

SOCIOLOGY 2700

Grande Prairie Regional College

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL ACTION

(3 UT Credits)

(Winter 2009)

Instructor: Alan Segal

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Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays: 14.30 – 15.30 Or By appointment

Course Prerequisite: SO1000

Course Description:

An inquiry into the characteristics of social action and social change. Ideology and social structure, community (grassroots) organizing, and specific social movements will be discussed.

Required Reading:

Social Movements – Suzanne Staggenborg

Teaching Community - bell hooks

Assignments:

NOTE: All written work must comply with the College's policy on plagiarism. For a detailed explanation of what it is, refer to page 44 in your Grande Prairie Regional College 2007-8 Calendar.

- All submitted work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Your assignments will be sent *only* by email. The address is gprcassignments@gmail.com *The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. **No attachments are acceptable.*** Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email.
- Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Conclusions can be valuable but it isn't obligatory to state one. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

Two Journals: (F, C+ to B)

Due February 6th and March 13th. Anything pertaining to the sociology of social action, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life relevant to our discussions, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. If you do not hand in a journal you will receive a failing grade on that specific assignment. The minimum length is 350 words.

Midterm Essay: (F, A+ to D-)

Due March 6th. The minimum length is 1200 words. Pick two contrasting theories regarding social movements and social action, and apply them to a social movement in Canada.

Final Project: (F, A+ to D)

To be discussed. The due date for this assignment is the last class day of the term.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

Discussion Bonus:

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a Backboard discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the books and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. If you are absent for more than 5 classes you will not receive a bonus grade.

Grade Equivalency:

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the assignments that will be evaluated on a full grading grid, I will use D- as a non-failing mark.

Tabulation of Marks:

Your final mark will be formulated by adding the grade point value for each letter grade you receive and dividing by the maximum Grade Point total you can attain given the number of required assignments. In this course the total value of GPS points is 14.

NOTE: (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on Blackboard. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not been entered.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to course
2. Movements..... Chapter 1

Is there more than rhetorical meaning to democracy? Is there more than rhetorical meaning to 'democratic action'? Think of the structural sociological theorists you are familiar with, and inquire how they would answer the previous questions.
What is a social movement? Prepare an explanation of a 'repertoire of collective action'. How is such a repertoire connected to social movements? Can we have action without movement? Are social movements conceivable without action? Does Canada have social movements? Can you imagine considerable and effective social action but little social movement? What are the prerequisites of social change? Is social change an inevitable result of social movements?
3. hooks..... Preface, Chapters 1 & 2
4. Movements..... Chapter 2

Prepare to identify, explain, and critique the theories of social movements. Ought we to weigh the worthiness of an objective before imagining it as a foundation for social change?
5. hooks... Chapters 3 & 4
6. Movements..... Chapter 3

Identify the issues listed by Staggenborg regarding social movements and action. Does she persuade you of the issues themselves, and her criteria for discerning them? What is a free-rider problem?
7. hooks..... Chapters 5 – 7
8. Movements..... Chapters 4 & 5

Approach these chapters in the same way you will for the next several from this book. What establishes a social movement in each context? Why does Staggenborg think these are salient enough to deserve inclusion in her book? Would you have included them if this were your book? Would you include others not mentioned in this volume? We will discuss these Social Actions or Movements from both a micro- and a macrosociological perspective, so be aware of the varying ideas she presents around tactics, strategies, forms of action, recruitment of supporters, etc.
9. hooks..... Chapters 8 – 11
10. Movements..... Chapters 6 & 7
11. hooks..... Chapters 12 – 14

12. Movements..... Chapters 8 & 9

13. hooks..... Chapters 15 & 16

14. Movements..... Chapter 10