

Course Syllabus
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & SOCIAL PROTEST
(SOCI 180)

University of California, San Diego; Winter 2026

Thursdays 5:00 – 7:50 pm

Location: Coalition Building (COA), Room 117

Instructor: Khasha Ostovany, PhD

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Office Location: Social Sciences Building (SSB); Room # TBD

Office Hours: By appointment, in-person (Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00-4:00 pm), or via Zoom.

(This syllabus is subject to occasional revisions. This version is published on **12/07/2025**)

Course Description

A simple definition of social movements is collective attempts by a group of people whose interests and goals align and lead them to organize and focus their newly-increased power to challenge an existing structure/distribution of power (and its direct component: the existing distribution of wealth) and, as a result, impact and change those social and power relations.

Since the emergence of their field of study in the mid-19th century, social movements and social protests have proven to be a powerful driving force for socio-political and cultural transformation around the world. Almost all social, political, and economic benefits that both the working-class and the middle-class enjoy today have been the results of sustained and organized collective campaigns challenging the ruling class and its oppressive means and methods.

The United States of America is no exception to this rule. The American Revolution started as a protest movement in order for the inhabitants of the original thirteen colonies to gain independence from the tyrannical and arbitrary rule of the British king. The broader movement that emerged from this protest movement succeeded in creating the United States of America under a democratic constitution. The Framers of the Constitution, mostly veterans of the Revolution, recognized the importance and power of protest and worked to provide individuals and groups many avenues for the redress of their grievances and for political influence, partly at least to forestall future revolutionary movements. Yet, with increasing frequency, dissidents continue to protest outside political institutions when political leaders refrain from addressing and correcting social ills, economic inequalities, and democratic deficiencies.

In this course we will study some of the most important sociological theories of social movement, and their proponents, in the past two centuries. We will also be examining and discussing a few of the most significant protest and social movements which emerged in the U.S. since the mid-20th century. Having discussed the theories and the building blocks behind

the rise of protest and social movements, we will then apply them to analyze those protest and social movements to better understand some of the main causes and factors that gave rise to them, helped to sustain them, and led them to succeed -or to their failure.

Course Format

This course will be conducted in a hybrid format. After Week 3, a number of class sessions will take place via Zoom. **These will be announced at least one week in advance.**

The structure of the course will consist of weekly reading assignments that you are expected to keep up with, some lecturing by me on the readings and related topics, and your questions, concerns, and comments to encourage class discussions. Some audio/visual material related to the topic of the week will be part of each session. (The videos indicated here are tentative and subject to substitution.)

Course Requirements

Required Books:

- Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021 (3rd edition)
- Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2008

Recommended Book:

- Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022 (4th edition)

There will be some additional readings assigned from time to time in the form of articles and/or short book chapters. If so, they will be posted on Canvas at least one week ahead of the session when the readings are due for class discussions. The links to the videos listed here are tentative and subject to change.

Attendance and Participation in Discussions: This is *your* class! It is *you* who have decided to take this course in order to further excel your knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Attendance and informed participation in class discussions are essential to benefiting from this course. Unjustified absences would jeopardize this as well as affect your final grade. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know ahead of time as soon as you can, indicating your valid reason.

When a class session is held on Zoom, you are expected to keep your camera on for the bulk of

the period if not for the entirety. Otherwise, you may be considered absent.

Through faithfully keeping up with the readings, being attentive in class and sharing your questions and comments on a regular basis, we can make this course a more interesting and enjoyable experience for all of us. I ask you to please refrain from calling and/or texting during class. There will be either a 10-minute break, or two 5-minute breaks, during each session, when you can attend to such activity.

Weekly Memos: Starting with the readings for Week 2 and ending and including with the readings for the last class session, you are required to turn in a 3-page summary of what we just covered (i.e. in Week 2) including the reading assignments, videos we watched, and major topics we discussed in class. You will decide which points in what was just covered are interesting/important enough to you to discuss in your memo.

Each memo is due 48 hours after the end of the corresponding class and should be emailed to me directly. Please: no late submissions. Should you miss this deadline, you will have up to another 48 hours to submit your memo, *but only at half the credit*. Beyond this second 48-hour deadline, your memo will not be accepted.

The purpose of these assignments is to help you review what has just been covered in the readings and class discussions. A satisfactory memo is one that gives a general and broad summary of the topics and the main points in each week's assigned readings with some emphasis and brief discussion on one or two of the most important points, demonstrating that you have done the readings, understood the main points and can represent them in writing. Your memos will comprise 25% of your overall grade for the course.

There will be a total of eight (8) weekly memos. Please submit your memos in WORD format, Font 12, double-spaced, with 1"-margin on all sides. I prefer that you email each memo assignment directly to me.

Please make sure to include on your memo your **NAME, COURSE #, DATE**, and indicate "**MEMO for WEEK__**".

Mid-Term Exam: There will be a mid-term exam scheduled to be held in the Week 6 class. It will require a combination of short answers and paragraph-long essays related to the assigned readings and the other material covered during our class sessions up to that week. There will be no memo due for that week. Memos will resume on the assigned readings for the following week.

Final Exam/Paper: The final exam will take place during the Final Week. The format will be similar to the midterm exam and will cover the contents of the entire quarter.

There is also the possibility of doing a research paper as the final assignment instead. Anyone who may wish to do so would have to do this under strict rules that would require you to work

closely with me during the process, which will include frequent discussions about how your research is proceeding. Any suspicion of inauthentic work will lead to failing the course.

Upon discussing your intended project, I will then decide whether you may take this option. If so, your paper will need to be 8-9 pages long on an aspect of a social movement of your choice, either from what we will have covered during this course, or another movement that is of interest and concern to you. This will be an opportunity for you to delve more deeply into and learn more comprehensively about an aspect of social movements and social protest that you will have found interesting and intriguing to you. A short synopsis of what you intend to research and write about will be due in Week 8. Your Final Paper will be due no later than the date of the final exam.

Please submit your Final Paper in **WORD** format (not pdf), Font 12, double-spaced, with 1"-margin on all sides.

Grading:

Class attendance and participation.....	20%
Weekly memos.....	25%
Mid-term.....	25%
Final Exam or Paper	30%

The following is a close approximation of the grading distribution criteria that will be used in this course. I will not be using an exact mathematical formula. The final grade will take into consideration your entire performance in this course.

<u>Exam Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
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97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 and below	F

To Succeed in This Course

In order to gain from and succeed in this course, the bulk of the responsibility rests on you. I play the role of the facilitator, but your part is primary and without fulfilling that you cannot expect to gain fully from this course. You would need to keep up with the reading assignments, pay close attention to the video documentaries we will be watching and discussing during our sessions, and complete and turn-in your weekly memos on time. Do your best to ask questions and make informed comments. Use the opportunity to excel this ability in yourself. Do all this and you will finish this course most profitably and with a high grade.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be expected to have developed a much wider perspective and a deeper understanding of the basis for the role of protest and social movements in challenging the institutionalized structures of power in society. This should happen through the application of the acquired knowledge of the theories of social movement in this course to the various case studies that will be covered.

Academic Integrity

All written work must represent your original work. Using “short-cuts” and presenting someone else’s work (real, or virtual) as your own undermines the whole purpose for being here, namely, to improve and excel your learning and creative process. A final paper submitted not of your own work will result in failure in the course. You should by now be familiar with the UCSD Policy on the Integrity of Scholarship (<http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu>) which you are expected to follow.

Knowledge is to be shared and built upon -and sometimes also, applying reason and evidence, it is to be refuted. When you write an academic paper and use the ideas or work of another person to augment your own argument, make sure to identify the original author. Whether you are paraphrasing, summarizing, or giving direct quotations, the original source needs to be clearly cited. It is your responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge and restatements of the ideas of others. If in doubt, let us discuss it.

Course Schedule (Subject to minor modifications)

Week 1 – Jan. 08___No readings assigned.

Introduction to the course, meeting one another, and discussing the following:

What is social movement? Why does the category deserve our attention, why should we study it, and what should we learn about -and from- it?

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

Social Movement (8 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7YPTD7QwR4>

How Does Social Change Happen? (5 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2BQ5ZAkD9Q>

Historic Protest Movements in Every Decade (10 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOaeUbZ7ums>

How Does Social Change Happen? The Six Contributing Factors (12 min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anhpgF_jdzQ

Protests in France over Pension Reform, March 2023 (7 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4glNYG4Eec>

Protests in Israel over Judiciary Reform, March 2023 (6 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkySLd93BU>

What's Behind the Violence and Protests in Israel (6 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkySLd93BU>

The Tiananmen Square (China) Protests in 1989 (3 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXJ6gHFME0w>

Farmers Protests in Europe (2024) (1:41 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJcDdQnq5NY>

Protests in Iran over Mandatory Hejab and Other Oppressions; Six months into it (5 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMsGu-SaYNk>

Protests in Iran "Woman, Life, Freedom" (28 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNhaqv4GGW4>

World Protests Against Israeli Aggression in Gaza (1 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GDuxx-DbIg>

"US man self-immolates in protest of Gaza funding, spurring nationwide vigils and ceasefire calls" (2:30 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QZfXjHcNpA&rco=1>

Week 2 – Jan. 15___ Theories of Social Movements & Collective Action;

Theorists of Conflict & Collective Action

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo & Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements: A Reader*; Part One: Introduction & Chapters 1-7 (pp 1-39), and Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp 1-31)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

Gustav LeBon: The Nature of Crowds (9 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCAhKGhYzh0>

Eric Hoffer: The True Believer and the Nature of Mass Movements (10 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfEAhUIMjfo&t=311s>

Aspects of Collective Behavior: Fads, Mass Hysteria, and Riots (6 min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOw7LWCW_Zk

Occupy Wall Street: the story behind seven months of protest (5 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFOWci6yrSs>

10 Years Since Occupy Wall Street: What Did We Learn? (6 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKXLbmcEe0c>

Occupy Wall Street, after 10 Years (24 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9X6H DU4NiI>

Suggested videos to watch for a deeper understanding:

Occupy Wall Street in Context (46 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQknkno88JQ&t=93s>

Money, Power, and Wall Street (57 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-Q9AOp2FW8>

Week 3 – Jan. 22 _Theorists of Hegemony & Collective Behavior:

Issues in the Study of Social Movements and Collective Action

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*; Part Two: Introduction & Chapters 8-14, pp 41-85), and Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*, (Chapter 3, pp 33-58)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

Francesca Polletta: Insights from the Sociology of Social Movements -2014 (27 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eZd-n5tBCU&t=561s>

Introduction to Social Movement Theories (15 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6QcN0tpgH4>

On Fascism and Capitalism (8 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqVQUZyIfeA>

Jason Stanley: The 10 Tactics of Fascism (10 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpCKkWMbmXU&t=16s>

Labor Unionization as Social Movement:

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/17/hamilton_nolan_us_labor_the_hammer

Google Employees' Protest as an Example of the Element of *Sympathy* in Organizing Protests:

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/17/no_tech_for_apartheid_google_israel

Week 4 – Jan. 29 _Theorists of Resource Mobilization

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*; Part Three: Introduction & Chapters 15-19 (pp 87-138)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

David Meyer on "Social Movements & Democracy in Today's Politics" (33 min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OzfhUy_OOQ

Thomas Frank: What's the Matter with Kansas (2004) part 1 (11 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zOVKTU4TJI>

Part 2 (6 min.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHESAUYEHo4>

Another chance to review: Classic Social Movement Theories, from Contagion to Framing (55 min.):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NliIC9QTI_I&t=598s

Week 5 – Feb. 05 ____ Social Movements and the Political Process

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*; Part Four: Introduction & Chapters 20-26 (pp 139-194)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

Political Process Model, Part 1 (6 min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnpc9Mi_-AQ

Political Process Model, Part 2 (8 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iO2Ab0qF-A>

Timothy Snyder: The Plan to Destroy Institutions (10 min.):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOc_9vydI1o &

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNrbInmlHhA>

Keep your head up: Professor Timothy Snyder's advice for resisting an autocrat (5 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNrbInmlHhA>

(18 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbtE2VKLugQ>

The 10 Tactics of Fascism (Prof. Jason Stanly) (10 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpCKkWMbmXU>

"Erasing History": Yale Prof. Jason Stanley on Why Fascists Attack Education & Critical Inquiry Part 1 (13 min)

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/9/17/erasing_history

Part 2 (27 min):

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/9/18/fascism_expert_jason_stanely_on_project

Week 7 – Feb. 19 **The Radical Decade: the 1960s; The Student Movement; The Women's Movement; and the American Civil Rights Movement**

Readings: Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*, Chapters 4 & 5 (pp 59-102)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

1968: The Year that Changed History (2 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtxOoUDAVZE>

The 1960s in America: A Crash Course (15 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkXFb1sMa38>

Civil Rights Turning Points in Every Decade (9 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UOTLqmRr2U>

President Lyndon Johnson _Remarks at the Signing of the Civil Rights Bill (5 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKfoJJA5xWM>

History of Women's Movement (30 min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_n1MuocuE4&t=138s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_n1MuocuE4&t=1s

International Women's Day (15 min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sf_UmO3l2Ss

Roe v. Wade Timeline: From March 1970 to June 2022, a short history of the abortion battle (5 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oauqCa3Cb2Q>

Phyllis Schlafly and the Fight against Women's Equal Rights (13 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2YO0nSXTiM>

A divided America reacts to Roe v. Wade reversal (3 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOOV5UxE4EA>

5 Years after #MeToo (5 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQPpRpZMiBQ>

On the Rise of the Modern Conservative Movement in Alliance with Big Corporations (5 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbbfgfnpJN9w>

The Student Movement in the US: Documentary on the Kent State

Shooting (27 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJYSSlQmVE8>

Former Kent State students speak out, 50 years after deadly

protest (6 min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I26iWfa_oqI

The Student Movement's Bastion (8 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcquWn5xg2E>

A look back at the Student Movement and the 1968 Democratic convention and its relevance today (9 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5tDX5qOCcE>

Suggested (longer) videos to watch:

Documentary on Women's Liberation Movement (58 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOsLjbpHV8M&t=114s>

The Road to Freedom: Black History and the Civil Rights Movement

(1:28:00): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6FLLsdHcwU&t=270s>

**Week 8 – Feb. 26__ The New Social Movements: The Environmental, the Anti-Nuclear and the Gay & Lesbian Movements;
Movements beyond Borders: Global Movements for Social Justice**

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*; Introduction to Part Five (pp 195-199), and Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*; Chapters 6 & 7 (pp 103-152) and Chapter 9 (pp 187-207)

Article on "15 Biggest Environmental Problems of 2025":

<https://earth.org/the-biggest-environmental-problems-of-our-lifetime/>

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

The Stonewall Rebellion, after 50 Years: (17 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDwIqUwMHmA>

Climate Change (by "350.org") (3:21 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5VXJBVpqM8&t=116s>

Why Is Climate Change So Political? (5:20 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8MOJAMbzKs>

Who Is Greta Thunberg? (3 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WORnPLZE5CA>

Greta Thunberg's full speech to world leaders at UN Climate Action Summit (5:19 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU&t=40s>

Suggested videos to watch:

On the Environmental Justice Movement (17 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU-D3YkOe-w&t=54s>

A Short History of the Environmental Movement (1:02:00 min):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAX2W_7jQcU

Week 9 – March 06_ Economic/Market Globalization and the Globalization of Social Movements

Readings: Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (ed), *Social Movements; A Reader*; Part Seven: Introduction & Chapters 39-45 (pp 297-365), and
Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*. Conclusion (pp 209-214)

Videos to watch and discuss in class:

Seattle 1999: The Battle of America against the World Trade Organization (15 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t13R6ej-WQ&t=731s>

Steelworkers and the Battle of Seattle (16 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkGM9tP9E1E&t=736s>

The Battle of Seattle: 20 Years Later (25 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ELOk24RgpE>

Suggested videos to watch:

Confessions of an Economic Hitman (26 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWuAct1BxHU&t=659s>

Week 10 – March 13_ The Counter-Movements: The Rise of Right-Wing Conservative and Reactionary Movements

Readings: Staggenborg, Suzanne, *Social Movements*. Chapter 8 (pp 153-185)

A selection of related videos to watch and discuss in class and/or on your own:

The Man Who Mobilized the Evangelical Votes: Paul Weyrich (10 min.):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcC53j32BW4>

George Carlin on Conservatives and Abortion (2 min.):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkMbMidsYIM>

Professor Jason Stanly on Fascism (18 min.):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xkcCmdE1u4>

Trump's American Carnage (57 min): <https://www.pbs.org/video/trumps-american-carnage-cgbssm/>

Thomas Frank: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zOVKTU4TJI>

The inspiration behind the Charlottesville's "Unite the Right" Rally
Torches (1 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDzfupUAE00>

A Night at the Garden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2-E5DHQMbY>

The Chris Hedges Report with Vincent Bevins on how our popular
uprisings are crushed and the far-right triumphs (57 min.):
https://chrishedges.substack.com/p/the-chris-hedges-report-with-vincent?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=email-half-post&r=dug1u

Videos to watch on your own before class in preparation of discussion:

On the Spread of Lies on Social Media (17 min.):
<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/in-the-digital-age-lies-spread-faster-truth-will-never-win/>

PBS Frontline: American Insurrection (1:24:52 min):
<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/frontline/episodes/american-insurrection>

If you are unable to access the PBS site directly, then try this link on
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v22xC09WSVc&rco=1>

Week 11 – **March 18** _____ **FINAL EXAM**