

**Ben Gurion University of the Negev**

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Contentious Politics: An introduction to the sociology of social movements**

**Dr. Sara Helman**

**2009**

**Course Description**

Social movements have become central political actors in contemporary societies. The visibility and ongoing presence of protests, coalitions and movements at the national and transnational level gave rise to a rich theoretical and research endeavor seeking to understand the emergence and dynamics of social movements. This course will introduce students to contemporary research and theories of social movements and will center on the following topics: 1) what are social movements and how and in what ways do they differ from other forms of contention; 2) why do social movements emerge and under what socio-political conditions? 3) are there patterns of organization unique to social movements and how do they mobilize individuals to action? 4) What is the cultural stuff constitutive of issues in contention and how do social movements promote new collective identities? 5) What is the fate of social movements in an era of globalization?

**Course Structure**

Weekly lectures

**Course Requirements:**

- Attendance is not compulsory but highly recommended
- Proficiency Test at the end of the first semester. The test will include all the bibliographic material learned during that semester.
- Final exam at the end of the second semester: this exam will include all the material learned throughout the year.

Structure of Final Course Grade

<b>Component</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1. Proficiency Test	30%
2. Final Exam	70%
Total:	100%

**A pass grade (56) is required in each exam.**

**Topics and Reading List**

**A. Defining and Conceptualizing Social Movements**

Mario Diani

"The Concept of Social Movement." *The Sociological Review* 40,1: 1-25

David Mayer and Sidney Tarrow

"A Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century." Pp. 1-28, in David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (Eds.) *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*. Lanham, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

## **B. Why do social movements develop and emerge?**

### **1. Psycho-Social Explanations: Relative Deprivation**

Steven Finkel and James B. Rule

1986 "Relative Deprivation and Related Psychological Theories of Civil Violence: A Critical Review." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 9: 47-69.

### **2. Resource Mobilization Theory: from irrational collective behavior to rational collective action**

Steven Finkel and James B. Rule

1986 "Relative Deprivation and Related Psychological Theories of Civil Violence: A Critical Review." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 9: 47-69.

### **3. The Political Process Approach: from resource mobilization to political opportunities**

Sidney Tarrow

"States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements." Pp. 41-61, In: Doug MacAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (Eds) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rachel L. Einowohner

2003 "Opportunity, Honor and Action in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 1942." *American Journal of Sociology* 109, 3: 650-675.

### **4. New Social Movements Theory: Post-Industrial Society and the Emergence of Contentious Identities**

Uri ben Eliezer

1999 "Is civil society possible in Israel? Politics and Identity in newly emerging NGOs." *Israeli Sociology* 2, 1: 51-91 (Hebrew)

### **5. Recruitment to Social Movement Activism**

Doug McAdam

1986 "Recruitment to High Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92, 1: 64-90.

## **6. Culture and Meaning in Social Movements**

Ann Swidler

"Cultural Power and Social Movements," Pp. 25-40, in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (Eds.) *Social Movements and Culture*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Helman, Sara. 1999. From Soldiering and Motherhood to Citizenship: A Study of Four Israeli Peace Protest Movements. *Social Politics* 6, 3 (Fall):292-313.

## **7. Collective Identity and Social Movements**

Francesca Polletta and James M. Jaspers

2001 "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:283-305.

Feigue, Michael

2003 "Hebron and Kyriat Arvah: Life in the shadow of memory," pp. 101-125, in: *Two Maps to the West Bank, Shalom Achshav and Gush Emunim and the struggle for space in Israel*. Jerusalem, Magness Press (Hebrew).

## **8. Emotions and Social Movements**

Jo Reger

2004 "Organizational "Emotion "Work" through Consciousness Rising: An Analysis of a Feminist Organization." *Qualitative Sociology* 27, 2 (summer) 205-222.

## **9. Transnational Social Movements**

Coney Roggeband

2004 "Immediately I thought we should do the same thing' International Inspiration and Exchange in Feminist Action against Sexual Violence." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 11, 2: 159-175.