



DESCRIPTIF D'ENSEIGNEMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

1^{ER} CYCLE

Titre du cours / Course Title

Global perspectives on social movements and activism

Type de cours : CMINT

Langue du cours : Anglais

Enseignante(s) / Enseignant(s) responsable(s) du cours / Professor(s)

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Résumé et objectifs du cours / Course description - Targets

This course focuses on the conflictual and contentious nature of politics, and examines why and how individuals engage in collective actions or events aimed at bringing about social change. It explores how contentious politics have evolved, especially since the 1960s, and how it is shaped by local and global contexts. To do so, the course introduces students to key theories and concepts about social movements and activism. It then applies them to historical and contemporary forms of contentious politics, relying on case studies from across the globe and the study of transnational movements, with a primary focus on labour-related conflicts, on feminist, civil rights or anti-racist and environmentalist movements, as well as on conservative movements.

Overall, the course raises four types of questions:

- ❖ Why do people engage in contentious politics?
- ❖ How do they express dissent and make claims, and what resources do they mobilise?
- ❖ How are contentious collective actions and events shaped by local and global political contexts, regimes and times?
- ❖ What effects do they have on political regimes, organisations and activists, and to what extent do they achieve their transformative goals?

The course is organised into five sections.

In the first one (sessions 1 and 2) students get introduced to key generic theories and concepts on social movements and activism, with a primary focus on political process theory, and are provided with a brief overview of the historical general transformations of social movements.



The second section (sessions 3 and 4) focuses on “traditional” forms of protest such as demonstrations, marches, strikes and occupations. It examines how these have evolved, and how they differ locally and according to the nature of the cause defended.

In the third section (sessions 5, 6 and 7), the course shifts towards the analysis of alternative expressions of dissent and ways to make claims which complement or at times replace traditional forms of protest. These include civil disobedience, the use of humour, festivities and arts, as well as boycotts and disinvestment. Such forms and tactics are explored and compared as they arise in the context of both considered “liberal democratic” and “authoritarian” regimes.

In the fourth section (sessions 8 and 9), the course contrasts institutional and institutionalized forms of contentious politics with violent forms of protest. It first looks at “legal activism” and at “bureaucratic activism” in order to explore to what extent litigations and activists-turned-into-state officials contribute or extend the reach of social movements. Then, it compares these to various forms of political violence more or less explicitly used by social movements and activists, such as riots, sabotage or terrorism, and discusses the articulations and disarticulations between these two modes of protest that appear the most antagonistic.

Finally, the last section (session 10) concludes with an exploration of the effects of social movements on political regimes, organisations and the biographies of activists; and makes general remarks on their abilities to bring about social change.

Modalités d'évaluation / Assessment

The assessment is made of four components:

- 1) An oral grade for a group presentation on a given topic related to the theme of the session. The exercise will require students to contrast two or three social movements or protest events in order to illustrate the topic (25%)
- 2) An oral grade for participation in the collective discussions in class. (10%)
- 3) A short collective paper in which students must offer both a sociological and strategic analysis of a social movement, articulating both theory and empirical observations. (35%)
- 4) A test on the course content (short questions) organised at the end of the term (30%)

Bibliographie indicative / Bibliography

General references on social movements theories and research on activism:

- Tilly, C. (1986). *The Contentious French. Four Centuries of Popular Struggle*. Harvard University Press.
- Traugott, M. (ed) (1995). *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*. Duke University Press.
- della Porta, D. and Diani, M. (eds) (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford University Press.



- Roggeband, C. and Klandermans, B. (eds) (2017). *The Handbook of Social Movements Across Disciplines*. Springer Nature.
- Tilly, C. and Tarrow, S. (2015, 2nd edition). *Contentious Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Filleule, O. and Neveu, E. (2019) *Activists Forever?: Long-Term Impacts of Political Activism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, G.F., McAdam, D., Scott W.R. and Zald M.N. (eds) (2005). *Social Movements and Organization Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Aminzade, R.R., Goldstone J.A., McAdam, D., (eds) (2001). *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. and Tilly C. (2001). *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press.
- David A. Snow, D., Soule, S., Hanspeter Kriesi, H., McCammon, H. (eds) (2018). *The Wiley Blackwell companion to social movements*. Wiley.

Some more specialised references:

- Bennett, W.L., Segerberg, A. (2013). *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bob C. (2012). *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chandra, G. and Erlingsdóttir, I. (eds.) (2020). *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of the #MeToo Movement*. Routledge.
- Giugni M, Grasso, M.T. (2019). *Street Citizens: Protest Politics and Social Movement Activism in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grote, J. and Wagemann, C. (2019) *Social Movements and Organized Labour. Passions and Interests*. Routledge.
- Filleule, O. and Tartakowsky, D. (English translation) (2013). *Demonstrations*. Fernwood Publishing.
- Hadden J. (2015). *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press.
- Luders, J.E. (2010). *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rowbotham, S. (1992). *Women in Movement. Feminism and Social Action*. Routledge.
- Staggenborg, S. (2020). *Grassroots Environmentalism*. Cambridge University Press.