

Sociology 01:920:280 Social Movements and Collective Behavior
Professor: Leslie Kay Jones
Spring 2022
TTh 3:50PM - 5:10PM

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Office Hours: To be determined after survey of classes

Course Description

Social movements and their leaders still capture widespread public attention and cultural legitimation. Public figures often appeal to our collective memories of movements like the Women's Movement, the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the Students for a Democratic Society when they ask us to take positions on hot-button social issues like school funding, mass incarceration, health care coverage, and reproductive rights. But the median age of the US population is 37.8, meaning that at least half of Americans have no personal recollection of many of these movements. Instead, we share a collective imaginary of the Civil Rights Movement and other formative historical moments in our national history, based on what we have learned from teachers, books, movies, music and countless other secondary sources.

Media provides us access to knowledge - including knowledge about what ideas, institutions, and figures are important to our culture and identities. However, in order to receive that knowledge, we must interpret it through a shared cultural language that is also influenced by the media we consume, the relationships we have, and the institutions we rely upon. In this disciplinary course, we will work toward a shared understanding of the American media ecosystem by comparing and critiquing coverage of social movements from a range of media sources, including social media and international citizen journalism.

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Identify social movement messages and strategies.
2. Compare and contrast models for understanding social movements.
 - a. Articulate principles of collective mobilization theory using dramaturgical analysis.
3. Compare and contrast protest strategies based on variables like target audience, financial backing, institutional affiliation, and longevity
4. Develop scientifically and historically credible predictions of the effectiveness of Twitter hashtag campaigns and other types of protests

5. Compare and contrast media representations of historic and contemporary social movements.
6. Conceptualize media power of organizations and movements
7. Identify patterns in the public definition and debate of social problems.
8. Anticipate how future innovations in technology might alter the collective mobilization landscape, and brainstorm research agendas that might help us understand those changes.

Grading

30% 4 Critical short response papers

30% Midterm Exam

40% Persuasive Paper

For the final paper assignment students are expected to engage critically with a topic of national or international importance and its media coverage. Drawing from this semester's readings and independent research, students will examine the role that news media (either mainstream or alternative) play in shaping public opinion about an issue of the student's choosing.

Schedule

1-18-2022 and 1-20-2022

Week 1: Introduction - Thinking Like a Social Scientist

Read

Polletta, Francesca. 1998. "Contending Stories: Narrative in Social Movements." *Qualitative Sociology* 21(4):419–446.

1-25-2022 and 1-27-2022

Week 2: What is a Social Movement?

Read

(Finish) Polletta, Francesca. 1998. "Contending Stories: Narrative in Social Movements." *Qualitative Sociology* 21(4):419–446.

Johnston, H. (2014). *What Is a social movement?* Chapter 1

2-1-2022 and 2-3-2022

Week 3: Collective Memory of Social Movements

Note: on 2-3-2022, instead of lecture, you will use Zoom to join the Sociology Department Culture Workshop for my lecture.

Read:

Hall, S. (1989). Cultural identity and cinematic representation. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (36), 68-81.

ch. 1 The Work of Representation / Stuart Hall -- 1. Representation, Meaning and Language -- 1.1. Making meaning, representing things -- 1.2. Language and representation -- 1.3. Sharing the codes -- 1.4. Theories of representation -- 1.5. The language of traffic lights -- 1.6. Summary --

2-8-2022 and 2-10-2022

Week 4: Youth Activism

Gun Violence Movement:

#NeverAgain How Parkland Students are Changing the Conversation on Guns

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/03/parkland-students-the-violence-must-stop-here/>

Today, Explained podcast: The Case for Climate Change Activism

[vox.com/todayexplained](https://www.vox.com/todayexplained)

2-15-2022 and 2-17-2022

Week 5: Defining Media and Its Role in Social Movements

Read:

Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 611-639.

Hall, S. (1993). Encoding, Decoding. In S. During (Ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (Vol. 56, # 1, pp. 90–103). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TIM.2006.887776>

2-22-2022 and 2-25-2022

Week 6: How do events enter into public news and debate?

Read:

Andrews, K. T., & Caren, N. (2010). Making the News: Movement Organizations, Media Attention, and the Public Agenda. *American Sociological Review*, 75(6), 841-866.

Oliver, P., & Myers, D. (1999). How Events Enter the Public Sphere: Conflict, Location, and Sponsorship in Local Newspaper Coverage of Public Events. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(1), 38–87. <https://doi.org/10.1086/210267>

3-1-2022 and 3-3-2022

Week 7: How do media frames influence how we interpret events?

Read:

Terkildsen, N. & Schnell, F. (1997). How Media Frames Move Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women's Movement. *Political Research Quarterly* 50(4): 879-900. 29

Chapter Excerpt from Noble, Safiya Umoja. 2018. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York: New York University Press.

3-8-2022 and 3-10-2022

Week 8: How Social Movements Harness Media Power

Watch: "The Square" Documentary on Rutgers Library streaming.

Read:

Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist*, 42(1), n/a-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12112>

Rucht, D. (2004). The Quadruple "A": Media strategies of protest movements since the 1960s. In *Cyberprotest: New media, citizens, and social movements* (pp. 25–46).

Spring Break - 3-12-2022 to 3-20-2022

3-22-2022 and 3-24-2022

Week 9: The Changing Media Landscape

[Watch "Astroturfing: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver"](#)

Read:

Daniels, J. (2009). Cloaked websites: propaganda, cyber-racism and epistemology in the digital era. *New Media & Society*, 11(5), 659-683.

van Dijck, Jose. 2013. Chapter 1 from *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford University Press.

Your midterm opens this week on Canvas on 3-23-2022 and closes next week on 4-1-2022

3-29-2022 and 3-31-2022

Week 10: Media and the Power of Emotions

Read:

Collins, R. (2009). Social movements and the focus of emotional attention. In J. Goodwin, J. M. Jasper, & F. Polletta (Eds.), *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements* (pp. 27–43). University of Chicago Press.

Midterm Due - 4-1-2022

4-5-2022 and 4-7-2022

Week 11: Storytelling, Eyewitness Accounts and Citizen Reporting

Read

Atton, C. (2009). Alternative and citizen journalism. *The handbook of journalism studies*, 265-278.

Read and watch: #NeverAgain How Parkland Students are Changing the Conversation on Guns

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/03/parkland-students-the-violence-must-stop-here/>

4-12-22 and 4-14-2022

Week 12

The Eugenics Movement and Anti-social Progress

Watch: American Experience: The Eugenics Crusade

https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/watch/the-eugenics-crusade?utm_campaign=Video&utm_medium=MARC&utm_source=aspresolver

Read:

Owens, D. C. (2017). *Medical bondage: Race, gender, and the origins of American gynecology*. University of Georgia Press. **Introduction and Chapter One**

4-19-2022 and 4-21-2022

Week 13: Online Social Movements

Read:

Chapter 8 "Transnational Activism Online" in Yang, G. (2009). *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online*. Columbia University Press.

Clark, R. (2016). "Hope in a hashtag": the discursive activism of #WhyIStayed. *Feminist Media Studies*, 0(0), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1138235> Pluto Press.

Penney, J., & Dadas, C. (2013). (Re) Tweeting in the service of protest: Digital composition and circulation in the Occupy Wall Street movement. *New Media & Society*.

Gonzalez-Bailon, S. (2013). Online Social Networks and Bottom-Up Politics. SSRN Electronic Journal, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2246663>

4–26-2022 and 4-28-2022

Week 14: Class Conclusion and Writing Clinic

Classroom environment policy: In order to ensure the best learning environment for all students, students are expected to abide by the university honor code and community standards of decorum. Additionally, students in this course are expected to adhere to the spirit of the community standards developed by the class at the beginning of the semester in a guided activity.