

SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
SOC 386/586, SECTION 1/2

SPRING 2023
T/R 9:30-10:45am
SCI A112

Department of Sociology and Social Work
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



Banksy murals in Port Talbot, UK (left) and London (above)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Why and how does societal change happen? What are the ingredients for a successful social movement? What are the reasons that pull people into social movements, defy the status quo and call for something different?

This course will present the tools in sociology to answer these questions. Using established theory, methods and knowledge, we will examine the origins and history of contemporary social change/movements; the different features of social movements and community action efforts; the role that context, technology, and environmental conditions play in societal change; and

approaches toward evaluation of such efforts. Use of historical and contemporary case studies will be examined to illustrate this content. Finally, this course will partner with community organizations to provide hands-on application.

The study of social change is core to the science of sociology. By taking a focused approach to the topic, a deeper connection to the discipline is made. Furthermore, building the tools to engage in thoughtful debate and informed conversation around the idea of a 'better tomorrow' is instrumental in any modern democracy.

Thematic note: Our society is changing. Our world is changing. Our planet is changing. Much attention in politics, culture, religion, and economics today is focused on how our physical, natural, and social environments are intertwined, in jeopardy, and require action. For instance, consider the images above. Street 'artist' Banksy created both pieces in response to the growing environmental concerns around global climate change, industrial pollution, and the ways humans have responded (or not). As such, this course will focus considerably on environmental/spatial issues, movements and how other aspects like race/ethnicity, social class, gender/sexuality, immigration and religion matter. This will span local/community to global and planetary/civilizational scales.

Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the Social Science and Environmental Responsibility GEP designation. They are:

GEP Learning Outcomes

Social Science

1. Explain or apply major concepts, methods or theories used in the social sciences to investigate, analyze, or predict human behavior.
2. Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions influence individuals or groups.

Environmental Responsibility

1. Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
2. Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
3. Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Explain or apply major concepts, methods, or theories used in sociology to investigate how and why individuals organize for social change.
2. Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions impact individuals groups aiming to make societal change and vice versa.
3. Identify and describe the interactions between the social, natural, and physical world, and how they are changing.
4. Apply sociological concepts and methods to analyze how socio-cultural and ecological factors impact attempts toward environmental sustainability.
5. Evaluate current environmental debates through the study of respective social movements.

REQUIRED TEXT

- Donatella della Porta, Mario Diani (2020) *Social Movements: An Introduction* (3rd Edition). Wiley.
- Pellow, David Naguib (2018) *What is Critical Environmental Justice?* Polity.
- Supplementary Readings

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Format

The format of each class will vary throughout the semester. Since we all learn differently, I will utilize a variety of teaching methods to present the material. These methods will include lectures, in-class activities, video presentations, and class discussions. It is vital that you come to class prepared (i.e., read what you are asked to have read!) and ask questions and make comments when you have them. Not only will the material make more sense, but you will get a lot more out of the class as well.

Academic Integrity

To ensure that the highest level of academic and personal integrity is upheld, it is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UWSP (see [Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students](#)). For a complete overview of UWSP academic standards and disciplinary procedures, please visit: the following website: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies. Any student who feels that an accommodation may be needed based on the impact of a disability should contact [Disability Services and Assistive Technology](#) at 715-346-3365 in Room 609 Learning Resource Center at 900 Reserve Street. Staff will work to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Technology Policy

My expectations regarding technology are simple and, hopefully, not unrealistic. I do not expect students to be without their phones, tablets, and/or computers. I completely understand that the schedule for most students may even necessitate this. In fact, our class will even utilize this as a resource at times during the semester; for instance, in-class activities that prompt students to do a quick search online. I also understand that some students prefer to take notes electronically, on a tablet or laptop. (Be warned: [research shows that students retain more information when notes are hand-written](#).) But, *unless specified otherwise or a circumstantial agreement with me is made, phones should be silent (e.g., airplane mode), and out of sight*. As soon as a device becomes a distraction to the class, I will revoke technology privileges all together.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance and participation will be recorded and calculated as part of your final evaluation. However, I understand 'participation' inclusively. This can include the conventional (i.e., asking questions via discussion posts) as well as other forms of interaction in and outside of

class (e.g., office hour visits, email discussions, in-class activities). In short, I am looking for students to be engaged in the material, however or wherever that might be.

Assignment Submission and Late Policy

All assignments (unless specified otherwise) should be submitted by the respective deadline electronically via Dropbox on CANVAS. Turnitin (originality checking software) is activated with results viewable to you and me. Please use this as a tool for writing. Late work is accepted up to one week after the specified deadline (5-point reduction), also via the appropriate CANVAS dropbox. I will not accept assignments after this.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Unit Discussion Boards

Unit Discussion Boards are *critical* dialogues covering aspects from class and organized in a popular online format via Canvas. This will allow your fellow students to comment/discuss in a productive and respectful manner. This interactive approach is vital for working through new material. The specific requirements and directions will be discussed in class.

6 Weekly Discussion Posts (10 points each) = 60 points

Group Roundtables

Group Roundtables will serve as extensions from the unit-specific group discussions you'll have on Canvas. Specific requirements and expectations about the roundtables will be discussed in class.

3 Group Roundtables (20 points each) = 60 points

Unit Assignments

Unit Assignments are more organized assignments that approach a specific topic or problem. The requirements and expectations for these papers will be discussed in class. In general, these are assignments that allow you to apply the concepts and ideas we have discussed in class to a specific setting/problem. These papers will require some research and activity outside of class to complete.

3 Unit Assignments (50 points each) = 150 points

Community Action Project (CAP)

The final project is an unconventional closing assignment, bringing together concepts and themes from the entire course and applying them to a community-based action project. The CAP serves as a hands-on, interactive assignment for students to connect knowledge and methods from studying social change/movements with organizations that are, in part, concerned with environmental impacts/issues. Specific details about the project will be discussed in class.

Community Action Project = 80 points

Note for Graduate Students (enrolled in SOC586).

In addition to the assignments outlined above, students who are enrolled in this course at the graduate level, will also be required to complete a research proposal and presentation. The research proposal will simulate a potential active research project, including all of the conventional components for such a project (e.g., literature review, theory, proposed

methodology). In addition, students will be expected to complete IRB CITI training and deliver a presentation to the class using a conventional academic presentation format.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance is crucial to succeed in this class. Keeping up on your reading in order to actively participate in class will ensure that you are adequately prepared for the assignments. My teaching philosophy is based on a cultivation of *active learning*. This means that I aim to provide an environment whereby students are able to ‘experience’ the material. However, this is a dual relationship. Students must also be willing to learn in order to make this happen. By *being* in class regularly (not just present), an active and invigorating culture of learning can be developed. *Attendance and Participation will be recorded via Canvas activities and discussions throughout the semester.* This being said, life is always full of unexpected events and emergencies. If you think you will miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make other arrangements.

Attendance/Participation = 50 points

Evaluation

Evaluation of this course is based on the standard UWSP grading scale.

Course Evaluation:

Discussion Posts =	60 (6, 10 points each)
Group Roundtables =	60 (3, 20 points each)
Unit Assignments =	150 (3, 50 points each)
Community Action Project =	80
Participation =	50
<hr/> Total =	400

Grading Scale		
Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	92-100	366<
A-	90-91	358-365
B+	87-89	346-357
B	83-86	330-345
B-	80-82	318-329
C+	77-79	306-317
C	73-76	290-305
C-	70-72	278-289
D+	67-69	266-277
D	60-66	238-265
F	<60	<238

Course Schedule

<i>Unit 1: Foundations and Principles of Social Change</i>		
Week 1 1/24	Introductions and basics of Sociology and Environmental Justice SM Ch.1; EJ Ch.1	
Week 2 1/31	Origin, traditions, and theory of social change/movements SM Ch. 2 and 3	DP1
Week 3 2/7	Participation and social action SM Ch. 4 and 5	
Week 4 2/13	Organization and strategies SM Ch. 6 and Supp	DP2
Week 5 2/21	Case study: BLM as an Environmental Movement <i>Roundtable 1</i> EJ Ch.2	
<i>Unit 2: Nuances in Social Movements</i>		
Week 6 2/28	Context and environment SM Ch. 7 and Supp	DP3, UP1
Week 7 3/7	Role of technology Supp.	
Week 8 3/14	Social change and the state SM Ch. 8 and Supp.	DP4
3/21	<i>Spring Break</i>	
Week 9 3/28	Case study: Little Village Environmental Justice Organization <i>Roundtable 2</i> EJ Ch.3	
Week 10 4/4	Community Action Project – Part 1	
Week 11 4/11	Consequences and response SM Ch. 9 and Supp.	DP5, UP2
Week 12 4/18	Evaluation and assessment Supp.	
Week 13 4/25	Case study: From Caycedo to Banksy: Art, Globality, Env. <i>Roundtable 3</i> EJ Ch.4	DP6
<i>Unit 4: Community Action Project</i>		
Week 14 5/2	Immersive Workshop in Chicago	UP3
Week 15	Community Action Project – Part 2	

5/9

Week 16 TBD

5/15 12:30-2:30pm