The study of social movements has often been as contentious as its subject matter, with longstanding tensions between various schools of thought, as well as between those who are primarily interested in developing theory and those who seek to advance practice and effect social change. For better or worse, much of the research on movements comes off as detached from the practical concerns facing activists and organizers. Given this backdrop, as this class serves both as the core course in the Social Justice & Social Policy (SJSP) program and as a Sociology elective, we will work to present key ideas from the sociological literature, with an emphasis on those areas relevant to social justice work. While the course is not a “how-to” primer in organizing, we will focus on hands-on aspects whenever possible, often in small-group section meetings that work as “lab” sessions and make use of packages of resources from our Beautiful Trouble book. Thematically, the semester will be organized around key dimensions of political contention (political opportunities, strategic capacity, tactical repertoires, recruitment mechanisms, framing processes, collective identity, and so on), rather than by type of movement. Most (but thankfully not all) of the cases that we will draw on to illustrate these dimensions relate to the 20th and 21st century U.S., as past research has most fully explored movements situated in that time and place. That said, our goal is to use these particular cases to develop ideas that can be extended to movements in general, and we encourage you to explore wide-ranging cases in your assignments and final project. Toward that end, throughout the semester we will draw on a variety of sources in an effort to demonstrate how the study of political contention intimately connects to issues of power, justice, and human agency.

Office Hours
I have scheduled office hours on Mondays from 1:30-2:30 and Wednesdays from 11:30-12:30. If these times are not convenient for you, we can make other arrangements. I encourage each of you to come to my office to discuss problems with the class, or any other issues that interest or concern you. Additionally, I will generally be available for quick questions immediately after class. If you need to contact me at other times, my phone numbers and e-mail address are listed at the top of this page. You can also leave messages for me in my mailbox outside the Sociology office in Pearlman.
**Readings**
Four required books for this course are available at the bookstore and other usual outlets:

- **Contentious Performances**, by Charles Tilly
- **Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement**, by Marshall Ganz
- **American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate**, by Pete Simi and Robert Futrell
- **Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution**, by Andrew Boyd et al.

We also will draw on a variety of shorter readings: excerpts, chapters, and free-standing essays that link to each week’s topics. Any required readings of this sort will be posted in advance on New Latte. If you are interested in owning an additional text that provides a detailed overview of key theoretical ideas, we might also recommend Sidney Tarrow’s *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

**Assignments**

**Biographical analysis (5 pg. maximum) 20%**
This paper requires that you either develop an analysis based on the interview of an activist, or construct a personal account/testimonial of your own politicized identity.

**Movement event autopsy (5 pg. maximum) 25%**
This assignment asks you to dissect a contentious event, using key conceptual dimensions from readings and class discussion to analyze its associated interactions, messages, trajectory, and outcome.

**Justice event response (3 pg. maximum) 5%**
At some point during the semester, you should attend at least one of our featured campus social justice/social movement events. As the semester progresses, we will add events to our compiled list (and welcome your suggestions to add to that list, which will be posted on Latte), and in some cases reserve the right to ask those interested to sign up in advance to attend limited-space happenings. By the end of the week that follows your chosen event, you will submit a response paper that describes your thoughts and observations, as well as relates these impressions to ideas from class.

**Final project (12 pg. maximum, or equivalent) 35% (proposal: 2%; project: 33%)**
This project will involve an in-depth examination of multiple aspects of one or more social movement-related organization, campaign, or event. Your final product can take a variety of forms, but in all instances it will be important to relate elements of your case(s) to topics explored in readings and in class. We will provide much more detail about this assignment over the course of the semester, but at this point know that we encourage creative proposals for alternative project conceptions. Mid-way through the semester you will need to submit a project proposal, describing your case(s) and your motivating research question(s).
Participation 15%

Much of the benefit of this course will come through in-class discussion, active engagement with your project topic, and your presence at class-related sessions/events. It is therefore very important for each of you to take these course components seriously, keep up with reading assignments, and come to class prepared to discuss issues you found interesting or want clarified. In a larger class like this one, we understand that in-class participation is sometimes difficult, and therefore view the ‘participation’ component of your grade broadly, meaning that it can include contributions during class, but also questions and/or suggested ideas, possible topics of discussion, and connections between class topics and current events made outside of class (i.e. before or after class, in my office hours, or over email). Periodically, you will meet in smaller discussion sections, which do provide a fuller opportunity to contribute your thoughts, questions, and critiques. Participation is especially important here – your instructor will take attendance, and you are expected to be present for each session (please make arrangements ahead of time with both David and your section instructor if you cannot make a section meeting).

Extra credit ??%

Sporadically throughout the semester, we expect (but do not guarantee) that opportunities will arise to contribute to the class in what we hope will be interesting, but non-required ways. In some of those instances, we are happy to offer extra credit toward your final grade in return for your participation. As this offer provides a direct illustration of the “collective action problem” at the heart of social movement theory, we reserve the right to tweak the “incentive structure” as needed. But like many of you, we place a high value on transparency in grading, so we will do our best to be clear at all times about how extra credit will operate.

Laptop and cellphone policy: Rather than banning or unilaterally restricting the use of laptops in this class, we will treat them as a resource to extend, test, confirm, or otherwise add detail to ideas that arise in class. To utilize that resource fully and coherently, we ask anyone who prefers to use a laptop in class to sit in the front rows of the center (floor-level) section of the room, so that you can be easily consulted to aid our discussions. Put another way, no laptops will be allowed in the tiered seating sections of Schwartz Aud. We also ask that you put cellphones away during class – if an emergency requires you to take out your phone, please do so in the outside lobby.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
Course Outline

Week 1 (13-16 January):
• Introductory business
• Considering starting points
  - music: Arcade Fire, “Ready to Start”
  - associated orienting quotations:
    “Activists are the heroes of modern society, turning a critical lens on what is and imagining what can be.”
    – Kathleen Blee
    “If the businessmen drink my blood
    Like the kids in art school said they would
    Then I guess I’ll just begin again.”
    – Arcade Fire, “Ready to Start”
• What questions can we ask about social movements?
  - film: This Is What Democracy Looks Like

Week 2 (22-23 January; no class 1/20 - MLK Day):
• Identifying, compiling, and curating core questions
• Defining foundational concepts
  - reading: Charles Tilly, “Social Movements as Politics”

Week 3 (27-30 January):
• Social movements and contentious politics: core frameworks
  - reading: Charles Tilly, Contentious Performances, Chs. 1, 3, 5

Weeks 4-5 (3-13 February):
• Biographical spaces: recruitment and participation
  - readings: Doug McAdam, “In Search of the Volunteers” and “The Biographical Roots of Activism”
    Kristin Luker, “World Views of Pro- and Anti-Abortion Activists”
• Note special sessions:
  Wednesday, 2/5, with Jane Sapp (meet in Slosberg Recital Hall)
  Thursday, 2/6, ‘DEIS Impact College with Sister Helen Prejean (meet in Sherman Hall, Hassenfeld Conference Center)
Week 6 (17-20 February): No classes (Midterm recess)

Week 7 (24-27 February):

- Organizations working for change: Strategic capacity and the Farm Worker Movement
  - reading: Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*

Week 8 (3-6 March):

- Cultural and interpretive spaces I: frame alignment processes
  - readings: David Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation”
  - case studies: Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream”
    Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”
    Mike Tidwell, “To Really Save the Planet, Stop Going Green,”

Biographical analysis due 3/3

Week 9 (10-13 March):

- Cultural and interpretive spaces II: Music, identity, and dissent
  - readings: William G. Roy, *Reds, Whites, and Blues*
    Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*

Week 10 (17-20 March):

- Mediated spaces: claims and audiences
  - readings: Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, Ch. 1
    William A. Gamson & Gadi Wolfsfeld, “Movements and Media as Interacting Systems”
    Jennifer Earl & Katarina Kimport, “Digitally Enabled Social Change”

Project proposal due

Weeks 11-12 (24 March - 3 April):

- Tactical interaction: Innovation and adaptation in the “repression-mobilization nexus”
  - readings: Saul Alinsky, “Protest Tactics”
    Charles M. Payne, “Greenwood”

- The policing of protest: evolving repertoires of social control
    Patrick F. Gillham, “Securitizing America: Strategic Incapacitation and the Policing of Protest...”

Movement event autopsy due 4/2
Week 13 (7-10 April):
  • Free spaces and collective identity
    - readings: Pete Simi and Robert Futrell, *American Swastika*

Week 14-15 (14-24 April, no classes 4/16-21 - Spring recess):
  • Guest panel
    - reading: Boyd et al, *Beautiful Trouble* (selections tba)

Week 16 (28 April):
  • Course wrap-up

Final project, due date tba