In this course, we will study American social movements from the 1950s to the recent past, primarily focusing on movements that challenged inequalities based on race, gender, and/or sexuality. These ranged from moderate efforts for recognition and inclusion for subjugated groups, to radical calls calling for separatism or wholesale transformations of American society. Throughout the semester, the key historical questions we will explore are: how do we explain the rise of the civil rights movement and why did it inspire so many subsequent movements among a variety of oppressed and marginalized groups during the 1960s and 1970s? How do we assess the effectiveness of movements and why have they seemingly declined in recent decades? Topics will include: Ella Baker and her role in the black freedom struggle; the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles; Asian Americans and the anti-eviction movement in San Francisco; American Indians and the seizure of Alcatraz Island; the feminist movement in the Midwest; and the Stonewall Riots and the gay liberation movement; and the grassroots origins of the New Right. We will consider how social movements shed light on historical inequalities suffered by women, sexual minorities, and racialized groups and how ordinary people mobilized movements to articulate alternative, oppositional visions and identities; the personal and interpersonal struggles of activists; the ideologies and politics within the movements themselves; the success, failures, and legacies of the movements.

We define a social movement as “a collective, organized, sustained, and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and practices.” Why do we study social movements? Social movements are all around us, so studying them can shed light on the diversity of interests in the world, the origin of new ideas, why
people act (and don’t act), and how social and political change occur. This class aims to illuminate these concerns using an historical and comparative approach and with particular attention to some of the major American social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. By the end of the semester, students should possess a general understanding of social movement origins and dynamics anchored in concrete historical knowledge, as well as a solid command over the significance of race, gender, and sexuality 20th century U.S. history and the similarities, differences, and intersections of the movements being considered. Biographies and the lived experiences of activists will play an especially prominent role in our study as we work toward a multifaceted understanding of why and how particular social movements arose, were sustained, and succeeded or failed.

This is reading and discussion intensive seminar in which for most of the semester we will move at the pace of a book per week. You should possess a basic background in U.S. history in the 20th century and prior coursework in Comparative American Studies is recommended. Our Tuesday meetings will usually be devoted to setting up the historical backdrop and issues concerning a particular social movement, and Thursdays will be devoted to presentations and discussion of assigned texts.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Texts:**

Ernesto Chavez, "¡Mi Raza Primero!" *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (California, 2002)
Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (Plume, 1993)
Judith Ezekiel, *Feminism in the Heartland* (Ohio State, 2002)
Estella Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Temple, 2007)
Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton, 2005)

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

**Grading:**

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

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Grades will consist of the following components:

**Attendance and participation. (20%)** Your attendance in this class is required and any absences, unless cleared by some documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) or a makeup assignment, will be considered unexcused and, thus, negatively impact your grade. If you miss a class be sure to speak with me to arrange a makeup assignment. However, excessive absences, whether made up or not, will be counted against your grade.
Participation is not only a crucial part of this grade but also for the success of this seminar, so it is important that you come to class ready to contribute to discussion and respectfully engage your classmates.

Presentations (20%). Twice during the semester, you and a partner (or two) will make a presentation on the topic and reading for the day and then begin discussion. The evening prior to your presentation (by 8:00PM), you should post some thoughts and questions on Blackboard, for the rest of the class. Your posting should be about a page in length. You can summarize the author’s main idea(s), highlight points of particular interest to you, raise questions prompted by the reading, and reflect upon the significance of the subject in American social movement history and analysis. Remember that your audience is the rest of the class, so you should aim to provide some focus for the following day’s discussion. The rest of the class should be prepared to engage the points and questions raised in the postings.

Two book reviews (20%). You will write two reviews on assigned texts other than the ones you presented on. Length is approximately five pages. I will give more details on this assignment in class. DUE MARCH 5 and APRIL 16

Final project (40%). You will identify and research a person or organization whom you consider to be an unsung player in American social movement history. This can be someone or something touched upon in a reading. More details will be given in class. The assignment will consist of the following parts:

1. Prospectus and preliminary bibliography. Due March 19 (5%)
2. Presentation. Held during the last two weeks of class (10%)
3. Final paper. Length should be 8-10 pages. (25%)

Grades for the coursework will be based on displayed intellectual content, originality of thought, mastery of course materials, and quality of expression. Generally, I do not grant extensions or give makeup exams, and late assignments will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for each day late. I may make an exception if you speak with me well before a due date.

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

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 in a timely manner, though I usually do not check email after 10:00PM.
SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: SETTING THE STAGE: AMERICA AT WAR’S END

Feb. 3  Course introduction, why movements occur, historical context

Feb. 5  Understanding the New Left
Reading: Gosse, "A Movement of Movements" (Blackboard) and Ransby, Chapters 1-2

I. RACIAL INEQUALITY AND PHILOSOPHIES OF CHANGE

WEEK 2: DIRECT ACTION AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Required film screening of Eyes on The Prize, "Bridge to Freedom, 1965" (Written, Produced, and Directed by Callie Crossley) at 4pm on Sunday, February 8th in Lord Lounge. There will be a Q & A following the film with Ms. Crossley as well as a reception.

Feb. 10  From movement centers to a Southwide movement
Reading: Ransby, Chapters 3-7

Feb. 12  Leadership, setbacks, and new directions (Callie Crossley will join our class for this session)
Reading: Ransby, Chapters 8-12

WEEK 3: BLACK POWER AND THE RADICAL TURN

Feb. 17  The origins of Black Power
Reading: Ogbar, Chapters 1-3

Feb. 19  The revolutionary objectives and culture of Black Power
Reading: Ogbar, Chapters 4-6

WEEK 4: BRIDGES AND ALLIANCES: THE LIFE AND WORK OF GRACE LEE BOGGS

Feb. 24  Early life and politicization
Reading: Boggs, Chapters 1-5

Feb. 26  Community organizing in action
Reading: Boggs, Chapters 6-9

II. THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND ACTION

WEEK 5: NATIVE AMERICAN POLITICS AND RADICALISM IN THE 1960s

Mar. 3  Native Americans and the consequences of termination and relocation
Reading: Fortunate Eagle, Chapters 1-11

Mar. 5  The politics of takeovers and legacies of Indian activism
Reading: Fortunate Eagle, Chapters 12-23
BOOK REVIEW #1 DUE
WEEK 6: ASSIMILATION AND RADICALISM IN THE CHICANO MOVEMENT

Mar. 10  Historical legacies and new militancy among LA’s Mexican Americans
Reading: Chavez, Chapters 1-3

Mar. 12  Cultural nationalism and electoral politics
Reading: Chavez, Chapters 4-5

WEEK 7: ASIAN AMERICANS, CLASS, AND ETHNIC SOLIDARITY

Mar. 17  The Asian American movement
Reading: Habal, Chapters 1-4

Mar. 19  Challenges of movement building in the I-Hotel struggle
Reading: Habal, Chapters 5-7
PROSPECTUS AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

WEEK 8: ***SPRING RECESS***

III: CHALLENGING PATRIARCHY AND HETEROSEXISM

WEEK 9: SECOND WAVE FEMINISM

Mar. 31  Background from the first wave to “women’s lib”
Reading: Ezekiel, Introduction-Chapter 4

Apr. 2  The feminist movement in Dayton, Ohio
Reading: Ezekiel, Chapter 5-Conclusion

WEEK 10: GAY LIBERATION

Apr. 7  Homophobia, the homophile movement, and origins of the struggle
Reading: Duberman, Parts 1-4

Apr. 9  Rights and resistance at Stonewall and beyond
Reading: Duberman, Parts 5-7

WEEK 11: COUNTERREVOLUTION: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE NEW RIGHT

Apr. 14  The sleeping giant stirs
Reading: Critchlow, Chapters 1-6 (skim 4)

Apr. 16  Phyllis Schlafly and the battle against the ERA
Reading: Critchlow, Chapters 7-11 (skim 7)
BOOK REVIEW #2 DUE
WEEK 12: WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINISM

Apr. 21  Addressing racism and heterosexism in the women’s movement
Reading: Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” and selections from This Bridge Called My Back anthology (Blackboard)

Apr. 23  Voicing dissent, breaking away, and literary activism
Reading: Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” and “An Open Letter to Mary Daly” (Blackboard)

WEEK 13: PRESENTATIONS

Apr. 28  Presentations

Apr. 30  Presentations

WEEK 14: PRESENTATIONS

May 5  Presentations

May 7  Presentations

FINAL PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, MAY 14, 4:00 PM OUTSIDE MY OFFICE AT KING 141-F