Political Science 392AP
Activism, Participation, and Protest

Instructor: Professor Sonia E. Alvarez
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Course Description:
This course examines historical and contemporary modalities of political activism, participation, and protest. Through the comparative analysis of select case studies, principally from Latin America and the U.S, we will explore the dynamic development of feminisms, anti-racist/Black mobilizations, and contemporary anti-globalization, anti-austerity and pro-democracy protests.

Drawing on varied theoretical approaches from a range of disciplines—including not only several subfields in Political Science, but also Sociology, Anthropology, Feminist Studies, Geography, African Diaspora Studies, History, Cultural Studies, and more—we will explore the following questions, centered on Activism, Participation, and Protest (APP, for our purposes):

- What does political activism look like? How do we know it when we see it?
- What does activism entail? (e.g. demonstrating, signing petitions, being vegan, canvassing, doing graffiti, engaging in civil disobedience, performing gender non-conformity, drafting policy briefs, living alternatively, running for office, crashing windows)
- How/when/why does one modality of APP shift to another? (e.g. protest to participation)
- Where does APP happen? In the streets, in civil society, in participatory institutions, on the internet, elsewhere, all of the above?
- What forms of activism constitute what 20th century social science called “social movements”?
- Are other concepts available to characterize today’s expressions of collective action?
- What forms of APP are most effective, why, and to what ends?
- When and how does collective action shift scales, from local, to the national, the global and (sometimes) back again?
- How do gender, race, class, gender identity, and sexuality shape APP in specific ways?
- How and why do contemporary protests/uprisings/occupations emerge?
- What is the role of the larger political, organizational, discursive environment in that emergence?
- How and why do they decline, “fail,” or end? Do they have “afterlives”? If so, what are their effects?
- How do we assess APP success? APP failure?
- How does the policing, militarization, and criminalization of protest affect APP outcomes?
Learning Objectives:
1) Acquire working knowledge of major 20th and 21st century forms of activism, participation, and protest and of prevailing approaches to social movements in/and politics.
2) Reconsider core concepts in the study of politics—such as democracy, social justice, social movements, political mobilization and participation, globalization, sexual, racial and gender equity, transnationalism—in the light of diverse contemporary and historical experiences of APP.
3) Identify and assess competing analytical frameworks and place readings in dialogue/debate with one another.
4) Critically engage and productively dialogue with a range of empirical materials and theoretical perspectives that may extend beyond your customary political and cultural “comfort zones.”

Course Requirements: Two brief (3-4pp) comparative analytical essays (due Oct. 24 and Nov. 28) and take-home final examination (due Dec. 15). Missed deadlines will result in a lowered grade. In-class exercises may be administered on any given class day when there are assigned readings. Class attendance is mandatory (you may not miss more than four class sessions).
Grading: 30 percent in-class exercises and participation in class discussions; 20 percent for each analytical essay; and 30 percent on final exam.

“House Rules”: 1) Be respectful of all political perspectives(points of view represented in course readings and/or expressed by your peers; 2) Always strive to ground your opinions about politics in evidence/examples supplied by course materials; 3) Listen actively to your peers’ contributions to class discussion; and, 4) Please turn off your cell phones at the beginning of class and leave them off.

On Academic Honesty: You are expected to adhere to the university’s regulations regarding academic honesty, which you can find in the university’s Academic Regulations, page 6. Most importantly, you are expected to refrain from plagiarism, which the AC defines as “knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting without citation, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or the research of another, including but not limited to commercial vendors who sell or distribute such materials.”

Disability Statement: The University of Massachusetts is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you are in need of accommodation for a documented disability, register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. It is your responsibility to initiate these services and to communicate with faculty ahead of time to manage accommodations in a timely manner. For more information, consult the Disability Services website at http://www.umass.edu/disability.

Course Materials: Most article-length required readings can be accessed on Moodle [indicated by an (M) below] and are organized online by date and topic in accordance with the Course Outline. The following are books we will be reading good chunks of or in their entirety. They are available for purchase
online through the UMass-Amazon agreement. Several are also available as e-books through the W.E.B. Du Bois Library and some can also be accessed through a variety of other online sites. All are also on reserve at Du Bois.


Course Outline

September 5 and 7—Introduction to Activism, Participation, and Protest (APP)
Readings (for Sept. 7):

Part I—Black/Afro-descendant APP in the Americas

September 12-19—Political Process and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement
Films: Eyes on the Prize
Readings:
- Sept. 12—Part I, Eyes on the Prize video; McAdam, pp. 60-116.
- Sept. 14—Part II, Eyes on the Prize; McAdam, pp. 117-180.
- Sept. 19—remainder, Eyes on the Prize; McAdam, pp. 181-229

September 21 and 26—Cultural Politics of U.S. Black APP
Readings:
- T.V. Reed, The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle
  - Sept. 21—Introduction.
  - Sept. 26—Chapters 1 and 2.

September 28-October 5—Black Lives Matters: Structural, Historical, and Comparative Perspectives
Readings:
- Oct. 3—Taylor, pp. 51-134.
- Oct. 5
October 10—NO CLASS, Monday schedule observed

October 12-19—Racial Politics and Afro-descendant Activism in Latin America: Brazil in Comparative Perspective
Film: Black in Latin America: Brazil (Oct. 12)
Readings:
- Oct. 12—discussion of film and Paschel (above)
- Oct. 17
  - PROMPT FOR FIRST ANALYTICAL ESSAY DISTRIBUTED
- Oct. 19
  - Telles, pp. 24-77 (M and e-book)

Part II—Comparative and Transnational Perspectives on Feminist APP in the Americas

October 24-November 2—Afro-descendant Feminisms in the Americas: Comparative Perspectives on Brazil
Films: Black Brazilian Women (Oct. 24); Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights (Oct. 31);
FIRST ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE on Moodle on OCT. 24 BY 4PM
Readings:
- Oct. 24
- Oct. 26
• Oct. 31
• Nov. 2
  o discussion of Perry and Nadesen
  o Angela Davis in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil on Afro-Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Day, 25 July 2017
    ▪ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ddyxOQ45jI (stream outside of class at your leisure…)

**November 7-16**—*Transnational Conflict and Coalition in Feminist APP in the Americas Films: Mulheres em Movimento; Feminist Stories from Women’s Liberation* (Nov. 7)
*Readings:*
• Nov. 9
• Nov. 14—Roth, pp. 47-75
  o DISCUSSION OF SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT
• Nov. 16—Roth, pp. 76-128, 214-226.

**NOVEMBER 21 AND 23**—THANKSGIVING BREAK

*Part III—Transnational Activism and Global Protests*

**November 28 and 30**—*Global Justice Movement and Anti-Globalization APP Film: This is What Democracy Looks Like* (Nov. 28)
SECOND COMPARATIVE, ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE NOVEMBER 28
Nov. 30—Guest Speaker, Priscila Carvalho, Ph.D. candidate, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, “Brazilian Perspectives on the World Social Forum Process.”

Readings:
- (Nov. 30) T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest*, chapter 9

December 5-12—Global Uprisings, Occupations, and Protests Today

Readings:
- Dec. 7—Guest speaker: Iris do Carmo, Ph.D. candidate, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, “Gender in Global Protests: Brazil in Comparative Perspective”
  Video: “Corpos Políticos” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzISD-OmJP8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzISD-OmJP8);
- Dec. 12
  - TAKE-HOME FINAL DISTRIBUTED
  - Readings and discussion on Antifa APP today (TBD)

**TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE BY NOON ON DECEMBER 15**