DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCI 386: Contemporary Social Movements
Winter Semester 2018

Meeting Times:
Tue.-Thu.-Fri., 4:35-5:25
Location: RPHYS 118

Professor: Barry Eidlin
(barry.eidlin@mail.mcgill.ca)
Office: Leacock 820
Office Hours: Tue. 1:45–3:45

TAs: Emanuel Guay
(emanuel.guay@mail.mcgill.ca)
Office Hours: TBA

Friday Conferences:
2:35-3:25: MAASS 328
3:35-4:25: MAASS 328
4:35-5:25: RPHYS 118

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the theoretical analysis of collective protest and social movements. It addresses several key questions, including: Why are people usually quiescent in the face of oppression and exploitation? Why and how do social movements nonetheless arise? What challenges do they face? And why do movements win or lose? The course will address these questions (and others) first through an introduction to some of the foundational texts surrounding questions of collective action, and then by examining three case studies of social movements: the workers’ movement of the 1930s in the U.S. and Canada, the U.S. civil rights movement, and the U.S. feminist movement. The twin goals of this course are to understand these particular movements better, and to master a variety of general ideas, concepts, and hypotheses for understanding a wide range of popular movements, past, present, and future.

CLASS CULTURE AND STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Readings offer you the chance to grapple with some of the fundamental questions and challenges surrounding processes of social mobilization and organization. You are expected to do assigned reading before class. You will be tested on the readings in quizzes at some point during every lecture.

There is no textbook for the course, as a textbook would imply a sense of order and consensus in the study of social movements that does not exist. In real life, the study of social movements, like social movements themselves, is contested and messy. Instead of a textbook, I am assigning to you some foundational texts related to problems of social mobilization, along with readings that explore our four case studies in depth. My goal is not to give you a comprehensive overview of social movements as a whole, but rather to have you grapple with some of the key problems at the heart of the study of social movements.
As such, I have assigned two books, each of which deals with one of the case studies: *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006, Third Edition* by Manning Marable, and *Freedom for Women: Forging the Women's Liberation Movement, 1953-1970* by Carol Giardina. These are available at the McGill Bookstore, or through various online retailers, including [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com). Please note that it is important to get the *third edition* of the Marable book, as it includes new material that is not in previous editions.

The remainder of the course readings are compiled in a course reader, also available at the McGill bookstore. I will also be making PDFs of the articles available on the course website, but I strongly recommend that you also purchase the course reader, as I require you to bring hard copies of the readings to class, and the cost of printing out PDFs using uPrint far exceeds the per-page cost of a course reader.

I have also included a list of recommended additional readings at the end of this syllabus. These will be useful for your final paper projects, which will involve delving more deeply into one of the course’s four case studies.

**Lectures** will explore the core theoretical and empirical questions at the heart of the study of social movements. You are responsible for all material discussed in lectures, as well as any announcements made there.

**Community-Engaged Learning Option:** In lieu of a final paper, you will have the option to participate in an *Experiential Community-Engaged Learning and Research (ExCELR)* project with a Montreal community organization for 3 hours a week to implement the knowledge gained from our readings and lectures. *Interested students will need to fill in a short application form to participate that must be completed by the end of week 2 of classes.*

**No laptops are allowed in class** unless you have a legitimate, OSD-documented reason and have received explicit permission from me. (I know I couldn’t resist surfing the web, emailing my friends, etc., during class, so I’m removing the temptation!) Plus, recent research shows that taking notes on laptops is detrimental to learning because it results in shallower information processing (Mueller and Oppenheimer, *Psychological Science* 2014 – see article abstract at [http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159](http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159)). You can also read a summary of other research on classroom electronics in this piece by a professor of Media Studies (i.e. someone whose job it is to study the internet and electronic communication), explaining why he does not allow electronics in class: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/).

**Cell phones** must be switched off (not just set to vibrate) unless you have a legitimate need (e.g., your spouse is about to have a baby or a liver transplant) that you have told me about.

**In-class quizzes** will be drawn from the readings, section discussions, and/or lectures. They will be held at a random point during every lecture, beginning with our September 19th class. They will usually consist of 3 or 4 multiple-choice questions. Your scores on these quizzes constitute 10% of
your grade. The grade itself will simply be for participation (i.e. you will not be penalized for wrong answers), although you will be able to know if you got the answer right or not.

You will take these quizzes using TurningPoint online polling technology, which you can access through your phone, tablet, or laptop. For information on how to use the technology, and to register your student account, go to the Polling@McGill site: http://www.mcgill.ca/polling.

I adopted this technology for several reasons. Research by cognitive psychologists (e.g., Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel 2014 *Make It Stick*) indicates that students should be graded frequently throughout the semester rather than at only a few points in time. Clickers make this possible in large classes. Clickers also make it possible for me to determine how well you grasp the material so I can spend less time on the concepts you understand well and more time on the challenging ones. This, in turn, leads to more interesting discussions. Finally, using clickers makes it easier for your reactions and opinions to serve as launching point for in-class discussion and debate.

Using your phone/tablet/laptop for quizzes is the only acceptable use of electronics in this class. That means that you need to bring one of these devices to class every day, but it can only come out during the quiz. The care and keeping of your device is your responsibility. If you forget it, if it runs out of batteries, if it fails to communicate with the receiver, or if it experiences any other kind of technical difficulty, you will get 0 on that day’s quiz (equivalent to being marked absent). I will not change any quiz grade based on a report of a technical malfunction. I understand, however, that freak accidents happen and that even the most conscientious person can forget something occasionally. To allow for that possibility, I will drop your three (3) lowest quiz scores. If you do not have a phone, tablet, or laptop to use to respond to polling questions, please contact the instructor immediately in order for appropriate arrangements to be made.

Conferences are a mandatory and indispensable part of the course. There will be six of them throughout the semester. They will provide you with opportunities to ask questions about the readings or lectures, and otherwise engage the material actively, which is hard to carry off in a large lecture.

“Friday Films”: Understanding the context and dynamics of social movements often involves immersing yourself in the texture and rhythms of the movements themselves. Film is an important medium for capturing this more gut-level understanding of social movements. To that end, I will be showing four documentary films over the course of the semester. Some of these documentaries are longer than our 50-minute class time. So on days that I will be showing documentaries, we will meet in ARTS W-215 to view the documentaries. We will have time to discuss the films afterwards for those who want to stay. Those who have to leave at the end of scheduled class time will not be penalized.

Exams and Assignments

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.
Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

In addition to course participation, those pursuing the regular course option will have four main assignments over the course of the semester. These will test your ability to grapple with the central questions of the course, and apply them to one of the four case studies we will examine over the course of the semester. They will include:

1. Two in-class exams, one on **February 15**, and one on **April 13**;
2. A research proposal, using theories discussed in class to analyze in depth an aspect one of the three case studies we examine in class, due on MyCourses on **FEBRUARY 9**;
3. A first draft of your research paper analyzing in depth an aspect of one of the three case studies (10 pages maximum), due on MyCourses at 11:59 p.m. on **MARCH 16**.
4. A final draft of your research paper analyzing in depth an aspect of one of the three case studies (8-10 pages maximum), due on MyCourses at 11:59 p.m. on **APRIL 16**.

For those pursuing the ExCELR option, that will replace the research paper assignment for the class. The ExCELR option (replacing items 2-4 above) will consist of three components:

1. Participation in the work of the community organization (3 hours/week x 8 weeks);
2. Bi-weekly reflection journals (4 total);
3. A final paper reporting on your experience.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following:

**OPTION 1: REGULAR COURSE OPTION**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (quizzes)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conferences (Attendance 5%, Preparation 5%, Engagement 5%, Activities 5%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (two total, 10% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>February 15, April 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>February 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>First draft of research paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>March 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final draft of research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>April 16</td>
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For those pursuing the ExCELR option, your grade will be based on the following:
OPTION 2: EXPERIENTIAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING & RESEARCH (ExCELR) OPTION

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<td>20%</td>
<td>February 15, April 13</td>
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**ExCELR Participation**
- 24-hours (3-hrs per week X 8 weeks) of community work at a local community organization that you select and apply for
- *ExCELR Orientation* (1.5-hrs during week # 3) – facilitated by McGill’s Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office (Date & location TBD)
- *Mid-term Group Reflection Discussion* (1.5 hrs during week # 9) – facilitated by McGill’s SEDE Office (Date & location TBD)
- community partner evaluation at end of term will be considered in your assessment
- includes instructor, peer evaluation (if doing team work), and community-placement attendance

**ExCELR Reflection Journal (4 @ 2.5% each)**
Every two weeks, you will be required to respond to structured questions (provided by the instructor) about your ExCELR experience.

- done through myCourses Discussion tool
- 300 words
- questions are guided and purposeful: helping students promote a deeper understanding of course subject matter and its relation to their community placement experiences while helping develop thinking towards your final paper.

**Final paper**
Rather than submitting a research paper, you are required to submit a reflection paper of about 1,500 words detailing your experience by April 16 before midnight through the myCourses Assignment tool. Your paper should not only reflect on what you did and what you gained from the placement, but it should also include a section linking how the placement relates to the ideas and themes in the course. The precise content of the paper will depend in part on the nature of the placement position. ExCELR students should discuss their paper with me before March 16.
IMPORTANT NOTE ON GRADING: For those pursuing the regular course option, your research proposal and first draft of your research paper will be graded by double-blind peer review, using an online software package called Peerceptiv (www.peerceptiv.com). Peer-review is the main form of evaluation in the real world of scholarly research, not to mention grant proposals, business plans, and more. This will give you an introduction to how that process works.

That means that, in addition to submitting your own work, you will be responsible for evaluating and providing constructive criticism on two of your classmates’ work. “Double-blind” means that you will not know the identify of the students whose work you will be evaluating, and the students whose work you will be evaluating will not know your identity. It also means that for the research proposal and first draft, your grade will consist of three components: 1) whether you submit a complete assignment on time (10%); 2) the quality of your assignment, as judged by THREE of your peers (50%); and 3) the quality of the peer evaluations you provide for THREE of your classmates (40%).

For the research proposal and first draft, you will have ONE WEEK to read and evaluate three of your classmates’ assignments, using the Peerceptiv software. IF YOU DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR PEER REVIEWS, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT.

Your final research papers will be graded by me and your TA, with the full grade consisting of our evaluation of the quality of your research and writing.

I will provide more details on the peer review process and the research assignment in class.

*** If you experience a significant situation that affects your ability to complete the work in this class in a timely fashion DO NOT DELAY IN DISCUSSING THE PROBLEM WITH ME.

Procedure for appealing grades. To appeal a grade on the research project or the exams please follow this procedure:

1) Within 10 working days after the project or exam is handed back to you, write a note explaining why you think your grade should be changed. One or two paragraphs should be sufficient to argue the merits of your case.
2) Make an appointment to meet with the TA during office hours, during which time your TA will explain her decision about your appeal. If you cannot meet your TA during office hours, your TA will respond to you via email.
3) If you are not satisfied with your TA’s decision and reasoning, within 10 working days of receiving your TA’s decision, make an appointment to meet the professor, who will evaluate the TA’s decision. After that, students are entitled to a re-read or re-assessment by a professor not teaching the course should they request it.

Academic honesty. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences
under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

According to a recent U.S. national survey (the National Study of Youth and Religion Wave 2), 50% of college students reported cheating at least once in the previous year and 18% reported more frequent cheating. It is a mathematical certainty that some members of our class will try to cheat at some point during the semester. In fairness to students who are honest, those who are detected cheating will be dealt with as severely as University policy allows. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using notes or written or electronic materials during an exam or quiz; copying another person’s quiz or research project; allowing someone to copy your quiz or research project; having someone take a quiz for you; or plagiarizing any written assignment. Any suspected cheating will be immediately reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

The use of online software in lectures will allow us to have more enjoyable, more interactive discussions and to conduct daily quizzes quickly. It also creates opportunities for academic dishonesty. Using someone else’s polling login for them is the same as cheating on an exam. Students caught engaging in such activity will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**Accommodations**

If you require special accommodations for this class, please let me know as soon as possible. You are never required to tell me personal information; however, if you are having problems that affect your ability to attend, participate, or keep up with the workload in this class, please don’t wait until right before the exams to ask for help, and don’t just disappear. I may be able to help you or direct you to someone else who can help you.

The McGill Office for Students With Disabilities (514-398-6009, https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/office-students-disabilities) provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.

**Absences**

If you are absent, you are still responsible for the course materials you missed. You should get the notes from someone in the class, review those notes, and come see me in office hours if you have any questions. I do not deviate from the syllabus, and if I do, I will email the class, so you can assume that what is on the syllabus is what we covered in class. Please do not email me to ask if you “missed anything important,” as that implies that every class is not important.
Respect

Please be respectful of yourself, your peers, and me. This means raising your hand before speaking, keeping an open mind, and never chatting while someone else is speaking. Making excessive noise during class (such as by chatting or packing up before class is over) is rude to everyone in the room, as it denies the people around you (and yourself) a chance to learn. If you have a question, please ask me (and not your neighbor). Finally, if you make an office hours appointment with me, please show up. If you cannot come, send me an email letting me know ASAP.

Email

I will be communicating with you via email a lot. Please check your McGill email regularly.

I am not always available via email. I will usually be able answer your email within 24 hours (except on weekends). Please do not expect an immediate response to your emails.

Please write your emails to me like you would write an email to your boss or other work colleague. Emails should have a proper greeting (Hi, Hello, Dear, Greetings, etc.) followed by my name (you may call me Dr. Eidlin, Professor Eidlin, or Barry. “Mr. Eidlin” is not an appropriate form of address). The body of your email should be written in complete sentences, using standard English grammar and spelling (i.e. not in “text speak”), and should use a respectful, professional tone. Please be sure to sign your emails with at least your first name. It can be hard to tell who the email is from if you do not sign it.

Questions

You can approach me with questions at any time. My preference is to answer questions in class or in office hours – this format is best for avoiding misunderstandings (which are common via email or when conversations are rushed). I am also available to answer quick questions via email (allow up to 24 hours to respond, longer if on the weekend) and right after or before class. If at any time you feel that what I am doing is not advancing your learning, please let me know (in a respectful manner) – I want each and every one of you to feel safe and to learn, so please let me know if that is not happening.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

January 9: Course introduction: logistics, syllabus, overview. What are social movements, and why should we care about them?
   Reading: Course syllabus

January 11: Justice, social protest, and the law
   Reading: King, Jr., Martin Luther. 1963. Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

January 12: Class Conflict and Social Change
   Reading: Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, part 1 (Bourgeois and Proletarians)

Week 2

January 16: Party and Class/Organizers and Organized
   Reading: Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, part 2 (Proletarians and Communists)

January 18: Social Movements and the Paradox of Organization—I

January 19: Social Movements and the Paradox of Organization—II

Week 3

January 23: Barriers to Mobilization—An Incentive Model—I

January 25: Barriers to Mobilization—An Incentive Model—II
   Reading: Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, Chapter 1, Sections E-F and Chapter 2 (pp. 36-65).

January 26: CONFERENCE 1

ExCELR Participants: Pre-placement Orientation (Date & location TBD)
Week 4

January 30: Barriers to Mobilization—A Class Conflict Model—I

February 1: Barriers to Mobilization—A Class Conflict Model—II
Reading: Offe and Wiesenthal, “Two Logics of Collective Action”

February 2: CONFERENCE 2

ExCELR Participants: First week at community sites

Week 5

February 6: Barriers to Mobilization—Power and Hegemony—I

February 8: Barriers to Mobilization—Power and Hegemony—II
Reading: Gaventa, Power and Powerlessness, Chapter 7: pp. 165-201.

February 9: CONFERENCE 3

(RESEARCH PROPOSAL (2-3 PAGES) DUE ON FEBRUARY 9 AT 11:59 P.M.)

Week 6

February 13: In-class exam #1 review session

February 15: In-class exam #1

February 16: Film, “Harlan County, USA” (MEET IN ARTS W-215)

(PEER EVALUATIONS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE ON FEBRUARY 16 AT 11:59 P.M.)

Week 7

February 20: The U.S. Labour Movement—Origins and History

February 22: The U.S. Labour Movement—Challenges for Today

February 23: Film, “Final Offer” (MEET IN ARTS W-215)

(BACK EVALUATIONS OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEWS DUE ON FEBRUARY 23 AT 11:59 P.M.)

Week 8

February 27: The Canadian Labour Movement—Origins and History

March 1: Comparing the U.S. and Canadian Labour Movements

March 2: CONFERENCE 4

****READING WEEK: MARCH 5—MARCH 9****

Week 9

March 13: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement: Background and Origins

March 15: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement: Ascendancy, Zenith, and Decline
Reading: Manning Marable, Race, Reform, and Rebellion, chapters 4-6

March 16: Film, “Eyes on the Prize, part 3: Ain’t Scared of Your Jails” (MEET IN ARTS W-215)

(FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER (10 PAGES MAX.) DUE ON MYCOURSES ON MARCH 16 AT 11:59 P.M.)

ExCELR Participants: Mid-term Group Reflection Discussion (Date & location TBD)

Week 10

March 20: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement: Retreat
Reading: Manning Marable, Race, Reform, and Rebellion, chapters 7-8
March 22: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement: Legacies
   Reading: Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*, chapters 9-10

March 23: CONFERENCE 5

**(PEER EVALUATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPER DRAFTS DUE ON MARCH 23 AT 11:59 P.M.)**

**Week 11**

March 27: Second-Wave Feminism in the U.S.: History and Origins

March 29: Second-Wave Feminism in the U.S.: Development and Diffusion
   Reading: Giardina, *Freedom for Women*, Chapters 9-11, Epilogue

**(BACK EVALUATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT REVIEWS DUE ON MARCH 29 AT 11:59 P.M.)**

March 30: GOOD FRIDAY—NO CLASS

**ExCELR Participants: Last week at community sites**

**Week 12**

April 3: Film, “She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry” *(MEET IN ARTS W-215)*

April 5: Second-Wave Feminism in The U.S.: Lessons for Today

April 6: CONFERENCE 6

**Week 13**

April 10: Wrap-Up

April 12: In-class exam #2 review session

April 13: In-class exam #2

**(FINAL RESEARCH PAPER/ExCELR REPORT DUE ON MYCOURSES ON MONDAY, APRIL 16, AT 11:59 P.M.)**
Supplementary Readings

For your research project, you will be expected to investigate in depth a problem related to one of the four case studies we examine over the course of the semester (U.S. and Canadian labour movements, the U.S. civil rights movement, and the U.S. feminist movement). This will require doing reading and research beyond the assigned course materials. Below I include a small sampling of additional materials related to the four case studies. These materials can provide a useful starting point for your own research. **They are not sufficient for your research project. You must find additional sources of your own.**

Civil Rights


Feminism

Labour


