

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Social Work and Social Action**

**Course Number:** SWOA 735  
**Semester:** Spring 2003  
**Instructor:** Megan Meyer, Ph.D.  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10-12, Fridays 12-2, or by appointment  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine theories of social action and the methods and processes used by challenging groups to bring about social change. Close attention will be paid to the causes and crystallizations of protest; the genesis, growth and sustenance of social movements; strategies and tactics to achieve social goals; and the institutionalization of social change.

Where appropriate, current and historical examples of major social movements will be studied in terms of their theoretical foundations or operational mechanisms. Different models of social action will be examined. Attention will be paid to the needed skills to bring about social change. Students will engage in class projects in order to experience macro level social change interventions.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

### **Knowledge**

1. To assess the variety of social action methods used to bring about social change.
2. To assess the historical roles played by various social movements and the role of organizers in creating and sustaining collective action.
3. To assess the theoretical and interdisciplinary foundations of the broad movements for social reform and social change in the United States.
4. To assess the differential experiences of social movements which stem from their focus upon the issues of race, sex, social class, age, sexual preference, ability, religion or power.

### **Skills**

1. To analyze a social movement regarding its organizational structure, decision-making processes, goals, underlying ideology, strategy and tactics.
2. To work with existing social movement organizations in cooperative efforts to improve existing social services or bring about broader social change and to perform as part of a multi-disciplinary team engaged in social reform with clarity on what social work brings to the intervention.
3. To employ a repertoire of skills such as lobbying, testifying, public speaking, advocacy, and coalition building. Make appropriate decisions on when to seek out the skill of others or do litigation or investigation.
4. To apply critical consciousness to both academic and practice situations and to engage in ongoing reflection on one's practice.

### **Attitudes**

1. To respect different approaches to learning and practice situations
2. To develop a heightened sense of self-awareness regarding one's own style of learning and responding to practice situations.
3. To be confident as a social change agent in a variety of settings.

## TEACHING METHODS

Classes will be divided between reflection on the readings and action on class projects. Classes will include information sharing, small and large group discussion and action planning, role playing, experiential exercises, films, and field trips. All students are expected to be very active participants and learners in the classroom setting.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Assigned articles.

Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M., and Soifer, S. (2001). Doing democracy: The MAP Model for organizing social movements. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers.

Thoreau, H. D. (1970). Civil disobedience. New York: Washington Square Press.

Prokosch, M. and Raymond, L. (2002). The Global Activist's Manual: Local Ways to Change the World. New York: Thunder Mountain Press

Florini, A. (2000). The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

## GRADING

Reading Critiques and Class Facilitation	15% (5% each)
Social Movement Paper	35%
Social Action Project	15% (meeting facilitation 5%, action steps 10%)
Final Reflection Paper	35%

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. Reading Critiques

(Sign-up session 1)

For **three** sessions, I want a thoughtful critique of and reaction to the assigned readings (**1-2 pages double-spaced**). State the authors' major theses, your critique, implications for the class project(s), and 2-3 questions for class discussion, which you will help facilitate. These will be **due on Blackboard by the Wednesday (midnight)** prior to the class in which they will be discussed (this will give the professor and other class members time to review the responses before class).

Everyone must complete class readings and be prepared to **actively engage** in class discussions. Because of the emphasis on class discussion, it is essential for everyone to do their part. If you cannot attend class, please notify me.

## **2. Social Action Project**

(Project choice second/third session. Meeting facilitation sign-up second session)

During the course of the semester, students will choose a social action project that involves working as a group to address a local, state, or federal issue or problem. Each student will run **one** class “meeting” during the semester in order to facilitate group decision-making regarding goals, strategy, and action steps necessary to conduct the social action project.

Each student will be required to accept responsibility for carrying out **action steps** identified during meetings and will be held accountable for completing those items by both fellow students and by the professor in her assessment and grading of each student’s participation. Each student should keep an activity **log/journal** of his/her **activities and contributions** to and **processing** of the social action project during the semester and attach it as an appendix to the final paper.

## **3. Social Movement Paper (individual or small group)**

(Due session 9)

Write a 10-15 page APA style, properly referenced paper on a social movement of your choice. You are to analyze the movement using Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan, but also drawing on outside sources. All papers are to be grammatically correct, contain no spelling errors, and have no APA reference errors. Please refer to the APA manual as needed.

The paper should address the following areas: a) From the perspectives of political opportunity, resource mobilization and framing theories, discuss what political and resource conditions contributed to the rise of the movement and how movement activists framed their grievances; b) Provide a brief discussion of the stages of the movement and what stage it is currently in; c) Discuss some of the innovative tactics used, the challenges and limitations faced, and what the movement achieved; and d) Discuss what can we learn from the movement? Specifically, what is applicable to our class action?

## **4. Final Reflection Paper**

(Due session 14)

The final paper is a 5-6 page description of what you learned from the social action effort. The paper should assess the following: a) the strengths and limitations of the social action project; b) group dynamics, tensions, and conflicts experienced in carrying out the project; c) personal reflections on what knowledge and skills you learned during the semester; and d) how

you intend to apply what you have learned to your personal and professional life in the future. Your activity log should be appended and referred to where appropriate.

## **SEMESTER OVERVIEW**

### **UNIT I: Social Action Parameters**

1) Jan. 24	Introduction and Course Overview
2) Jan. 31	Thinking globally, acting locally - Linking local action to global issues
3) Feb. 7	Violence and Nonviolence
4) Feb. 14	The Inside/Outside Dilemma

### **UNIT II: Social Movement Theories and Analysis**

5) Feb. 21	Resource Mobilization and POS
6) Feb. 28	Framing Social Action
7) Mar. 7	Social Movement Stages, Cycles and Success

### **UNIT III: Social Movement Case Study Analysis**

8) Mar 14	Case Study – Civil rights movement
9) Mar. 21	Case study – Women’s movement – <i>Social Movement Paper Due</i>
Mar. 28	Spring Break – NO CLASS
10) Apr. 4	Case Study – Anti-nuclear movement
11) Apr. 11	Case Study – Gay & Lesbian movement
Apr. 18	Good Friday – NO CLASS

### **UNIT IV: Social Work and Social Action**

12) Apr. 25	Transnational Civil Society Part I
13) May 2	Transnational Civil Society Part II
14) May 9	Social workers and social action – <i>Final Paper Due</i>
15) May 16	Reflections: Practice knowledge, Evaluation, and Celebration

## **COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS**

### **UNIT I: SOCIAL ACTION PARAMETERS**

#### **Session 1. Introduction and Course Overview**

\*Sign up for reading critiques

Readings: None

#### **Session 2. Thinking globally, acting locally**

\*Sign up for meeting facilitation

- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. and Perraton, J. (1999). "Globalization." Global Governance: A review of multilateralism and international organizations, 5(4):483-496.
- Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M., and Soifer, S. (2001). "Chapter 10: "The globalization movement." In Doing democracy: The MAP Model for organizing social movements. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers: 176-185.
- Prokosch, M. and Raymond, L. (2002). The Global Activist's Manual: Local Ways to Change the World. New York: Thunder Mountain Press.
  - Introduction
  - Chapter on "Direct Action" - pp. 127-169

#### **Session 3: Violent and Nonviolent Action**

\*Finalize Social Action Project Topic(s)

- Thoreau, H. D. (1970). Civil disobedience. New York: Washington Square Press. (*Civil Disobedience Essay Only*)
- Irwin, B. (1983). "Why Nonviolence?: Introduction to nonviolence theory and strategy." Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Gamson, W. (1990). "The success of the unruly." In The Strategy of Social Protest. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp. 72-88.

#### **Session 4: The Insider/Outsider Dilemma**

- Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M., and Soifer, S. (2001). "Chapter 2: The four roles of social activism." In Doing democracy: The MAP Model for organizing social movements. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers: 21-41.
- Meyer, D. and S. Tarrow (1998). A Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century. In The Social Movement Society. D. Meyer and S. Tarrow (eds). New York, Rowman & Littlefield: 1-28.
- McCarthy, J. and McPhail, C. (1998). The institutionalization of protest in the United States. In The Social Movement Society. D. Meyer and S. Tarrow (eds). New York, Rowman & Littlefield:83-109.
- Katzenstein, M. (1998). Stepsisters: Feminist movement activism in different institutional spaces. In The Social movement Society. Meyer, D. & Tarrow, S. (eds). New York: Rowman and Littlefield .195-216.

### UNIT II: SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES AND ANALYSIS

#### **Session 5. The Context of Action: Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunities**

- Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M., and Soifer, S. (2001). "Chapter 5: Social movement theories and MAP: Beginnings of a Dialogue." Doing democracy: The MAP Model for organizing social movements. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers: 100-114.
- Tarrow, S. (1998). "Introduction. " In Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:1-9
- Tarrow, S. (1998). "Political opportunities and constraints " In Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:71-90.
- McAdam, D., McCarthy, J, and Zald, M. (1996). "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements." In Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. McAdam, D., McCarthy, J, and Zald, M. (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1-20.

Further reading:

- Tarrow, S. (1998). "Contentious politics and social movements" In Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:10-25.
- Piven, F. and Cloward, R. (1977). The Structuring of Protest. In Piven, F. and Cloward, R., Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail. New York: Vintage books: 1-40.
- McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. (1987). Resource mobilization and Social movements: A partial theory. In McCarthy, J. and Zald, M., Social movements in an organizational society. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Tarrow, S. (1998). "Mobilizing structures and contentious politics." In Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:123-138.
- Jenkins, C. Nonprofit Organizations and Policy Advocacy. P296-318.

### **Session 6. Framing, Collective Identity and Social Action**

- Snow, D. and Benford, R. (1986). Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization. International Social Movement Research, 1:197-217.
- Klandermans B. (1992). The social construction of protest and multiorganizational fields. In Frontiers in Social Movement Theory. Morris A. and Mueller, C. (eds). New Haven: Yale University Press: 77-102.
- Zald, M. (1996). "Culture, ideology, and strategic framing." In Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. McAdam, D., McCarthy, J, and Zald, M. (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 262-274.
- Gamson, W. & Meyer, D. (1996). "Framing Political Opportunity." In Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. McAdam, D., McCarthy, J, and Zald, M. (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Further reading:

- Tarrow, S. (1998). "Framing contention" In Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:106-122.
- Best, J. (1997). Rhetoric in Claims-Making: Constructing the Missing Children Problem. Social Problems, 34(2): 101-121.

### **Session 7: Social Movement Stages, Cycles of Protest, and Success**

- Giugni, Marco (1994). The outcomes of social movements: a review of the literature. Working Paper: Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research.
- Moyer, B., McAllister, J., Finley, M., and Soifer, S. (2001). Doing democracy: The MAP Model for organizing social movements. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers.  
(Chapters 1, 3, 4 and Conclusion).

## **UNIT III: SOCIAL MOVEMENT CASE STUDY ANALYSIS**

### **Session 8: The Civil Rights Movement**

- Moyer et al – Chapter 6
- McAdam, D. The Decline of the Civil Rights Movement

### **Session 9: The Women's Movement**

*Social Movement Paper Due!*

- Moyer et al – Chapter 9
- Taylor, V. (1989). Social movement continuity: The women's movement in abeyance. American Sociological Review, 54: 761-775.

### **Session 10: The Anti-nuclear Energy Movement**

- Moyer et al. – Chapter 7

## **Session 11: The Gay and Lesbian Movement**

- Moyer et al. – Chapter 8

## UNIT IV: SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL ACTION

### **Session 12: Transnational Civil Society Part I**

- Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. (1998). "Transnational advocacy networks in the movement society." In The social movement society. New York: Rowman and Littlefield: 217-238.
- Florini, A. (2000). The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
  - Chapters 1-3

### **Session 13: Transnational Civil Society Part II**

- Florini, A. (2000). The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
  - Chapters 4-8

### **Session 14: Social Workers and Social Action**

*Final Paper Due!*

- Wagner, D. (1989). "Radical Movements in the Social Services: A theoretical framework." Social Service Review, pp. 264-284.
- Hokenstad, M. and Midgley, J. (1997). Realities of Global Interdependence. In Issues in International Social WorkL:Global Challenges for a New Century, Hokenstad and Midgley (eds). Washington, D.C.: NASW Press, pp.1-9.

### **Session 15: Reflections: Practice Knowledge, Evaluation, and Celebration**

- Readings: None