HIST/CAST 243
Race, Gender and American Social Movements

Spring 2010
Professor Shelley Lee
Oberlin College

Members of the Asian American Political Alliance take part in a Free Huey Newton Rally

Women’s Liberation demonstration in Boston, 1972

3 SS CD
MW 2:30-4:20
KING 237

Office hours: MW 8:00-10:30 (or by appt)
King 141-F
Email: shelley.lee@oberlin.edu

This course can be taken for credits in GSFS

DESCRIPTION, EXPECTATIONS, OBJECTIVES

This class examines American social movements in the late 20th century, with particular focus on the 1960s and 1970s. Defining a social movement as “a collective, organized, sustained, and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and practices,” this course will use historical and comparative approaches to the study of key movements that grew out of or were influenced by the black civil rights movement and the New Left, and which rebelled against the social and cultural order of America in the mid-twentieth century.

Why do we study social movements? For one, they are all around us, and studying them can shed light on the diversity of interests in the world, the origin of new ideas, why people act or don’t act, and how social and political change occur. Of particular interest in this class are movements that sought to upend the status quo during the mid to late 1900s by contesting racism, sexism, and homophobia and advancing their visions of a more inclusive and just world. These range from campaigns to end legal and economic discrimination, efforts focused on self-transformation and cultural change, and revolutionary calls for the end of capitalism, imperialism. In gaining an introduction to myriad social movements of this era, we will consider their similarities and differences, assess their successes and failures, and reflect upon the impact of the movements (collectively and individually) on American culture and politics today. We will also study relatively recent developments, such as the rise of the New Right and the environmental justice movement. Other topics include Black Power, the rise of “Asian America,” Indians and the seizure of Alcatraz, Puerto Ricans and the Young Lords, the Chicano movement, “Women’s Liberation,” the movement for gay rights, and environmental racism in New York.
Classes will usually consist of lecture and discussion in some combination, with a few sessions being devoted entirely to discussion. The readings and lectures will offer a broad frame for understanding the myriad issues, players, and actions that made the 1960s and 1970s such a fertile period for social movement organizing. They will also highlight intersecting and recurring themes across seemingly disparate movements, and we will discuss, for example, the impact of anti-colonial struggles abroad on the consciousness of activists, racial politics in the movements for gender equality, gender politics in movements for racial equality, and the politics of representation and use of media. In addition to providing a broad introduction to an important historical subject, the course will give students the opportunity to hone their skills in reading and thinking critically, working with primary and secondary materials, writing with clarity and purpose, and discussing and debating in an informed and rigorous manner. In addition to completing assigned readings for class, you are expected to stay on top of your deadlines and requirements and conduct yourself in a respectful and non-disruptive manner. If you have any problems or questions regarding the course expectations or requirements, do speak with me as soon as possible. You should do so sooner rather than later, as I may be unable to assist you in a last minute situation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (Available at Oberlin Bookstore)**


These books are available at Oberlin Bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library. Other required readings will be available on Blackboard or will be distributed in class.

**Grading:**

Course grades are calculated from a possible total of 200 points.

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*Your grade will be based on the following:*

**Attendance and participation (15%).** Attendance and participation in discussion are required. Do show your respect for the class by being on time, prepared and attentive. Punctuality is crucial, as I will start class at 2:30 sharp. Regarding absences, unless you provide documentation (doctor’s note, flat tire repair bill, etc.), you must make up missed classes with an extra assignment(s). It is your responsibility to arrange this with me, either before or immediately after an absence. Otherwise, each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of two points from your final grade. Excessive tardiness and disruptiveness (i.e., leaving the room in the middle of class without permission) will also negatively affect your grade.
On participation, you should be a thoughtful discussant, active contributor, and attentive listener. Though this is a lecture-based class, I approach lecturing in a way that invites dialogue, and there will, moreover, be many opportunities to engage in discussion with your classmates (in pairs, small groups, and as a class). If for any reason you have difficulty with class discussion, see me as soon as possible.

**Blackboard/Start of class conversation (5%).** A group of four or five of you and I will begin each class session with an informal conversation about the day’s reading and issues. You will sign up for your dates ahead of time, and over the semester, you will have participated in these two times. Prior to the meeting for which you are signed up, you must do a Blackboard posting on the assigned reading. These must be posted by 11:00PM the day before class. Because of the variety of readings, your posts need not follow a particular format or address a fixed set of questions, but you should demonstrate that you have done a close, thoughtful reading of the material and can relate them to the course’s broader themes. What did you find particularly interesting, helpful, and/or problematic about the reading? What additional questions do they raise? Your classmates will read these, and I will also draw on them for our start of class conversations. This requirement is not graded, but posts and comments fail to demonstrate substance, thoughtfulness, and engagement will not receive credit.

**Primary source analysis (20%).** For this 5-6 page paper, you will a close reading and analysis of a set of primary materials related to American social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. You will select from a packet of materials that I will provide. This assignment will be evaluated on the following criteria: clarity of expression and presentation; ability to provide a close, thoughtful, and critical reading of the documents’ contents; success in locating the documents in their proper historical context; and effective linking of document and issues to broader themes and questions in Asian American history. Further details on this assignment will be given in class. Due **March 10.**

**Biography/Autobiography review (20%).** You will write a 5-6 page essay on a book-length biography or autobiography of an important American social movement activist from the late 20th century. You should select a book about an individual connected to one of the movements we studied in class, so that you can draw on course materials for context. Otherwise, you may need to do additional background reading. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to an important figure in social movement history, to reflect upon the lived experience of being an activist, and to think critically about studying history through life stories. Further details on this assignment will be given in class. A short prospectus is due on **April 21** and the paper is due on **May 3.**

**In-class midterm (20%).** Blue book exam will test you on concepts and identifications covered in class and readings. Exam will be on **March 24.**

**Final exam (20%).** Take home exam, emphasizing material from the second half of the semester. This will be handed out on the last day of class and is due on **May 22.**

*Grades for all coursework are based on displayed intellectual content, originality of thought, mastery of materials, and quality of expression. For all written assignments, you must turn in hard copies. Generally, I do not give extensions on papers, and any late assignments will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for each day late.*

**OBERLIN HONOR CODE**

By enrolling in this class you are agreeing to abide by Oberlin’s Honor Code and Honor System. Be sure you have read and understood your rights and responsibilities. You can find it at this link: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html)
SPECIAL NEEDS
I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with physical or learning disabilities. See me as soon as possible to discuss what steps need to be taken and any modifications that might be necessary.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME
The best way to contact me about discussing course matters is to come to office hours. I welcome and strongly encourage each of you to visit at least once during the term, if only to introduce yourself. You may contact me via email, and I will do my best to reply within 24 hours.
PART I: ORIGINS AND OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: SETTING THE STAGE

Feb. 8 Course introduction, why movements occur, historical context
Feb. 10 The origins of the era of radicalism
Reading: Gosse, Chapters 1-3

WEEK 2: CHANGING THE WORLD, TOGETHER AND APART DURING THE 1950s and 1960s

Feb. 15 The southern civil rights movement and northern campus radicals
Reading: Gosse, Chapters 4, 6
Feb. 17 The antiwar movement
Reading: Gosse, Chapters 5, 8

PART II. FIGHTING FOR RACIAL EQUALITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

WEEK 3: BLACK POWER

Feb. 22 Overview of the Black Power movement
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 9; Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, Black Power (Blackboard)
Feb. 24 The influence of socialism and third world radicalism on black liberation politics
Reading: Young, Chapters 1-2

WEEK 4: PROTEST AESTHETICS AND MOVEMENT CULTURE

Mar. 1 Role of art and media
Reading: Young, Chapters 3-4
Mar. 3 Theorists, icons, and charismatic leaders
Reading: Young, Chapter 5

WEEK 5: THIS LAND IS OUR LAND: LATINOS, NATIVES AND ANTI-COLONIALISM

Mar. 8 Historical legacies and ongoing struggles
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 10; Young Lords Party, Thirteen Point Platform (Blackboard); Movimiento Estudiantil Chicoano de Aztlan, El Plan (Blackboard)
Mar. 10 Native American sovereignty and the politics of occupation
Reading: Indians of All Tribes, Proclamation (Blackboard)
PAPER #1 DUE
WEEK 6: NOT MODEL MINORITIES: THE ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

Mar. 15  Asian American radicals and the fight for ethnic Studies
Reading: Maeda, Chapters 1-3

Mar. 17  Performing revolution
Reading: Maeda, Chapters 4-Conclusion

WEEK 7: MIDTERM WEEK

Mar. 22  Review

Mar. 24  MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 8: ***SPRING BREAK***

PART III. GENDER AND SEXUALITY

WEEK 9: THE ORIGINS AND EMERGENCE OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Apr. 5  The way we never were: women in the 1950s and the origins of the modern women’s movement
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 7

Apr. 7  From the Feminine Mystique to “Women’s Lib”
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 11

WEEK 10: TROUBLE BETWEEN US: NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCE IN THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

Apr. 12  Black-white relations in the civil rights and women’s movements
Reading: Breines, Chapters 1-2

Apr. 14  A third way: women of color feminism
Reading: Breines, Chapters 3-5

WEEK 11: STONEWALL AND BEYOND

Apr. 19  The history of the closet and gay/lesbian politics
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 12; Chauncey, Chapters 1-2

Apr. 21  The latest frontier: The struggle for gay marriage rights
Reading: finish Chauncey

PART IV. LEGACIES
WEEK 12: DISCONTENT AND BACKLASH

Apr. 26  The evangelical resurgence
Reading: Boyer, “The Evangelical in 1970s American Protestantism” (Blackboard); Crespino, “Civil Rights and the Religious Right” (Blackboard)

Apr. 28  The culture wars
Reading: Spruill, “Gender and America’s Rightward Turn” (Blackboard); Porter, “Affirming and Disaffirming Actions” (Blackboard)

WEEK 13: NEW MODELS, NEW STRUGGLES

May 3   Visit by Wendy Kozol, Professor of Comparative American Studies, Oberlin College
Professor Kozol will speak on the subject of human rights. More details to follow.

PAPER #2 DUE

May 5   Environmental racism and the movement for justice
Reading: Sze, Chapters 1-4

WEEK 14: THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

May 10  Lessons from New York and activism today
Reading: Sze, Chapter 5 – Conclusion

May 12  Wrap up and final thoughts
Reading: Gosse, Chapter 13

TAKE-HOME EXAMS DUE SATURDAY, MAY 22 at 9:00PM

**The contents of this syllabus are subject to change. I will notify you in class and via Blackboard of any updates.