, interviews, published memoirs of activists, web-available documentation) and secondary literature (already published studies of theoretical or topical relevance). Early in the quarter you will be asked to submit a research proposal. Your final paper should be 12-15 pages in length. You will follow the same timetable for submission of the research components as the co-authors (see Hand-out: “Writing and Submitting the Research project.”)

##### Option two: co-authored project.

First, select the social movement that you want to study and find one or two people in the class who are interested in working on the same topic. Then, do some preliminary research to determine what sorts of materials are available. Your research should include both primary sources (archival documents, interviews, published memoirs of activists,

web-available documentation) and secondary literature (already published studies of theoretical or topical relevance). Co-authors are strongly encouraged to do some fieldwork: i.e., attend some meetings by the organizations you're interested in or interview activists. There are a few preliminary deadlines for project sub-components before final submission of the paper. Your final paper should be 15-20 pages in length. You will follow the same timetable for submission of the research components as the individuals (see Hand-out: "Writing and Submitting the Research project."). Co-authors will receive the same grade for the paper, so you need to select a collaborator who you trust to hold up his/her side of the project.

**All research projects must be turned in on-line via Blackboard's Digital Drop Box by the scheduled exam time: Friday, June 9 (Thursday), no later than 5 pm.**

*C. Class presentation.* 10 points.

Starting in early May, we will have one or two oral presentations per class. Students will put together Powerpoint presentations to summarize their projects for the class. Each presentation will last ten minutes, with five minutes for discussion/questions. Students who present early in May will focus on their research questions, information sources, and hypotheses. Students who present late in the term will share their research results.

*D. Class participation.* 10 points.

I'm serious about this. Read section II.B. on class participation in the "Grading and Course Policies" hand-out.

## II. Deadlines

<b>t.b.a.</b>	<b>Research proposal due</b>
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Virtual Lecture hall for mid-term prep (time t.b.a.)</b>
<b>May 9</b>	<b>Mid-term examination (in class)</b>
<b>June 9</b>	<b>Research paper due, 5 pm.</b>

## GRADING AND COURSE POLICIES

### I. Grading

#### A. Point System

All grading is done on a point basis. Each requirement or assignment is worth some total number of points; these are noted on the syllabus and on the grade sheet that is accessible via Blackboard. The possible points from all class assessments total 100.

#### B. Final Grades: Conversion to Letter Grades

At the end of the quarter, I will total up the number of points for each student. The student may view the total on the grade sheet from Blackboard. I will then convert the numerical scores to letter grades to submit to the Registrar. The grade conversion scale is as follows (**no rounding of scores**):

94 - 100	A
90 - 93.9	A-
86 - 89.9	B+
82 - 85.9	B
80 - 81.9	B-
76 - 79.9	C+
72 - 75.9	C
70 - 71.9	C-
66 - 69.9	D+
60 - 65.9	D
less than 60	F

#### C. Grade Changes

**The only circumstances under which the University allows me to change a final grade are in the case of a clerical or computational error.** The Dean underscored this policy in his Sept. 18 letter to me: “Grade changes involving the submission of extra work by a student, reexamination of a student, or reevaluation of a single student’s work after the grades for all other students in the course have been determined and submitted for record *are not permitted.*”

## II. Course Policies

### A. Attendance

You simply cannot miss class. There are only seventeen meetings during which we can cover the material you need to master the course. Since NU tuition and fees are substantial, you should value each contact hour accordingly.

### B. Class participation

Ten percent of your grade is based on my evaluation of the quality of your involvement during the class period. I give high participation scores to students who come to class prepared to ask and answer questions; these students appear alert and interested in the topics we are discussing. I give low scores to students who sit in the back of the classroom and surf the web on their laptops during my lectures, who spend their time on the crossword puzzle or Sudoku in the newspaper, who engage in short little side conversations/text messaging/IMing with their friends, fall asleep during the discussion, come in late to class or leave early, or carry on silent conversations with their imaginary friend.

### C. Academic Honesty

Northwestern University has a very clear vision of its academic mission. The integrity and honesty of each member of the community is at its core. The policy is stated as follows: "Academic integrity at Northwestern is based on a respect for individual achievement that lies at the heart of academic culture. Every faculty member and student, both graduate and undergraduate, belongs to a community of scholars where academic integrity is a fundamental commitment." I have promised to uphold these standards as a member of the faculty. And I am responsible for promptly reporting cases of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean.

## III. Instructor Availability

I am available during my office hours (Wednesdays, 4-6 pm), by appointment, or via email ([m-osa@northwestern.edu](mailto:m-osa@northwestern.edu)). I am quite willing to meet with you to discuss paper topics, explain difficult material, or even to discuss your future career possibilities. In addition, I use the Blackboard course website to post announcements that are of interest to the class as a whole.