Social Movements and Contentious Politics in Europe and Beyond
(CPO 6077 / EUS 6930)

Spring 2026
Professor Conor O'Dwyer

PLEASE EMAIL ME THROUGH CANVAS TO SET UP APPTS AND ANY OTHER CLASS QUESTIONS!

Meeting Times & Office Hours:

Meeting Time: Tuesday, Periods 8-10, Room: Turlington 2346.
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description and Goals:

This class is intended for graduate students in political science and the related social sciences. Its subject is the relation between social contention and politics. The course aims to:

1. provide a survey of the literature on social and protest movements,
2. introduce students to methods for studying these movements,
3. furnish tools for interpreting protest across different social and political contexts,
4. apply those tools in the development of a final paper, which the students will also present in conference format.

Specifically, we will address the following questions: Under what conditions do social movements form? How and when do they exploit opportunities to mobilize? What internal resources do they draw on to overcome obstacles to mobilization? What are the implications of how a social movement frames its cause? Who participates and how? We also explore social movement case studies.

Class Requirements and Assignments

- **Attendance** (5% of final grade): Attendance is calculated as the percentage of meetings attended. Excused absences do not count against your grade, but these require prior notification to the instructor. In the case of illness, a doctor's note is required for an excused absence.
    - According to the Office of the University Registrar, "acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music

performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused."

- **Participation in class discussion** (10% of grade): Because this is a seminar, I assume full and active engagement in the discussion and completion of the assigned readings before class. This component of the overall grade will be based on my estimation of how engaged each student is in class discussion over the course of the semester. Participation is assessed on effort, not the correctness of what you say; so, be encouraged to contribute to the discussion. There will be three categories for assessing this effort: highly engaged (100% for this category), moderately engaged (85% for this category), and insufficiently engaged (70% for this category).

- **Leading the discussion of the week's readings** (20% of grade, 10% per presentation): Twice over the course of the semester, each student will work with a partner to present the week's readings. This task will consist of summarizing and critiquing the readings' research questions, arguments, empirical evidence, and methodologies. This presentation will serve as a jumping-off point for the class discussion. As described below, this task will also require coming up with an in-class exercise to stimulate discussion and submitting it to the instructor on the Friday before seminar. This assignment will be graded on the standard letter grade scale.
  - Note: Students will need to bring a laptop or other device capable of logging in to Canvas. They may either complete the in-class assignments using a laptop or by hand and then submitting the photo of the handwritten assignment to Canvas.

- **Final Paper** (45% of grade in total): The intent of the paper is to allow students to apply the class's theoretical perspectives comparatively to specific empirical cases drawn from their region(s) of interest. As described below, students will develop their (1) topic proposal, (2) literature review and annotated bibliography, and (3) paper prospectus in stages over the course of the semester through assignments and exercises outlined below and in consultation with the instructor. The final paper is expected to be ~7,000 words in length. Independent research will be necessary to understand the details and context of the case chosen. The paper will be graded on the standard letter grade scale.
  - Breakdown of the components of the final paper:
    - Topic proposal (5% of grade)
    - Literature review and annotated bibliography (5% of grade)
    - Paper prospectus (5% of grade): the prospectus summarizes the research question, contribution to the literature, and research strategy
    - Final paper itself (30% of grade)

- **Presentation of the Final Paper** (10% of grade): Prior to submitting it, students will present their paper to the rest of the class. The goal is to gain experience in how to condense and prepare written research for a live audience, such as you might find at a professional conference or in a job talk. It will also be an

opportunity to gather feedback on your research from the rest of the class. It will be graded on the standard letter grade scale.

- **Weekly Exercises** (10% of grade in total): Each week there will be at least one in-class exercise that students are expected to complete and turn in via Canvas. The person presenting the readings that week will be responsible for creating an in-class exercise to probe the readings and help stimulate discussion. These exercises will also be graded based on effort, with the following three categories for assessing this effort: "solid and satisfactory effort" (100% for that assignment), "insufficient effort" (85% for the assignment), and "not completed" (70% for the assignment). Because these are in-class exercises, they must be submitted by the deadlines specified in Canvas for full credit.

Books for Purchase:

There are two required books:

- David A. Snow & Sarah A. Soule. (2010) *A Primer on Social Movements*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, Mayer Zald [McMcZ] (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge UP, 1996).

The rest of the readings will be available on-line through the university library's journal article database and on Canvas. I expect you to have completed the relevant assigned readings prior to class and to be ready to discuss them.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1 (1/3): Introduction, Course Requirements, and Scheduling
No Readings

Week 2 (1/20): What is a Social Movement? / Are Grievances Sufficient for Mobilization? / Classical Social Movement Theories
Presenters:
Readings:

- Snow and Soule, Chapter 1.
- Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald, "Introduction" in McMcZ, pp. 1-22.
- Suzanne Staggenborg. *Social Movements*. (Oxford UP, 2011), Chapter 2.
- William Kornhauser. *The Politics of Mass Society* (Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), pp. 159-174. (Canvas)
- Eric Hoffer. *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (Harper and Row, 1951), pp. 3-44. (Canvas)
- Sheri Berman. (1997) "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49(3): 401-429. (Canvas)
- Sidney Tarrow. (1993) "Cycles of Collective Action," *Social Science History* 17(2): 281-307. (Canvas)

- David Snow et al., "Disrupting the 'Quotidian,'" *Mobilization* 3(1998): 1-22. (Canvas)

Recommended Readings:

Week 3 (1/27): The Political Process Model, Origins of and Debates about
Presenters:
Readings:
- Origins of the PPM
  - Snow and Soule, Chapter 2 & 3
  - Doug McAdam, "Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions" in McMcZ, pp. 23-40.
  - John McCarthy, "Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing," in McMcZ, pp. 141-151.
  - Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Organizational Structure of New Social Movements in a Political Context," in McMcZ, (focus on pp. 152-165).
  - Mayer Zald, "Culture, Ideology, and Strategic Framing," in McMcZ, pp. 261-274.
- Debates about the PPM
  - Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper. "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory," in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 3-30. (Canvas)
  - David S. Meyer. "Tending the Vineyard: Cultivating Political Process Research," in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 47-59. (Canvas)

Recommended:
- Sidney Tarrow, "States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements," in McMcZ, pp. 41-61.
- Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 26:611–39.
- Ruud Koopmans. "Political. Opportunity. Structure. Some Splitting to Balance the Lumping" in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 61-73.

Week 4 (2/3): The Political Process Model, Applications of
Topic Proposal for final paper due
Presenters:
Readings:
- Donatella della Porta, "Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protest," in McMcZ, pp. 62-92.
- Jennifer Earl, Sarah A. Soule, and John D. McCarthy. (2003) "Protest Under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest," *American Sociological Review* 6: 581-606.

- Charles Kurzman. (1996) "Structural and Perceived Opportunity: The Iranian Revolution of 1979," *American Sociological Review* 61(Feb.): 153-170.
- Kim Voss. "The Collapse of a Social Movement," in McMcZ, pp. 227-258.
- Anthony Oberschall, "Opportunities and Framing in the Eastern European Revolts of 1989," in McMcZ pp. 93-121.
- Francesca Polletta, "Culture Is Not Just in Your Head," in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 97-110. (Canvas)
- Dingxin Zhao. "Ecologies of social movements," *American journal of Sociology* 103.6 (1998): 1493-1529.

Recommended Readings:
- Bert Klandersmans and Sjoerd Goslinga. "Media Discourse: Movement Publicity, and the Generation of Collective Action Frames: Theoretical and Empirical Exercises in Meaning Construction" in McMcZ, pp. 313-337.

Week 5 (2/10): Who Participates?
Presenters:
Readings:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 4
- Marc Dixon and Vincent J. Roscigno. "Status, networks, and social movement participation," *American Journal of sociology* 108.6 (2003): 1292-1327.
- Rachel L. Einwohner. "Identity work and collective action in a repressive context: Jewish resistance on the 'Aryan side' of the Warsaw Ghetto." *Social Problems* 53.1 (2006): 38-56.
- Marc Morjé Howard. (2002) "The Weakness of Postcommunist Society," *Journal of Democracy* 13(1): 157-69. (Canvas)
- Timur Kuran. (1991) "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.
- Special Issue of the *Journal of Democracy* on the Maidan Protests in Ukraine. (Canvas)
    - Editors' introduction, pp. 17-18
    - Lucan Way, "Civil Society and Democratization," pp. 35-42.
    - Olga Onuch, "Who Were the Protesters?" pp. 44-51.
Recommended Readings:
- Valerie Sperling. (1999) "Unemployment Has a Woman's Face...' Economic Opportunities and Obstacles to Women's Movement Organizing" in *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition* (Cambridge UP): pp. 146-78. (Canvas)

Week 6 (2/17): How Do Social Movements Operate? Tactics and Diffusion
Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography for final paper due
Presenters:
Readings:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 5

- Charles Tilly. (1977) "Getting It Together in Burgundy, 1675-1975" Theory and Society 4: 479-504. (Canvas)
- Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth. (2008) "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 7–44
- Doug McAdam. "Tactical innovation and the pace of insurgency." *American Sociological Review* (1983): 735-754.
- Sarah A. Soule. "The student divestment movement in the United States and tactical diffusion: The shantytown protest." *Social Forces* 75.3 (1997): 855-882.
- Phillip Ayoub. (2013) "Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe," *European Political Science Review* 5(2): 279-310.
- Clifford Bob. 2012. *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. Cambridge UP, Chapters 2 & 3. [CANVAS]

Recommended Readings:
- Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge UP, 2005).
- William Gamson. (1990) "The Success of the Unruly," in *The Strategy of Social Protest*. 2d ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (UPLOAD)

Week 7 (2/24): New Social Movements
Presenters:
Readings:
- Suzanne Staggenborg, 2011. *Social Movements* (Oxford University Press), chap. 4 "The Protest Cycle of the 1960s" in, pp. 51-62 [CANVAS, add to]
- Buechler, Steven M. "New Social Movement Theories." *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1995): 441–64. [CANVAS]
- Inglehart, R. (1995). "Public support for environmental protection," *PS, Political Science & Politics*, *28*(1), 57-72. [CANVAS]
- Elizabeth Armstrong, "From Struggle to Settlement," in Gerald Davis, Doug McAdam, W. R. Scott, and M. Zald eds., *Social Movements and Organization Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 161-187. (Canvas)
- Deborah B. Gould, "Passionate Political Processes: Bringing Emotions Back into the Study of Social Movements," in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 155-175. (Canvas)
- Mary Bernstein. "Celebration and suppression," *American Journal of Sociology* 103.3 (1997): 531-565.

Week 8 (3/3): Social Movements' Impact // Social Media and the Internet
Prospectus for final paper due
Presenters:
Readings:
    On Impact:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 6

- William Gamson. "Defining Movement 'Success'" In Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts (Wiley-Blackwell: 2009), pp. 413-416. (Canvas)
- Marshall Ganz. "Why David Sometimes Wins: Strategic Capacity in Social Movements," in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 177-198. (Canvas)
  Social media & Internet:
- Yascha Mounck, 2018. *The People versus Democracy* (Harvard University Press), Chapter 4 "Social Media." (Available as an eBook on the UF library website).
- W. Lance Bennett, Alexandra Segerberg, & Yunkang Yang. "The Strength of Peripheral Networks: Negotiating Attention and Meaning in Complex Media Ecologies" *Journal of Communication* Vol 68, No 4, pp. 659-684, 2018. [CANVAS]
- Valerie Sperling. *Sex, Politics, & Putin* (Oxford University Press, 2014), Chs. 3 & 6. (Canvas)
- Cammaerts B. 2021. "THE NEW-NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: ARE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGING THE ONTOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?" *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 26(3):343–358. (Canvas)

RECOMMENDED:
- David S. Meyer. "How Social Movements Matter" In Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts (Wiley-Blackwell: 2009), pp. 417-422. (Canvas)
- Darren Sherkat and T. Jean Blocker. "The Personal Consequences of Protest" In Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds. The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts (Wiley-Blackwell: 2009), pp. 423-434. (Canvas)
- Kenneth T. Andrews. "Social movements and policy implementation: The Mississippi civil rights movement and the war on poverty, 1965 to 1971." American Sociological Review (2001): 71-95.

SPRING BREAK (3/17)

Week 9 (3/24): Individual meetings with instructor to review prospectus and discuss final paper

Week 10 (3/31): Case Study: Populism through a Social Movement Lens
Presenters:
Readings:
- Yascha Mounk. 2018. The People versus Democracy. Harvard UP: Read pp. 1-181 (skim the rest). (Available as an eBook on the UF library website).
- Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2013. "Populism." In Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies. (Oxford UP), pp. 493-510.

- Mario Diani. 1996. "Linking Mobilization Frames and Political Opportunities: Insights from Regional Populism in Italy," *American Sociological Review* 61: 1053-69. (Canvas)
- Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak. (2004) "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany," *American Journal of Sociology* 110: 193-230. (Canvas)
- Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. 2016. "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash." HKS Faculty Research Working Papers. (Canvas)
- Devashree Gupta. (2008) "Nationalism Across Borders: Transnational Nationalist Advocacy in the European Union," *Comparative European Politics* 6: 61-80. (Canvas)

Week 11 (4/7): Final Presentations 1
Presenters:

Week 12 (4/14): Final Presentations 2
Presenters:

Week 13 (4/21): Conclusion

Final Paper due on 4/24 at 5pm

APPENDICES:

●Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Range
A	100%to93%
A-	< 93%to90%
B+	< 90%to87%
B	< 87%to83%
B-	< 83%to80%
C+	< 80%to77%
C	< 77%to73%
C-	< 73%to70%
D+	< 70%to67%
D	< 67%to63%
D-	< 63%to60%
F	< 60%to0%

●Students with Disabilities:
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is the student's responsibility to contact the DRC at the beginning of the semester and to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

●Academic Honesty
UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Honor Code (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

●Academic Honesty and AI
Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are essential aspects of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Finding your own writing, research and creative style will be one of the strongest assets you can offer professionally. Utilizing AI to generate your work ultimately slows your progress during your higher ed journey and may limit you professionally. Staring at the blank page happens to us all – but it's where our best ideas emerge. **Be a writer, not an editor! Be a creator, not a tweaker!** If you are struggling with an assignment, please come see me in office hours or send me an email.

You will need to adhere to the following guidelines in our class:

> ***Appropriate use of AI when writing essays or completing assignments on Canvas:***
> ●You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools (e.g., Grammarly, and MS Word)
> ●You are free to use app recommendations when it comes to rephrasing sentences or reorganizing paragraphs you have drafted yourself
> ●You are free to use app recommendations when it comes to tweaking outlines you have drafted yourself
>
> ***Inappropriate use of AI when writing essays or completing assignments on Canvas:***
> ●You may not use entire sentences or paragraphs suggested by an app without providing quotation marks and a citation, just as you would to any other source.

Citations should take this form: OpenAI, chatGPT. Response to prompt: "Explain what is meant by the term 'Triple Bottom Line'" (February 15, 2023, https://chat.openai.com/).
•You may not have an app write a draft (either rough or final) of an assignment for you