HIST/CAST 342

Race, Gender and American Social Movements

Spring 2008
Instructor: Shelley Lee

Office hours and location:
T 8:30-10:00 and W 4:30-5:30
(or by appointment)
King 141-F

Email: shelley.lee@oberlin.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In this class, we will study American social movements from the 1950s to the recent past, focusing on movements that sought to challenge inequalities based on race, gender, and/or sexuality. These ranged from moderate movements for recognition and inclusion for subjugated groups, to radical movements calling for separatism or structural transformations in 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? Some of the topics we will examine include: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and coordination of a South-wide civil rights strategy; Puerto Ricans and the Young Lords Party in Chicago; Asian Americans and the American Citizens for Justice; the American Indian Movement; the women’s liberation movement; and the gay rights movement. 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.

For our purposes, we define a social movement as “a collective, organized, sustained, and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and practices.” This is a fuzzy definition, but intentionally so. Why do we study them? Social movements are all around us (yes, still!), 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. Thus, by the end of our study, students will not only possess a strong understanding of social movement origins and dynamics anchored in concrete historical knowledge, but also 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 under study. Though theory is not a central component of this class, sociological and other social science work in movement theory will supplement our study.

REQUIREMENTS

Grade breakdown:

Attendance and in-class participation. (10%) As a 300-level seminar, this course relies on students’ active in-class participation. Thus, attendance and participation in discussion are required. I will allow two absences without penalty. All others will negatively impact your final grade.

Presentations (10%). Twice during the semester, you and a partner/group will make a short presentation on the topic and reading for the day and then begin discussion.

Primary Source Paper (15%). 3-4 pages. Further details will be given in class. Due March 19.

Book Review (15%). You may write on any of the assigned texts. Further details will be given in class. 3-4 pages. Due April 28.

Blackboard postings (5%). Identify and discuss three important ideas, events, or people that stood out for you in the assigned reading for the day. You may post either before our Monday or Wednesday meeting. Postings submitted by 10:00AM the day of class will be counted. Each student is required to post FIVE times over the semester.

Final project (45%). You will research, write a paper on, and present to your classmates an American social movement not covered in the class. The project consists of the following components:

1. Prospectus and preliminary bibliography (5%). Due March 5
2. Rough draft (5%) Due April 16
3. Presentation (10%). April 30, May 5, and May 7.
4. Final paper. 7-8 pages (25%) Due May 15

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.

Required Texts (available at Oberlin Bookstore):


Sara Evans, Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century’s End (Free Press, 2003)

Miguel Melendez and Jose Torres, We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights With The Young Lords (Rutgers, 2005)

Aldon Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change (Free Press, 1986)

Laura Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles (California, 2006)

Helen Zia, Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People (FS&G, 2001)

Other readings are available on Blackboard. You can access them through the syllabus page or by clicking the menu tab “Course Documents.”

In addition to the readings, there are several required films for the class. We will try to schedule viewing times that accommodate everyone’s schedules. The films will also be made available on reserve at the library.

**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 should make sure you are familiar with the Honor Code and Honor system. You can find it at this link: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regfs07-08/honorcode.pdf](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regfs07-08/honorcode.pdf).

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with physical or learning disabilities. Do 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. 4  Course introduction, why movements occur, historical context

Feb. 6  The early civil rights movement as a window to social movement models
        Reading: Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, Chapters 1-3

Week 2: DIRECT ACTION AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Feb. 11  From movement centers to a Southwide movement
        Reading: Morris, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, Chapters 4, 5, 7

Feb. 13  Beyond the indigenous base: Civil Rights goes national
        Reading: Morris, Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, Chapters 9, 10

        Film screening: TBA

Week 3: MOBILIZING PEOPLE, EMOTION, AND RESOURCES

Feb. 18  The role of women and the black poor
        Reading: Kelley, “Congested Terrain” and “Birmingham’s Untouchables”; McGuire, “It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped”

Feb. 20  Leadership and charisma in social movements
        Reading: Carson, “Martin Luther King, Jr”; Elliott, “Ella Baker”

Week 4: THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

Feb. 25  Politicization and action from two perspectives
        Reading: selections from Banks, Ojibwa Warrior; selections from Crow Dog, Lakota Woman; selections from Warrior and Smith, Like a Hurricane

Feb. 27  Political theater and continuing the struggle
        Reading: Warrior and Smith, Like a Hurricane, Epilogue; Stripes, “A Strategy of Resistance”


Mar. 3  “Black Power” as an ideological and structural phenomenon
        Reading: Self, “To Plan Our Liberation”
Mar. 5  Emergence of the Third World left
  Reading: Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left, Chapters 1-3

PROSPECTUS AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 6: THE THIRD WORLD LEFT (continued)

Mar. 10  Ideology and coalition-building in the Third World left
  Reading: Judy Wu, “Journeys for Peace and Liberation,” Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left, Chapters 4-6

  Special event: Judy Wu, associate professor of History at Ohio State, will give a talk entitled “Anti-Imperialist Travelers: Asian-Black Internationalism and Radical Orientalism.” Attendance at this event is required for students of HIST/CAST 342. Details on this event to come.

Mar. 12  Decline and reflections
  Reading: Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left, Chapters 7-8

Week 7: LATINOS IN CHICAGO

Mar. 17  Autobiography and social movements
  Reading: Melendez, We Took the Streets, Chapters 1-6

Mar. 19  Rise and fall of the Young Lords
  Reading, Melendez, We Took the Streets, Chapters 7-12
  PRIMARY SOURCE PAPER DUE

Week 8: ***SPRING RECESS***NO CLASS

Week 9: SECOND WAVE FEMINISM

Mar. 31  From consciousness-raising groups to a national movement
  Reading: Evans, Tidal Wave, Chapters 1-4

Apr. 2  Limits of identity politics and the mainstreaming of feminist politics
  Reading: Evans, Tidal Wave, Chapters 5-7

Week 10: EMERGING AS A PEOPLE: THE ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

Apr. 7  The second political awakening of Asian Americans
  Reading: Zia, Asian American Dreams, Chapters 2-5, 7
Apr. 9  Can model minorities engage in movement politics?
Reading: Zia, Asian American Dreams, Chapters 9-12

Film viewing: “Who Killed Vincent Chin?”

Week 11: GAY LIBERATION: THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS AND RECOGNITION

Apr. 14  Origins and foundations
Reading: D’Emilio, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities, Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7

Apr. 16  Emergence of the gay movement
Reading: D’Emilio, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities, Chapters 8-12
ROUGH DRAFT DUE

Week 12: COUNTERREVOLUTION: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE NEW RIGHT

Apr. 21  Awakening the sleeping giant
Reading: Lisa McGirr, Suburban Warriors, Chapters 2 and 3

Apr. 23  The Promise Keepers
Reading: Heath, “Soft-Boiled Masculinity”

Week 13: THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Apr. 28  Globalization
Reading: TBA
BOOK REVIEW DUE

Apr. 30  Project presentations

Week 14: PRESENTATIONS (continued)

May 5  Project presentations

May 7  Project presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 15—DROP OFF OUTSIDE MY DOOR AT KING 141-F BY 5:00 PM.