SOCI 3323 COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR
Section 4335
TTH 9:30-10:45 Nance Boyer 3008

Su Lee, Ph.D.
Office: 2081 Nance Boyer, 581-2945, suholee@cameron.edu
Office Hours: M 100-300 & T 11-12

Required Readings


Course Description/Objectives

Collective behavior and social movements, or collective actions as they are called concurrently, are crucial to social change and political process in contemporary mass democracies. The field of collective actions, which ranges from protests to revolutions, is too broad at the levels of research and theory to render a systematic presentation. It would be an error, however, to study collective actions independently of organized social movements, although such episodic behaviors as riots and fads can be treated in their own terms. Collective behavior and social movements overlap in numerous ways in the social world and sociological research, so we will treat both under the rubric of collective actions. There is no coherent or paradigmatic approach to studying collective actions. What we have in the field are discrete observations with typifying characteristics that sociologists call perspectives or approaches to studying collective actions. Most fundamental perspectives in the field were reshaped or emerged in the 70s and 80s, which are still current today. This course introduces both diffused collective behaviors and organized social movements along the lines of various research and perspectives. We will explore not only episodic and enduring forms of collective actions (riot, crowd, protest, publics, movement organizations); also, more importantly, we will approach them in terms of emergence, participation, mobilization, organization, strategy, outcome, ideology, and movement environments. Thus, rather than examining discrete cases in an unsystematic way, our task is to identify and understand central perspectives on studying and explaining collective actions. We will examine the perspectives developed within, or contributing to, collective behavior tradition (how collective actions unfold) and resource mobilization (how collective actions are sustained). Depending on class time, we will look into “new social movements” perspective, where collective identity and social relations become a central problem and driving force of collective actions (why collective actions emerge). Collective actions occur within often-conflicting social and political environments. There are movements and counter-movements. The need for empirical and theoretical understanding is indispensable in the field, and we will approach it accordingly. This course stresses the questions that competing perspectives and different research ask about collective actions, and characteristic ways that they try to answer them.

General Information

1. Class attendance and participation are important in this course. You are expected to be present and on time for class. Attendance will be taken frequently on a random basis. If you are absent once or twice, I will assume that you had a good reason. On the other hand, a pattern of absence and tardiness will adversely affect your course grade. If you anticipate periodic or prolonged absence in the course of the semester, you are advised not to take this course.
2. You are always welcome to elicit comments, critique, and opinions in class. I appreciate your reaction
to the issues raised in texts and lectures. If you are befuddled, the class will welcome your efforts at
clarification. Bring the text under discussion to class meeting. I often make textual references in class.

3. If you have a disability that will make it difficult for you to participate in class, to abide by the course
policies or perform successfully, please advise me immediately. I will work with you and the Office
of Multicultural and Disabled Services to provide you with reasonable accommodations. Similarly,
please let me know if a problem arises during the course of the semester, so we can resolve it at the
earliest possible time. Feel free to contact me by telephone or e-mail.

4. I distribute handouts in class, especially in the event we fall behind the scheduled progress. You are
responsible for making sure that you have all handouts, including study questions given in class. If
you do not have them, you are responsible for securing your own. Please do not ask me for the
handouts distributed a week ago.

5. Incompletes are given only in accordance with University guidelines and only under extraordinary
and documented circumstances in which a student is unable to complete the latter portion of course
work. There is no extra-credit work in this course; you are to focus on class requirements.

Class Requirements

Discussion Essays

1. You will submit five discussion essays, each discussing in your words themes/issues of the readings
and lectures for the previous weeks. These essays are meant to foster class discussion, review course
materials, and for you to articulate via writing your comprehension of the learned materials. You may
base your essay on the study questions distributed in class. However, I expect you to show succinctly
that you have grasped the covered portion of course materials at the level and breadth appropriate to
upper-division course. Edit your essays before submitting them; essays are to be thoughtful and well
written (grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. do count).

2. Your discussion essay should: (a) incorporate or refer to the assigned portions of texts, especially the
primary text or reader discussed in class; (b) be 1½ to 2 pages long, single-spaced, stapled, and 11 or
12 font-size typewritten with proper margins (margins no wider than 1.2 inch); (c) show your name
and essay number on the back of the last page (i.e., I do not want to see your name when I read your
essay); (d) begin immediately from the top margin (i.e., do not write essay title, course name, etc., on
the front of the first or second page); (e) begin with purpose statement, stating clearly in two or three
sentences what your essay is going to show, apply, analyze, contest, or contrast; and (f) be written in
paragraphs without line break (i.e., begin a new paragraph with a short indent instead). You will lose
6 points (-10%) at the outset if you do not adhere to these specifications; there is no exception.

3. You can be selective in your essay theme but be as complete as possible. I suggest you end essays
with one or two questions related to the readings and lectures that you would like for us to discuss in
class. Avoid ending your essay by rephrasing what you already have written; you will lose points for
unnecessary repetitions or rephrases at any part of your essay. You can cite authors but avoid using
long or frequent quotes. Keep in mind that discussion essay requires you to incorporate or refer to the
themes/issues in the assigned text. If you are using external sources in addition to the class materials,
insert author’s name and publication year in parenthesis where it is appropriate and provide separate
pages with complete reference (author, title, publication year, publisher, page numbers). Plagiarism is
a serious academic offense and will be subjected to the University disciplinary action. Internet web
pages are not an acceptable source; your essay will not be accepted if it incorporates or is based on
web page information.

4. Discussion essays are not for sharing your personal experiences. I expect you do that in class. Essays
are to be integrating (show how statements or concepts interrelate to support a particular perspective
under discussion), comparative (contrast assigned articles and point out thematic differences and
similarities), applying (interpret a collective action from a perspective you have learned, or discuss
how such a perspective might explain it), critical (take a position and argue against what you consider
as critical deficiencies in particular perspective presented in texts or lectures), or inquisitive (discuss questions, answers, implications, inferences, assumptions, etc. relevant to collective actions that can be derived from your readings). In other words, do not simply repeat the points made in the texts in sequence but contrast, integrate, apply, explore, question, look for common themes, etc. You will receive minimal points if your essay is merely repetitive of texts and lectures. For example, do not define conceptual terms or describe statements unless you are making specific arguments and avoid narrating unrelated arguments unless you are making specific contrasts under a general theme. Good essays serve a definite purpose. Essays are to be organized, succinct, consistent, and as complete as possible.

5. You will have at least a week to work on a discussion essay following readings and lectures. Late essay policy: (a) essays should be turned in on time, which means during class meetings on the due dates, and must be brought to class (not e-mailed to me or brought to the department office); (b) all late essays are penalized without an exception (-6 points if submitted within a week, and -12 points thereafter and within two weeks past the due date); (c) under no circumstance I will accept an essay after two weeks past the due date; and (d) all missing essays thereafter will be converted to 0 point. To ensure class fairness and timely progress, I will strictly adhere to this late essay policy. Always keep a copy of the essay you have turned in. If you need out-of-class assistance, please see me during office hours or make an appointment after class. I am always willing to assist you.

Study Questions
1. On Thursdays, you will be given two or three take-home study questions, covering the readings and lectures. Study questions are meant to self-test your overall comprehension of the learned materials, to enhance your analytic thinking, and to prepare you for exams. You are encouraged to organize your answers on a separate notebook (not due). Keep this notebook updated and review it for midterm exams. You may utilize study questions as an outline for your discussion essays.

2. On average 3-4 succinct paragraphs for each study question would suffice, but keep in mind that specific questions require specific answers. Avoid giving unnecessary definition to the terms you are using and get to the points immediately. You may discuss your answers in review sessions or during my office hours.

Midterm Exams
1. You will take three written exams, consisting of five questions of which you answer four. All exam questions are drawn directly from the study questions distributed in class for the midterm under examination. You will have 8-9 study questions before each scheduled exam. The third exam, which is not comprehensive, will be given at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 7th, the day designated by the University for our class final.

2. Exam policy: (a) there is no early exam; (b) if you miss an exam or anticipate missing one, you must provide a written statement verifying the necessity of your absence; (c) a makeup exam must be taken within two weeks following the scheduled exam; (d) all makeup exams are penalized (-10%) unless you provide a documented excuse; (e) under no circumstance a makeup exam will be given after two weeks past the designated exam date; (f) all missing exams thereafter will be converted to a “failure” (not an incomplete) for that portion of coursework; and (g) all makeup exams will be evaluated on an absolute, not comparative, basis. There is no exception to this exam policy. It is to your advantage not to miss an exam.

3. Please bring a blue book (exam book) and arrive 5 minutes early on the designated exam dates. I must sign on your blue book before the exam; a blue book without my signature on it is invalid and will not be considered. Do not attempt to cram up study questions. You will not be able to handle this, and I will not be able to help you.

4. Meeting class requirements (i.e., submitting essays on time, taking all exams, etc.) does not by itself warrant a passing grade. In order to pass, your overall course work must be of passing quality. In this course “A” is reserved for those who truly justify outstanding work.

Readings
1. You are required to do assigned readings thoroughly prior to class; be prepared to discuss them and answer questions in class. The reader Collective Behavior and Social Movements contains important articles in the field. It demands attentive reading. You are not expected to grasp the details on your first reading. However, I will assume that you are already acquainted with conceptual terms in the texts, that you are prepared to raise generic issues and questions in class. In the event the class lags behind, I will randomly name a few of you to summarily describe readings in the next class meeting.

2. Likewise, lectures are delivered on the assumption that you have done your readings thoroughly. You will be introduced to competing standpoints and relevant issues in class, and lectured materials are on all exams. Each lecture will identify issues and themes that the text under discussion raises, and it often centers on extended clarification of the materials you have read.

3. Notice the exam dates and essay deadlines below, and plan your schedules accordingly. Changes, if any, will be announced in advance. We will often have to jump around the texts; but we will proceed in an orderly and thematic fashion throughout. The first six weeks will focus on collective behavior and the latter weeks on social movements perspective. Under the heading of perspectives, we include movement organization, mobilization, strategy, participation, recruitment, ideology, goals, and outcomes, that is, across the central frames of studying collective actions. Contingent on class time, the last two weeks will focus on new social movements perspective.

4. Readings are assigned on every Thursday for the following week along with the expected completion dates and study questions (DL=David Locher; CA=Curtis & Aguirre). Reading assignments for the first and second weeks (Jan. 16th through 23rd) are DL pp. 1-23 and pp. 24-38 (read before Thursday, Jan.16); and DL pp. 174-190 and CA pp. 5-20 (read before Tuesday, Jan 21). You are required to have the readings prepared on time for class.

1. 1/14 course introduction
2. 1/21
3. 1/28
4. 2/04 1st discussion essay due on Thursday Feb 6.
5. 2/07
6. 2/18 midterm exam 1: Tuesday Feb. 18, 1/13 to 2/11
7. 2/25
8. 3/04 2nd discussion essay due on Thursday March 6.
9. 3/11
11. 3/25 review discussion & 3rd discussion essay due on Thursday March 27.
12. 4/01 midterm exam 2: Tuesday April 1, 2/20 to 3/27
13. 4/08
14. 4/15 4th discussion essay due on Thursday April 17
15. 4/22
16. 4/29 review discussion & 5th discussion essay due on Thursday May 1.

5/07 final exam: Wed. May 7, at 8:00 a.m., 4/03 to 5/01

Evaluation

Your course grade is based on:

Five Discussion Essays (60 points each).........................300 points total.
Three Midterm Exams (200 points each).................................600 points total.

The grading scale is:  792-900 (88%): A  702-791 (78%): B
612-701 (68%): C  522-611 (58%): D

1. 1/15  Course introduction; Social contagion perspective. DL pp. 1-23
2. 1/22 Emergent norm perspective. DL pp. 24-38, 95-100, 174-190

3. 1/29 Value-added perspective. DL pp. 39-54, 87-95, 109-130

4. 2/05 Communication in collective behavior; Rumors. DL pp. 159-173
   1st discussion essay due on Thursday February 7

5. 2/12 Sciocybenetic perspective; the Publics. DL pp. 55-70
   2/14 Review discussion (bring texts).

6. 2/19 Images, miracles, and apparitions; the Crowds. DL pp. 131-158
   Midterm Exam 1: Tuesday February 19, 1/15 to 2/14

7. 2/26 Nature and forms of social movements. DL pp. 231-247

8. 3/05 Perspectives on social movements I. DL pp. 248-269
   2nd discussion essay due on Thursday March 7.

9. 3/12 Perspectives on social movements II. DL pp. 270-288

10. 3/18-3/22 Spring Break

11. 3/26 Perspectives on social movements III. DL pp. 289-305
    3/28 Review discussion (bring texts)
    3rd discussion essay due on Thursday March 28

12. 4/02 Perspectives on social movements IV.
    Midterm Exam 2: Tuesday April 2, 2/21 to 3/28

13. 4/09 Perspectives on social movements V.

14. 4/16 New social movements perspective I.
    4th discussion essay due on Thursday April 18

15. 4/23 New social movements perspective II

16. 4/30 New social movements perspective III
    Review discussion (bring texts).
    5th discussion essay due on Thursday May 2

Final Exam: 1 p.m. Friday May 10, 4/04 to 5/02

Student Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on:

Five Discussion Essays……………………………………………….300 points total.
   60 points each
Three Midterm Exams……………………………………600 points total.
  4 short-answers, 50 points each

The grading scale is:  792-900 (88%): A
                        702-791 (78%): B
                        612-701 (68%): C
                        522-611 (58%): D