

NCLC 304
Social Movements and Community Activism
Fall 2014

Fridays 10:30am-1:10pm
Robinson B106

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Office Hours by appointment

This course is intended to introduce you to social movements, their history and contemporary forms as well as individual forms of community activism. People have always tried to make positive changes in their communities and societies, but they have only been organizing into recognizable social movements for about three-hundred years. During that time, there have been many innovations in tactics, as well as the development of a significant body of scholarly work about social movements and activism. *This course earns 1 credit of experiential learning and students must successfully complete the experiential learning component to pass the course.*

Learning Objectives

- To understand the relationship of community organizing, social movement activism, and nonviolent revolution.
- Begin to understand and critically evaluate the objectives, values, and actions of these movements
- To develop the skills necessary to be a contributor within movements
- Develop a group of theoretical approaches useful for analyzing social movements
- Understand the methods available for cooperative social action to address grievances
- To develop a critical understanding of the potential for and methods of achieving social change
- Demonstrate college-level oral and written communication skills.
- Apply skills that will facilitate collaborative learning.

TEXTS

Required:

- Graeber, David. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009.
- Reed, T. V. *The Art Of Protest: Culture And Activism From The Civil Rights Movement To The Streets Of Seattle*. U of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Recommended:

- Boyd, Andrew, and David Oswald Mitchell, eds. *Beautiful Trouble*. OR Books, 2012. This is also available at www.beautifultrouble.org

Additionally, we will make use of articles and video available on the internet. The breakdown of readings by week as well as links to webpages and PDF files are available in the folders section of this course's Blackboard page.

BLACKBOARD

This course will include a significant online component through the course Blackboard site. You will have weekly discussion assignments on the site. You will also use it to submit your assignments and to find the weekly reading assignments

COURSE ASSESSMENT

This course includes assignments that everyone is required to complete (universal assignments) and a list of assignments from which you can pick and choose what you want to do (free choice assignments). You will need to complete the universal assignments and at least some of the free choice assignments to pass the class. Your grade will be computed out of 1000 points, adding the points you have earned from both types.

Late Work

Papers and other assignments are to submitted through Blackboard before the start of class.

Late work will be reduced one letter grade per day. No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family. The instructor does not have a mailbox at NCC. Email is discouraged, but acceptable in an emergency. The only exception to this is the reading summaries, which should be brought to class.

Format for Assignments

Assignments should be submitted on Blackboard. You must correctly and consistently use a recognized citation style, such as MLA, APA, Chicago Manual, etc. For a summary of the styles, visit <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/researchguide.htm>.

ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed assignment descriptions are on Blackboard.

Required Assignments (all students must complete)

- **Experiential Learning #1: Protest Observation (150 points, due November 21st)**
 - Observe two protests, write one, 1,500-word reflection
- **Experiential Learning #2: Movement Simulation (300 points, due December 5th)**
 - Group video (200 points)
 - Group participation (50 points)
 - Exercise reflection (50 points)
- **Movement Film Responses (100 points, due the day we watch the next film)**
 - Write 1000-word responses to five of the six films we will be watching (20 points each, due 1 week after we watch the film)
- **Reading Summaries (100 points, due in class on reading days)**
 - Write a 500-word summary of the readings for the week, including at least two questions you would like to pursue (17 points each, due at the beginning of class on paper)
- **Exercise Participation (100 points, in class every reading/exercise day)**
 - Participate in the exercise we do in the second half of every Tuesday class (17 points each)
- **Class Reflection (50 points, due December 12th)**
 - Write a 1000-word reflection on your experience in the course

Optional Assignments (choose from these to get more than 80% in the class. Maximum 250 optional points, all due December 12th but can be turned in anytime)

- Movement Analysis (200 points)
- Framing Analysis (100 points)
- Issue Analysis (100 points)
- Film Reflections (additional) (25 points each, maximum of 4)
- Book Reflections (50 points each, maximum of 2)
- Change the World (200 points)
- Creative Work (100 points)

TYPES OF WRITING

This course involves significant writing, in multiple styles. Every assignment will include a designation indicating what type of writing is expected.

Reflective writing assignments give you a chance to work with ideas and concepts from class in the context of another experience. In general, it is best to follow a What?, So What?, Now What? Format for these papers:

- **What?** Describe your experience. This may include some summary, but should be focused more on your experience as a viewer/reader/actor/participant. Do not simply summarize a text.
- **So What?** Incorporate the concepts and ideas from class into your experience. Did you see examples of these? Did the experience encourage you to think differently about them? What can these ideas and concepts tell us about the subject of your experience? What connections do you see?
- **Now What?** Contextualize the experience. How does it relate to your other work in the class, your other classes, or your future plans? Where are you going to take this knowledge?

Reflective writing should always be in an *I* voice, since you are writing about yourself. You can introduce the text or film you are discussing, but do not simply summarize it. The reflection is about you and your learning experience.

Research writing assignments give you a chance to work outside of class on a question that specifically interests you and to arrive at your own answer to a research question. Research assignments will often include specific requirements and instructions, but in each case:

- Develop a good **research question**.
- Answer this question with an **argument**. You are not simply writing a report about what other people think.
- Use **evidence** that supports your argument, and explain how it does.
- **Cite** quotations, ideas, and data with a formal citation system.
- Write in a **formal style**, avoiding contractions and slang. Be precise.
- Papers may utilize an “I” voice, if it is appropriate to the topic.

Professional/policy writing assignments give you a chance to practice writing for a professional audience, such as in a company or governmental organization. Although the requirements for these assignment can vary,

- Develop a good **thesis statement**.
- Develop your thesis through an **argument**.

- Use **evidence** that supports your argument, and explain how it does.
- **Persuade** your reader that your argument is sound and considers alternatives.
- Write in a **formal style**, avoiding contractions and slang. Be precise.
- In most cases, an “I” voice will be appropriate, but think about this before starting.

Informal writing assignments are just for the class. These could include discussion posts or in-class writing. You are writing so that your fellow students will be able to understand, but without formal requirements. This is not an excuse to avoid proofreading.

SOMEWHAT IDIOSYNCRATIC TIPS FOR WRITING:

This is a general list of suggestions that will improve your writing or, in some cases, at least avoid annoying me (Ghandi):

- **Word economy:** use the words you need, and no more.
- **Precision:** make sentences that have few possible interpretations. Counterexample: “You can’t put too many meanings into one sentence.”
- **Introductions/conclusions:** are largely unimportant in this class. Tell me what you are doing and in what context, but I do not care whether or not the phenomenon you are describing “has been around since the beginning of time” or what Webster’s Dictionary might say about something. You can restate your findings in a conclusion, but please avoid trying to get poetic.
- **Don’t raise the stakes unnecessarily:** If you are writing about something specific, don’t spend time trying to claim that your analysis or opinion applies to all possible cases. If something is relevant, mention it. If not, don’t.
- **Proofread:** Yes, I know what I did there.
- **Cite like your life depends on it:** If you borrow ideas, information, or words from someone else, cite them. Do so using an accepted academic format (Chicago, APA, etc.) and remember that this applies to exact quotations as well as paraphrasing. Include a bibliography or reference list.
- **Gandhi:** is not “Ghandi.”
- **Novel/book:** A work of fiction over about 75,000 words is called a “novel.” That nonfiction work you read for class is just a “book.”
- **1980s, not 1980’s:** If you are speaking of a decade, it is simply plural. The apostrophe only shows up if you leave something out, like ‘80s or the 1980s are possessing something.
- **Avoid “throughout”:** Don’t use “throughout” unless you are actually claiming something happens through the entirety of something. You probably mean “in” or “during.”
- **Your mother is “she,” your country is “it.”:** Countries, organizations, and other collections of people have no gender, so don’t try sneaking one in. If a group of them do something, “they” do it. If only one, “it” does. In no cases can they be “who” (or “whom,” but that’s another issue and doesn’t particularly bother me one way or the other).

GRADING SCALE

Your grade will be computed out of 1000 points. Completing the required assignments can get you to 800 points. Additional work will be required to get a higher grade.

A = 1000-930

A- = 929-900

B+ = 899-870

B = 869-830

B- = 829-800

C+ = 799-770

C = 769-730

C- = 729-700

D = 699-600

F = 599-0

USEFUL RESOURCES

On-Line Writing Guide. <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/>

This guide will help you achieve success as a writer during your learning experience in New Century College and beyond. Integrative Studies courses involve learning and writing from multiple perspectives and disciplines and negotiating knowledge boundaries. Your ultimate goal as a New Century College student is to use writing to make meaning of the knowledge you are acquiring, but also to integrate and connect what you are learning across disciplinary boundaries. Use this resource to aid you in achieving this goal.

A note on the Honor Code. When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, see an instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This is all sources, including the Internet. Use an approved citation method, such as MLA, APA, etc.

Commitment to Diversity Statement. New Century College is an *intentionally* inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

Disability Services. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Written Assignment Grading Standards

Score of A: Superior

- Addresses the topic fully and explores the issue thoughtfully.
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- Demonstrates clear, focused, coherent, and logical organization.
- Is fully developed and detailed. The point is clear and well stated.
- Good introduction with clear thesis statement, and an effective conclusion.
- Evidences superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition between paragraphs; only a few minor flaws.
- Integrates evidence from texts to support ideas and arguments.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of B: Strong

- Clearly addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is effectively organized. Easy to follow and understand.
- Is well developed, with supporting detail. Logically coherent.
- Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition; may have a few minor mechanical flaws.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of C: Competent

- Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity.
- Is organized. Can be followed with some difficulty.
- Is adequately developed, with some detail. Some logical fallacies or incoherent sentences/paragraphs.
- Demonstrates competent writing; shows some flaws in syntax and grammar.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of D: Weak

- May distort or neglect parts of the topic.
- May be simplistic or stereotyped in thought.
- May demonstrate problems in organization.
- May have generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; may be undeveloped. Logically flawed; several incoherencies.
- May reveal patterns of flaws in language, syntax or mechanics.
- Improper citation method.

Score of F: Inadequate

- Demonstrates serious inadequacy in addressing the topic.
- Fails in its attempts to discuss the topic. Illogical.
- May be deliberately off-topic. Extremely difficult to follow.
- Is so incompletely developed as to suggest or demonstrate incompetency.
- Is wholly incompetent mechanically.
- Improper citation method.

SCHEDULE

8/29/2014: Introductions, Exercise: motivations

9/5/2014: 1st film: *Iron-Jawed Angels*, focus on Targets, Tactics, and Strategies

9/12/2014: Reading: *Art of Protest* Introduction-Chapter 3. Exercise: Targets & leverage

9/19/2014: 2nd film: *Boycott*, focus on agitators, organizers, & other movements.

9/26/2014: Reading: *Art of Protest* Chapters 4-6. Exercise: Strategic planning

10/3/2014: 3rd film, *Walkout*, focus on identity and opposition

10/10/2014: Reading: *Art of Protest* Chapters 7-9. Exercise: Vito Russo and the Quilt

10/17/2014: 4th film: *How to Survive a Plague*, focus on messaging and rhetoric

10/24/2014: Reading: *Direct Action* Introduction-Chapter 3. Exercise: Messaging and frames

10/31/2014: 5th film, *If a Tree Falls: The Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, focus on repression

11/7/2014: Reading: *Direct Action* Chapters 4-6. Exercise: consent, pillars, and power.

11/14/2014: 6th film, *How to Start a Revolution*, focus on nonviolent action

11/21/2014: Reading: *Direct Action* Chapters 7-10. Exercise: putting it together

11/28/2014: No Class - Thanksgiving

12/5/2014: Movement video presentations, student evaluations