

# **Social Movements, Contentious Politics, and Democracy**

MA course, Political Science Department, 2015-16 Winter Semester, 4 credits

Instructor: Professor Béla Greskovits e-mail:

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Classes: Mondays and Wednesdays 11.00-12.40, classroom FT 908.

Office hours: Mondays 3-5pm, or by appointment in Faculty Tower 602.

## **Course outline**

The course introduces participants into the study of contentious politics and social movements in various historical periods and distinct parts of the world. With Barrington Moore we ask: “why people so often put up with being the victims of their societies and why at other times they become very angry and try with passion and forcefulness to do something about their situation.” (*Injustice. The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*. New York: M. E. Sharpe 1978: xiii.)

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The first part of the course covers theories and historical examples, which help better understand how power relations, political opportunities and risks, availability of allies, utilization of organizational resources, and ideas on the purpose of contentious claims shape peoples’ choices between obedience and revolt.

The second part focuses on the impact of long term processes – such as changing values across generations, increasing dependence on the global economy, the passing of popular involvement in democracy, and the growing tensions between various tasks of good government – on the emergence and spread of particular types of social movements, and movement-based parties. The examples reflect the experience of mature Western and nascent East Central European and East Asian democracies, as well as East European and East Asian authoritarian regimes. In all these cases we shall also investigate the consequences of social movements and social contention for the quality and prospects of democracy and democratization, respectively. The second part concludes with the study economic protest in the current hard times of East European capitalism.

## **Learning outcomes**

The course improves students’ analytic skills required for future careers, whether in academia or policy making, through facilitating:

- a) in-class discussion and debate;
- b) critical thinking about the views expressed in the literature;
- c) and experience in making comparisons across concepts and cases.

- d) While not focusing particularly on Eastern Europe, the course provides background theoretical and empirical knowledge for students who plan to write theses and do research on related issues in this region.

## **Requirements and grading**

**Presence and active participation in in-class discussions** / absence only in case of illness substantiated by medical documents. (20% of final grade)

**1 short presentation (10-15 minutes)**. The presentation will tackle a concrete example of social movement and/or contentious political event chosen by the author. The presentation is expected to give a short overview over the event, justify why it is important, explain what is its relationship to readings of the course, and raise one related problem or question the author wants to discuss with the participants of the course. (10% of final grade)

**One in-class closed book mid-term exam (60 minutes)**. The exam will test familiarity with the key terms and concepts covered by the readings during the weeks 1 to 6. (35% of final grade)

**One in-class closed book final exam (60 minutes)**. The exam will test familiarity with the key terms and concepts covered by the readings during the weeks 7 to 11. (35% of final grade)

## **Electronic Devices**

The use of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, e-readers, phones, etc.) is not allowed during class meetings.

## **Topics and required readings**

### **Part I: Powers in Movement. Theoretical and Historical Perspectives**

#### **Week 1**

Class 1: Introduction: course content and requirements

Class 2: Overview of social movement research

Required readings:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power In Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: Contentious Politics and Social Movements, pp. 16-34.

## **Week 2**

Class 1: Social capital and social movements

Required readings:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power In Movement*. Chapter 6: Networks and Organizations, pp. 119-139.

Class 2: Civil, “un-civil”, and “virtual civil” society

Required readings:

Riley, D. (2005) „Civic Associations and Authoritarian Regimes in Interwar Europe: Italy and Spain in Comparative Perspective.” *American Sociological Review* 70 (April), pp. 288-310.

Beissinger, M. R. (2012) „Russian Civil Societies: Conventional and Virtual.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 91-104.

## **Week 3**

Class 1: Ideas and contentious claims

Required readings:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power In Movement*. Chapter 7: Making Meanings, pp. 140-156.

Class 2: Framing labor demands in different varieties of capitalism

Required readings:

Gentile, A. and Tarrow, S. (2009) „Charles Tilly, Globalization and Labour’s Citizen’s Rights.” *European Political Science Review* 1 (3), pp. 465-493.

## **Week 4**

Class 1: Political opportunity and social movement agency

Required readings:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power In Movement*. Chapter 8: Threats, Opportunities, and Regimes, pp. 157-180.

Class 2: Challenging authoritarian rulers

Required readings:

Bunce, V. and Wolchik, S. (2010) "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *World Politics* 62 (1), pp. 43-86.

Brownlee, J., Masoud, T. and Reynolds, A. (2013) "Tracking the 'Arab Spring': Why the Modest Harvest?" *Journal of Democracy* 24 (4), pp. 29-44.

### **Week 5**

Class 1: The transnationalization of protest

Required readings:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power In Movement*. Chapter 12: Transnational Contention, pp. 134-258.

Class 2: The transnational and the local: Attac and the European Social Forum

Required readings:

Kolb, F. (2005) "The Impact of Transnational Protest on Social Movement Organizations: Mass Media and the Making of Attac Germany." In Della Porta, D. and Tarrow, S., eds., *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*. Lanham, Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 95-120.

Della Porta, D. (2005) "Multiple Belongings, Flexible Identities, and the Construction of 'Another Politics': Between the European Social Forum and Local Social Fora." In *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, pp. 175- 202.

### **Week 6**

Class 1: The transnational and the local: Solidarity across borders?

Required readings:

Bieler, A. and R. Erne (2014) "Transnational Solidarity? The European Working Class in the Eurozone Crisis" *Socialist Register* 51 (1).

Class 2: Midterm exam

## **Part II: Changing values, globalization, the hollowing of democracy, and their impact on movements and contention in good times and bad**

### **Week 7**

Class 1: Changing values and motivations for social activism

Required readings:

Inglehart, R. (2008) "Changing Values Among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006." *West European Politics* 31 (1-2): pp. 130-146.

Class 2: Left-libertarian and radical right movements

Required readings:

Kriesi, H. (1997) "Movements of the Left, Movements of the Right: Putting the Mobilization of Two New Types of Social Movements into Political Context." In Kitschelt, H., Lange, P., Marks, G. and Stephens J. D., eds., *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 398-423.

### **Week 8**

Class 1: The hollowing of Western democracy and its consequences for movements and parties

Required readings:

Mair, P. (2006) "Ruling the Void? The Hollowing of Western Democracy." *New Left Review* 42 (November-December), pp. 25-51.

Mudde, C. (2014) "The Far Right and the European Elections." *Current History* (March), pp. 98-103.

Class 2: Hollowing and backsliding of new democracies

Required readings:

Greskovits, B. (2015) „The Hollowing and Backsliding of Democracy in East Central Europe." *Global Policy* 6, pp. 28-37.

### **Week 9**

Class 1: Does economic liberalism breed political illiberalism?

Required readings:

Ost, D. (2005) *The Defeat of Solidarity. Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, pp. 13-59.

Class 2: Civil society and contentious politics in autocracies

Required readings:

Perry, E. (2012) „The Illiberal Challenge of Authoritarian China.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 3-24.

### **Week 10**

Class 1: Canceled, public holiday

Class 2: Civil society and contentious politics in new East Asian democracies

Required readings:

Kim, S. (2012) “‘Contentious Democracy’ in South Korea. An Active Civil Society and Ineffectual Political Parties.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 51-61.

Park, Ch-M. (2012) „Associations, Social Networks, and Democratic Citizenship: Evidence from East Asia.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 35-50.

### **Week 11**

Class 1: East European protest during the Great Recession – variation in intensity

Required readings:

Beissinger, M. R. and Sasse, G. (2012) An End to “Patience”? The Great Recession and Economic Protest in Eastern Europe. Oxford: Nuffield Working Paper Series in Politics.

Class 2: East Central European economic protest – variation in form

Required readings:

Cisar, O. And Navratil, J. (2014) Collective Action in Transformation, Transformation in Collective Action: Varieties of Economic Protest in Post-Communist East-Central Europe. Paper prepared for the 8th ECPR General Conference, University of Glasgow, 3-6 September.

### **Week 12**

Class 1: Final exam

Class 2: Concluding discussion