

LDST 304: Leadership, Social Movements, and Social Change

Spring 2006

Dr. Thad Williamson

Jepson Hall 135

Twillia9@richmond.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:15-4:30 p.m. or by appointment.

How do citizens of democratic societies effect—or attempt to effect—large-scale social change? After all, large-scale social changes only look inevitable in the lens of history—most of the time, it seems, inertia rules the day.

Yet social movement activists have, from time to time, succeeded in triggering more dramatic and more rapid changes than almost anyone believed possible. On many other occasions, their efforts have (seemingly) failed. This course provides an intensive overview of the theory and practice of social and political change within democratic societies, with particular attention to the various roles played by grassroots, intellectual, and political leaders in forwarding their goals.

We will pursue this inquiry principally within the context of the United States, and with respect to three large-scale social movements which have shaped modern American history: the Civil Rights movement; the labor, community organizing and economic justice movements; and the modern conservative movement. We will draw primarily on biographical, autobiographical and other historical material to analyze each movement, drawing on other fields as appropriate. We will also examine representative texts produced by leaders within each movement. Studying the successes and failures of these movements will help us come to terms with the deep background of modern American society, and to develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to social movement leadership.

In addition, at the outset of the course we will explore some more general questions, including the origins of social movements; the motivations of political and social activists; the process by which minority opinions become majority views within democracies; and long-term trends pertaining to civic engagement in the United States. We will then turn to discussion of the specific movements with (at least) these four questions in mind: how movements frame issues and causes to garner public support; how they mobilize resources and seek to sustain themselves over time; the role of ideas in shaping social movements and their acceptance; and the various approaches to leadership evident in these movements.

Students should note that this course is designed so as to overlap minimally with other courses on social movements taught at UR, such as Sociology 302/01 (“Social Movements”) and LDST 390 (“The Women’s Movement”). Students taking either of those courses this semester (or who have in the past) are more than welcome to enroll in this course as well.

The pace of this course is demanding: students are expected to read the equivalent of one book plus one scholarly article a week.

Class Requirements

1. Attentive attendance at each class session
2. Working with one other student, two 15-20 minute class presentations over the course of the semester helping introduce the reading for a given week. You should also turn in a copy of your notes/outline for the presentation. Please submit to me by email a draft of your presentation outline by 9 a.m. the day you are making a presentation; I will return any comments to you by noon that same day. You are welcome to submit your draft earlier if you want more time to incorporate any feedback.
- 3.. Four short in-class quizzes on the content of the assigned reading (both for the week of the quiz and the preceding weeks). These quizzes will consist of multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions; no prior preparation beyond doing the reading and paying attention in class will be necessary. The dates of the quizzes will be February 6, February 27, April 3, and April 24.
4. In the first two weeks of the semester you must join the email list-serve of at least one social movement/advocacy organization. (The organization can be local, national, or international in orientation. Example of a national organization: moveon.org. Numerous local organizations are listed below.) Please read and save these emails (you can usually arrange to get them in digest form once a day); roughly once every two weeks we will “check in” with you to see what is going in with that group (what are they talking about, what are they planning to do, etc). If there is no significant activity in your selected group’s list-serve for more 10 days, you should find a group with a more active list-serve. On the last day of class you should submit a short (2-3 page) write-up of the activities the group you selected conducted over the course of the semester as well as any other observations you may have about the group based on the emails you saw.

Note: if you try to join an email list-serve ad you are asked why you want to be on it, be upfront and honest about your aims. It is possible (though not highly likely) that some groups may not want a student observer on their list-serve; in this case, find another group.

5. At least eight hours of participation and/or observation of a contemporary social movement. Up to three of these hours may consist of attendance at events or meetings on-campus; the remaining hours must consist of events or meetings happening off-campus. You must complete the first four hours of participation/observation by Monday March 13th and submit a 2-3 page write-up explaining what you did and/or saw in those hours. You should complete the remaining hours and submit a second 2-3 page write-up by Monday April 24th. While it is recommended that you spend all eight hours observing the

same social movement, when this is not possible you may spend the hours observing two different movements.

For the purposes of fulfilling this requirement, it is recommended that you immediately subscribe to the Connect Richmond email list-serve, which announces a wide variety of community events, some of which you may attend to fulfill this requirement.

Go to <http://richmond.com/communityfocus/index.aspx> to subscribe.

That website also contains a community calendar. Additional community calendars can be obtained here:

Richmond Peace Education Center: <http://www.rpec.org/calendar.html>

Richmond Indy Media <http://richmond.indymedia.org>

Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality <http://defendersfje.tripod.com/id26.html>

I will also pass along information I come across on social movement events as the semester goes along.

6. Identify and conduct a structured interview with one social movement leader or former leader currently living in the Richmond area. The suggested length of the interview is 30-45 minutes. You should prepare in advance at least one dozen questions to ask this leader, to be submitted to me in advance for approval. Your interview questions should be approved and an appointment made with the interviewee by no later than March 27, though it is recommended you act earlier to fulfill this requirement. *Each student must identify a unique leader to interview.* You should then turn in a write-up of the interview (either a complete transcript, or a magazine-style article about the leader you interview with substantial quotes from your conversation.)

7. A research term paper on an issue related to social movements in the United States, totaling roughly 15-18 pages. The paper may be historical or analytical, but must address a topic of substantive and/or theoretical importance and must produce appropriate evidence and argumentation to support its claims.

You are welcome to write about the movements covered in the course or to write on another social movement you are interested in. It is recommended but not required that your term paper focus on a social movement that you have observed and or participated in.

The term paper can go one of two general directions: First, you may write a paper rooted primarily in “book research” that employs the tools that might be used by a historian or social scientist to tell a particular story or analyze a particular group. A successful paper along these lines will draw on multiple academic sources (books, articles, newspaper archives, collections of personal papers) and should reflect sustained engagement with previous relevant scholarship on your topic.

Alternatively, you may choose to write a paper that relies more heavily on participant observation of a contemporary social movement, or which involves making a sustained effort to gather new material (i.e. interviews) pertaining to a historical social movement. In this case, the expectations for engagement with prior academic literature will be lower, but you should plan to spend significant time doing participant observation (or interviews) above and beyond the 8 hours required of everyone.

You must turn in a statement of your intended topic in class by April 3, and you must turn in a broad outline of the paper as well as a working bibliography by April 17. You should budget time to undertake quite substantial research for this paper. You have the further option to turn in a rough draft of your paper at the last class, April 24th, and schedule a meeting with me to discuss the draft on either Friday April 28th or Monday May 1st. The final paper is due May 5th.

What Social Movements Can I Study?

For the purposes of this class, a social movement is defined as either a sustained collective effort to alter the status quo and effect lasting changes in policies, institutional structures, and/or social norms and attitudes. Social movements can be radical, liberal, moderate, conservative, or reactionary in character, but each aims in some fashion to alter either the status quo or a perceived trend.

Most but not all recognized social movements have a liberal or radical orientation; but numerous important movements are conservative, and there are some relatively non-ideological “single-issue” movements. You do not need to agree (or completely agree) with the goals of the social movement you are studying to learn from it, and hence you are invited (but not required) to choose for study movements whose aims you do not endorse. In that case, however, you must make special effort to understand the aims and reasoning of the group under study “from the inside” and to assess the movement’s success or failures on its own terms.

Examples of social movements you can choose to consider (in addition to those to be studied in class):

Environmental justice movement (i.e. addressing racial disparities in exposure to environmental harm)

Climate change/energy conservation activism

Clean air/clean water campaigns

Local ecosystem protection campaigns

Pro-Choice movement

Pro-Life movement

Antiwar movement

International solidarity movements

Debt relief/global anti-poverty movements

Educational reform movements

Feminist movements

Anti-sprawl movement
Anti-gun violence movement
Campaign finance reform/clean government movements
Gay and lesbian movements
Domestic anti-poverty movements
Living wage campaigns
Immigrants rights movement
Prison reform movements
Anti-death penalty movements
Tax reform movements
Subsidy accountability (corporate giveaway) movements
Civil liberties advocacy
Anti-sweatshop activism
Media reform activism

You should generally *not* pick a political party (Republicans, Democrats, Greens, etc.), unless you have special reason (cleared with the instructor) to do so. Nor should you choose a professional organization (i.e. the Virginia Bar Association) or an organization funded primarily by corporations. Grassroots organizations which regularly work in direct contact with political parties are generally acceptable but also should be cleared with me.

Examples of grassroots Central Virginia-area organizations whose activities you may want to observe or whose leaders you may want to contact include:

Virginia Coalition for Open Government (<http://www.opengovva.org/>)
Virginians for a Healthy Future <http://www.healthyva.org/>
Virginians Against Handgun Violence <http://www.vahv.org/>
Southern Environmental Law Center <http://www.southernenvironment.org/index.htm>
Virginia Organizing Project <http://www.virginia-organizing.org/>
Virginia Grassroots Coalition <http://www.vagrassroots.org/>
Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty <http://www.vadp.org/>
Equality Virginia <http://www.equalityvirginia.org>
ACLU Virginia <http://www.acluva.org/>
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/>
Virginia Poverty Law Center <http://www.vplc.org/>
Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality <http://defendersfje.tripod.com/index.html>
(Multi-issue network with links to Richmond groups working on criminal justice, worker, environmental, and antiwar issues)
Richmond Peace Education Center <http://www.rpec.org/>
Virginia League for Planned Parenthood <http://www.vlpp.org/>
Virginia League of Conservation Voters <http://www.valcv.org/>
Democracy for Virginia <http://democracyforvirginia.com/>
Central Virginia Family Forum <http://centralvirginiafamilyforum.com/>
Life and Liberty Ministries <http://www.lifeandlibertyministries.com/>
Virginia Society for Human Life <http://www.vshl.org/>

Virginia AFL-CIO <http://www.va-aflcio.org/Links.htm>
Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Office of Justice and Peace
<http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ojp/>
Virginia Catholic Conference <http://www.vacatholic.org/>
Richmonders Involved to Strengthen Our Communities
<http://www.thedartcenter.org/network-directory/index.htm>
Sowers of Justice <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ojp/ojp102.asp>
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy <http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/>
Policy Wonk Network <http://www.policywonknetwork.com/>
Hope in the Cities <http://www.hopeinthecities.org>
Partnership for Smarter Growth: <http://www.psgrichmond.org>

Class Format

Each class session will begin at 2:40 with a 15-20 minute student presentation on the assigned reading, followed by discussion until approximately 4:00. After a short break, we will view a film (or excerpts thereof) corresponding to the reading from 4:05 to approximately 5:00 p.m., to be followed by further discussion until 5:20.

Evaluation

20% In-class presentations (10%) and overall participation (10%)

20% In-class quizzes

20% Write-ups of participant observation/Email group observation/Leader interview

40% Term Paper

General grading standards:

A range grades are given for truly outstanding written work which not only meets the basic requirements of the given assignment but also demonstrates exceptional insight, clarity, and depth of thought.

B range grades are given for good and very good written work which amply meets all the basic requirements of the given assignment and reflects substantial effort and engagement with the material. Such work is well-written, well-organized, shows good understanding of the course material, and avoids major substantive or logical errors. *B is a good grade for any assignment in this course, and B+ is a very good grade.*

C range grades are given for work which attempts to fulfill the requirements of the assignment but which falls short in some substantial way, with respect to organization, writing quality, understanding of the material, or argumentative logic.

Your class participation grade is based on attendance, attentiveness, evidence of preparation (i.e. doing the readings), making the effort to verbally participate, and quality of such participation. In a seminar-class such as this, it is not acceptable to simply show up and not make an effort to contribute. However, talking a lot does not necessarily guarantee you a very high participation grade; contributions to class that advance the class discussion are valued more than sheer quantity of participation. Advancing the class discussion can take several forms, from calling attention to something important in the reading we haven't talked about yet, to answering a question posed by the instructor, to asking a factual or interpretive question of relevance to the discussion, to stating (and giving reasons) why you think you disagree with an author, another student or the instructor.

Excessive unexcused absences (more than one over the semester) will lead to severe penalties in this part of the grade.

Course Plan

Required texts:

Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream*

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*

Tom Hayden, *The Port Huron Statement*

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*

Rick Fantasia & Kim Voss, *Hard Work*

Jane Slaughter, ed. *The Troublemakers' Handbook 2*

Mark Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling*

Thad Williamson, David Imbroscio & Gar Alperovitz, *Making a Place for Community*

Donald Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*

Michael Graets & Ian Shapiro, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*

* Readings marked with an asterisk will be available both on e-reserve and on regular (hard copy) reserve, for those wishing to minimize use of your print credits.

I. Overview of Social Movements and Activism

January 16. Introductory Meeting and Course Overview

Reading: Robert Putnam, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America"

January 23. Perspectives on Political Activism

Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, 1-27*

Nathan Teske, *Political Activists in America: The Identity Construction Model*, 27-61, 106-130*

Richard Flacks, *Making History: The American Left and the American Mind*, 25-116, 168-192*

In Class Film: Excerpt from *Berkeley in the Sixties*

II. The Civil Rights Movement

January 30. The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement: 1930-1945

John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement*, (short excerpts) 18-33, 79-98, 150-167 *

Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*, 133-168 *

Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream*, 11-158

In class film: *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, (PBS, 2002) Episode III

Week of February 6. From World War II to Montgomery

Note: This class must be moved from its usual Monday slot. We will determine another day and time for this session no later than January 23.

Lilian Smith, *Killers of the Dream*, 159-250

John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day*, 345-398 *

J. Mills Thornton III, "Challenge and Response in the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56," *Alabama Review*, 1980, 278-305 *

Richard Cuoto, "Narrative, Free Space, and Political Leadership in Social Movements," *Journal of Politics*, 1993, 57-79 (to be distributed via email)

In class film: *Eyes on the Prize* (20 minute excerpt).

Guest speaker (final hour of class): Dr. Richard Cuoto, Professor of Leadership Studies, Antioch University and founding faculty member of the Jepson School

February 13. Ella Baker and "Group-Centered Leadership"

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, 1-13; 170-377 (required); 64-169 (recommended)

In-class film: *Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker* (1981)

February 20. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Philosophy of Nonviolence

Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 231-255 *

M.L. King, Jr. "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" in *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* 35-42 *

M.L. King, Jr. "Letter From Birmingham Jail" in *Testament of Hope*, 289-302 *

M.L. King, Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community* in *Testament of Hope*, 595-617; 626-633 *

Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965*, 21-169*

Recommended but not required: Taylor Branch, James McGregor Burns Lecture (Jepson School, November 2005)

In class film: *Eyes on the Prize*, Episode 4

February 27. John Lewis and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Civil Rights, White Activists, and the New Left

Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, 9-129; 175-190, 298-306 *

John Lewis, *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*, 146-172 *

Tom Hayden, *The Port Huron Statement*, 45-90, 109-116, 135-169

In Class Film, *Eyes on the Prize*, Episode 3

March 6—Spring Break

III. Labor, Community Organizing, and Economic Justice Movements

March 13. The Rise and Fall of Labor in America

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 1-177

Rick Fantasia & Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, 19-33

Jane Slaughter, ed. *The Troublemaker's Handbook*, 1-31, 108-126

Cesar Chavez, *The Words of Cesar Chavez*, 65-72.*

In class film: *Harlan County, U.S.A.*

March 20. The Contemporary Labor Movement

Rick Fantasia & Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, 63-175

Slaughter, *The Troublemaker's Guide*, 140-193; 208-243

In class film: *Wal-Mart, The Movie*

March 27. Community Organizing: The Alinsky Tradition and the Industrial Areas Foundation

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, 1-23, 48-97 *

Mark Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Organizing to Revitalize American Democracy*, 15-39, 98-238

In class film: *The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky and His Legacy*

April 3. The Community-Based Economics Movement

Thad Williamson, David Imbroscio, and Gar Alperovitz, *Making a Place for Community* (Introduction, Parts II and III, Conclusion) 1-21, 103-262, 310-322.

James DeFillipis, *Unmaking Goliath*, 61-86 *

In class film: *The Take (Worker takeovers of factories in Argentina)*

IV. The Conservative Movement, 1960-2005

April 10. Conservative Intellectuals and the Origins of the Modern Conservative Movement

Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, 9-14, 31-37, 68-75 *
William F. Buckley, *Up From Liberalism*, 187-229 *
E. J. Dionne, *Why Americans Hate Politics*, 147-169*
Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern Conservatism*, 124-221*

In class film: clips from “Firing Line,” with William F. Buckley interviewing Jesse Jackson (1971) and members of the Young Americans for Freedom (1977)

April 17. Conservative Activism

Donald Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 1-36, 109-162, 183-304
Ralph Reed, *Active Faith*, 254-281 *

In class films: “Radical Feminism: What Feminism Is and Why It Is Destructive” (Documentary produced by Schlafly); “On the Wings of an Eagle” (Official Eagle Forum biography of Schlafly)

April 24. Conservatism in Power

Michael J. Graetz and Ian Shapiro, *Death By a Thousand Cuts: The Fight Over Taxing Inherited Wealth* (entire book)

Film: *Karl Rove: The Architect* (2005 PBS special)

Final Paper due Friday May 5 at 5 p.m. in my mailbox at the Jepson School.