Course Overview

This course is designed to offer you an introduction to women and grassroots movements – both local and global. In this process, I have three learning objectives:

• First, you will become knowledgeable about the tremendous range of women's and feminist grassroots activism. During the semester, we will discuss some of the key grassroots movements during the last 100 years, and we will reflect upon how these movements have been impacted by historical, cultural, social, educational, economic, and political factors. In class, we will explore: (1) What do you need to know to understand women's conditions in a specific place? (2) What factors contribute to women's ability to alter their conditions? (3) How, when and why do women's grassroots movements emerge? (4) What are the cultural, economic and political conditions that promote, inhibit and incite activism to promote women's rights?

• Second, this is a course about grassroots civic engagement where we will explore and reflect on the complexities of individual and community service, learning and scholarship, and their role in facilitating social change.

• Third, this is a course about the history and rhetoric of grassroots social movements, where we will explore how ordinary citizens join together as a collective group to promote change. We will focus on key questions, such as: (1) Under what circumstances do social movements emerge? (2) How do members choose political tactics and strategies? and (3) How do grassroots movements affect social and political change? When and why do they fail?

Overall, it will offer you an opportunity to
• better understand those forces that affect grassroots social change
• better understand the rhetoric of grassroots social change
• better understand what it means to become civically engaged

In the process, we will engage with some of the key debates in the study of
grassroots social movements, reading both case studies from particular movements and theoretical treatments of central issues. By the end of the semester you should have sufficient mastery of the literature to ground your own research.

**Required Texts**


*In addition, a course packet of journal articles and book chapters available at Bob’s Copy Shop.*

**Course Requirements (600 points possible)**

**Class Participation: 150 points**

You are expected to respond to course material, lecture content, and general class discussion. Please note that attendance and participation are not equivalent. Your participation is worth up to 100 points. These points are earned through your active engagement; not simply through perfunctory remarks made each class. If you are inclined to remain quiet in class discussions, please come to see me early in the semester. Together, we will formulate a plan that will help you to participate at increasing levels of comfort.

Occasionally, at the end of class I will ask you to respond to a question or issue with a paragraph or two. These will not be graded but counted with a check.

**Small Group Work: 150 points**

Rather than simply considering theories or methodologies in the abstract, we often will examine their pragmatic value through small group activities held in class. The purpose of these groups is three-fold. First, they provide an immediate means to discuss issues raised in lecture. Second, when groups
share their insights with the rest of the class, it will facilitate the exchange of ideas. Third, these groups will provide another means through which students can experience aspects of persuasion, performance, intercultural communication, and deliberation.

In addition to these regular activities, each group will be responsible for guiding class discussion three times during the semester.

Each group will consist of three randomly selected members who will work together throughout the semester. You will be assigned your group during the first class meeting.

Papers: 300 points (These assignments are detailed in separate handouts.)

Late papers will be docked 10% per day. Papers should be typed double-spaced. A specific citation style (MLA, Chicago, APA) should be used consistently and correctly.

Response Papers: 50 points each
Students will write two short responses (500 words) critiquing two of the class readings. This is not meant to be a summary of the research. Rather, the papers should make claims about the text that are informed by the methods and theories we are studying and that are supported by evidence drawn from the text. These papers can be turned in at any point in the semester. These will be graded with a check, check plus, or check minus.

Final Paper: 200 points
Each of you will choose a grassroots movement (that connects with women’s issues) to explore, discuss and analyze. You will write a 15 page paper (this paper will be your final exam) about this movement and present your findings to the class. These presentations will enable the class to learn about several other movements that have taken place in the last half century. You may choose one of the following movements or you may choose another one that is of particular interest to you:

Sexual revolution and the counterculture
Music movements
Pro-choice movement
Pro-life movement
Antiwar movement
Environmental Rights movement
AIDS movement
Anti-poverty movement
Anti-gun violence movement
LGBT movement
Immigrant rights movement
Anti-immigrant movement
Prison reform movement
Student rights movement
Animal rights movement

Final Grade

Your final grade is final. Please do not request a change of grade for reasons other than mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the entire class and is unfair to every student. If you have questions about a grade, speak first to me. If the question is still not resolved, speak with the Chair, Julie D’Acci, or the Associate Chair. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

Good Things To Know

Attendance: Attending class is up to you; however, be aware of several consequences. Small group work will be announced and conducted the same day; therefore, missing lecture will prevent you from participating. In addition, material presented in class often is not available in other resources, and you will be held responsible for that material. Also, I assume you receive any announcements or any handouts during class. Ultimately, attending class is up to you; however, participation in discussions and exercises that take place will require your presence.

Help: This course is writing intensive and may require you to think and write in ways that are unfamiliar to you. I encourage you to utilize my office hours to talk about assignments. Also, I encourage all students to use the Writing Center resources.

Late Assignments: Late papers will be docked 10% of the available points for each day late. The day a paper is turned in is defined by when a department secretary or I receive a hard copy of the paper, so you should always be sure to give your paper directly to one of these people. Please note: Papers submitted via email will not be accepted.

Illnesses and Other Personal Emergencies: If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, you must take responsibility for informing me prior to the date the work is due. A failure to contact me prior to the due date will result in the application of the late assignment policy described above. Extensions will be granted for substantiated emergencies.

Religious Holidays: If you plan to miss class for religious holidays, state in writing the days you will be absent and submit that information to me by the third week of class.
Incompletes: As per University policy, incompletes are reserved for students who are earning a passing grade, but are unable to complete the course due to illness or conditions beyond the control of the student.

Academic Misconduct: Students sometimes take desperate measures to complete a paper, especially if they feel overwhelmed by the demands of an assignment. Please do not do this. Instances of academic misconduct will be penalized to the fullest extent in all cases. If you find yourself unable to complete an assignment and considering acts such as plagiarism, please seek help with the assignment.

Special Needs

I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center will provide useful assistance and documentation.

Women and Grassroots Politics

9/2 Welcome

Engaging with Grassroots politics and women's issues.

9/7 Grassroots Politics and Women's Movements


9/9 Whose Women's Movement?


9/14 Women and Human Rights

9/17 **Rhetorical Practices, Testimony, and Storytelling**


9/21 **India and Social Inequity**

Kumar, “From Chipko to Sati: The Contemporary Indian Women’s Movement” in packet. (Kumar, 2007).


9/23 **India and Grassroots Politics**

Sekhon, “Grassroots Social Action and Empowerment in India” ch.1 in Bystydzienski and Sekhon (Bystydzienski & Sekhon, 1999).

9/28 **Women, Non-Violence, and Social Protest**


9/30 **Egypt, Women and Grassroots Politics**

Ammar and Lababidy, “Women’s Grassroots movements and Democratization in Egypt” ch. 7 in Bystydzienski and Sekhon.

10/5 **Women and Anti-War Movements in Serbia**

Mladjenovic and Hughes, “Feminist Resistance to War and Violence in Serbia” in packet (Kumar, 2007).

10/7 **Tibetan Women and Anti-War Movements**

10/12  **Protest Tactics**


10/14  **Argentina and the Disappeared**

Foss and Domenici, “Haunting Argentina: Synecdoche in the Protests of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” in packet (Domenici, 2001).

10/19  **El Salvador and Grassroots Democracy**


10/21  **Honduras and Feminist Organizations**

McKelvey, “Feminist Organizations and Grassroots Democracy in Honduras” ch. 9 in Bystydzienski and Sekhon.

10/26  **South Africa and Apartheid**

Kaplan, “We Sleep on Our Own Graves” ch.6 (Kaplan, 1997).

10/28  **Education and NGOs in South Africa**

Rajuili and Burke, “Democratization through Adult Popular Education” ch. 5 in Bystydzienski and Sekhon (Bystydzienski & Sekhon, 1999).

11/2  **South Africa**


11/4  **Poetry and Protest**
Chin, “Poet for the People” in packet (Olson, 2007).


11/9  **African American**


11/11  **Appalacia**


11/16  **Professionalism and Local Expertise**

Jenkins, “Practically Professionals? Grassroots women as local experts – a Peruvian case study” in packet (Jenkins, 2008).

11/18  **Debates over Sexuality and Pornography**


11/23  **The Vagina Monologues and South Asian Sister’s Yoni ki Baat**

Cooper, “Worrying about Vaginas: Feminism and Eve Ensler’s The Vagina Monologues” in packet (Cooper, 2007).


11/25  **Thanksgiving Break**

11/30  **Queer Performance Art and Protest**
breen, “Between the Covers: Feminist, Antiracist, and Queer Performance Art in Australia, ch. 7 in Twine and Blee.


12/2 Queer Grassroots Organizations


12/7 Health Care Reform and Grassroots movements

Walters, “Women, Health Care and Social Reform in Yemen” ch. 4 in Bystydzienski and Sekhon (Bystydzienski & Sekhon, 1999).

12/9 Grassroots AIDS Activism

Goodwon et al ch. 8.

12/14 Class Presentations

References


London: Routledge.