



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 4426F-001
Protest and Contentious Action
Fall 2023
Method of delivery: In-person
Instructor: Professor Howard Ramos

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Course Description: This course will focus on the study of contemporary protest, contentious action and mobilization in pursuit of social change. Students will be introduced to theoretical perspectives and critically examine actual current and historical forms of protest or contentious action.

Prerequisite(s): Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any module.

Anti-requisite(s): None.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn about contemporary forms of extra-institutional politics and their historical origins. The class will focus on understanding #BlackLives Matter, Indigenous Resistance, LGBTQ+ activism, Environmental mobilization, and Right Wing movements through social movement studies. Students will also learn how to systematically find and document academic material, synthesize debates, and write an academic paper that offers an original contribution to the area.

Course Material:

Selected peer-reviewed academic readings will be available on the class OWL site. Each week students will be expected to read 30 to 60 pages of material.

Optional: Staggenborg, Suzanne and Howard Ramos. 2023. Social Movements (4th edition). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking their Western email for information on the course as well as the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) for news and updates.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Project portfolio (PP) (70%)

All portfolio tasks need to be submitted on the submission week in order to be graded. No exceptions are made for those deadlines. Complete any set of assignments that add to 70% of your final grade. Additional detailed information will be provided on each portfolio assignment.

1) Identifying key concepts, problems, and research questions 20%

In no more than three pages, identify and justify the key concepts, problems or research questions that need to be examined to understand one of the political movements or set of analytic issues covered in class. The bibliography is not included in the page count. **Submit week 3.**

2) Finding relevant literature to sufficiently examine the key concepts 20%

In no more than one page, identify key databases to search for information related to the key concepts, problems or research questions identified in PP1, also identify keywords and a strategy to determine search constraints and saturation. Additionally provide a bibliography of searches and screen shots to determine what was found. Download all relevant works and share them in the class share folder for a given political movement. **Submit week 6.**

3) Finding relevant cases to apply literature 10%

In no more two pages, identify cases that can be used to explore issues and literature identified in PP1 and PP2. Also identify at least 10 sources outside of class assigned readings on one of the political movements engaged by the class. **Submit week 7.**

4) Develop an analytic frame to process literature 20%

In no more than one page build on PP1 through PP3 and develop an analytical frame to apply to literature identified to understand the political movement covered by the class. In an excel sheet create a coding guide to systematically track the literature you are reading. **Submit week 9.**

5) Develop an analytic frame to examine the cases 20%

In no more than one page build on PP1 through PP4 develop an analytical frame to apply to interpret the case(s) covered in class. In an excel sheet create a table

to systematically apply the literature and the case that will be analyzed. **Submit week 10.**

- 6) Find a suitable venue to submit an academic paper on the movement and issue you have identified 10%

In no more than one page build on portfolio assignments one through five and identify three suitable venues to potentially submit the paper to. They can be conferences, but preferable peer-reviewed academic publications. **Submit week 11.**

- 7) Write a final class paper on issues engaged in the class 20%. Complete first submission by **week 12.**

Combine elements of all previous project portfolio assignments to write an original sociological paper on protest and contentious actions using one of the political movements covered in class. The paper should incorporate feedback provided on other PP assignments and should critically examine a political movement covered in class and issues identified in previous assignments. Essays should highlight your own observations and situate them in a dominant literature. The paper should support its conclusions with secondary evidence and cases. One is expected to cite all relevant sources and include a full bibliography of works cited. The assignment should be double-spaced and the suggested page length is 10 to 15 pages. The bibliography is not included in the page count.

Weekly information probes 30%

In any given week, find a recent news article or piece of information that is relevant to the work we cover in the class that week or find an additional academic article that the class should know about. Apply the material for a given week to the case to interpret it or if you find an academic article explain how it challenges or adds to material covered in class. Be sure to download the material and share it in the class shared drive. Additionally, in a paragraph or less explain why the material is relevant and link it to the assigned readings. In class, take a moment to introduce the material and animate discussion of it. This should be done in two minutes or less and will animate class discussion for that week. Complete 3 weekly information contributions to pursue the full 30% of the grade for this component. Each contribution is worth 10% and must be completed in real time and material should be submitted no less than one day before class. No late assignments will be accepted.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:

Alert the instructor as soon as possible and an agreed upon accommodation or penalty will be determined.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

For such assessments over 10% recommendations from Academic Counseling will be followed. Assignments may be re-weighted, extended, or a make-up offered to accommodate those missed if that is the recommendation from that office. If assignments are late a penalty of no less than 20% will be applied to the assignment to a maximum of a grade of zero for missed assignments.

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology "[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)" document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

Course Schedule and Readings:

1. What is protest and how does it differ from other contentious actions?

Week 1: September 13

2. Collective Behaviour: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 2: September 20

3. Resource Mobilization: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 3: September 27

4. Political Opportunity: Indigenous resistance

Week 4: October 4

5. Eventful protests: Indigenous resistance

Week 5: October 11

6. Collective Identity: LGBTQ+ mobilization

Week 6: October 18

7. Media frames: Transgender Advocacy

Week 7: October 25

8. Fall Reading Break

Week 8: October 30 to November 5

9. Movement networks and diffusion: Environmental movement and Wet'suwet'en

Week 9: November 8

10. Counter Movements: Anti-environmentalism

Week 10: November 15

11. Radical movements: The Freedom Convoy

Week 11: November 22

12. Protest as normal politics: Conservative movements

Week 12: November 29

13. Does protest still matter?

Week 13: December 6