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Welcome to what I hope will be a pertinent and intriguing investigation into the role of social movements in U.S. society. Social movements are, without a doubt, one of the most exciting topics for sociological inquiry. They are conspicuous and contentious social happenings. By their very nature, social movements challenge fundamental aspects of society. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a major social issue in which social movements are not involved. Environmental protection, race and ethnic relations, family values, gun control, labor rights, nuclear weapons, abortion, gender equity, poverty, homosexuality, toxic waste, globalization / privatization are only a few of the issues around which social movements have emerged. Social movements continue to represent central mechanism for social change and are key actors in the contemporary political process.

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a sociological understanding of past and present social movements in the United States; their organizational structures, ideologies, support-base, strategy and tactics, resources, discourse framing, multi-organizational fields of action, political opportunity structure and social control agents. We will employ a range of social movement theories and concepts to better understand the origins, dynamics, and activities of social movements. Throughout this semester we will examine the key role of social movements in an ever-changing socio-political landscape in the U.S. as well as the transformed global society.

Specifically we will address such questions as: under what historical conditions do social movements arise? Who joins social movements? Why and when do some movement actors move beyond institutionalized channels? Why do some social movements succeed and others fail? How have movement issues / foci changed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? How well do single-issue movements fair compared to multi-issue movements. What types of social movements have emerged in response to the globalization process? How do movement strategy and structure change in response to political opportunities?

In C. Wright Mill's classical formulation, the sociological imagination involves seeing the connections between broad social structures and prevailing individual biographies. This way of seeing the social world has particular relevance in the case of social movements. Social movements provide some of our discipline's most vivid examples of individuals recognizing shared social concerns and uniting with one another at some historical moment to change the workings of society in some manner. A broader sociological understanding of these ubiquitous social phenomena will enable us to highlight the relationship between human agency and sociopolitical structures. Such an understanding holds the promise of a more informed citizenry and a more active democracy.

It is my hope to engage this topic of social movements in a relaxed and comfortable manner with plenty of class discussion and student presentation of material. It is important to me and extremely beneficial to you to make every effort to attend every class meeting. I favor frequent and informed participation. You will be expected to contribute as a regular member of this class. Your grade for this course will be determined as follows: daily participation (10%), four exams (20% each / 80% total) and a SMO research paper (10%).

The following three required texts for this course are available at both the UMC and Hill bookstores

Grassroots Resistance: Social Movements in Twentieth Century America  
by Robert Goldberg

Radical Ecology : The Search for a Livable World  
by Carolyn Merchant

Social Movements and Globalization: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement by Valentine Moghadam

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide me notification from Disability Services and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard Hall, room 322).

**Religious Observances**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform me as to any classes you expect to miss due to a religious observance.

**Classroom Behavior Policy**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussions and to get reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

**Student Honor Code**

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

**Policy on Discrimination and Harassment**

The University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based up on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.