

**SOSC 3530 Social Movements and Contentious Politics**  
(Syllabus)

Instructor:  
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Office Hours:  
Wed. 3:00 -5:00 pm  
(or by appointment)

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**Course Description**

This course introduces students to basic theories about social movements and collective action. The topics discussed in this course include the occurrence of social protests and social movements, the reasons for individuals' participation in collective action, the role of leadership, movement strategies and tactics, issue framing, and outcomes of social protests. Protest events in Hong Kong, mainland China, and other countries and areas will be used to explain the theories discussed in the course.

After taking this course, students are expected to: (1) understand the basic theories about social movements and collective protests; (2) be able to analyze the dynamics of social protests; and (3) understand the consequences of social protests and their implications for governance and policy making.

**Course Requirements**

1. Class participation and question submission (25%)

Students are expected to attend each class and to participate in class discussion; they are expected to submit one question (more questions are welcome) based on the reading of each week for class discussion. The question should be submitted to the TA at [wwuau@connect.ust.hk](mailto:wwuau@connect.ust.hk) before 10:00 pm on Thursday evening. Question submission starts from the second week.

2. In-class assessment (30%)

Answer 2 out of 3-4 essay questions. This is an in-class open-book assessment in the last lecture of this course.

3. Group projects (research paper): 45%

Students are encouraged to work together to finish a research project on any aspect of social protests. For example, a topic can be about a protest incident, and you can explain and analyze why or how it occurs, how participants are mobilized, why it succeeds or fails, or why roles the leaders or activists play, etc. The group project can be conducted by two students. If anyone who wishes to complete a research project alone, it is allowed. The research project should be around 7-8 pages (a longer one is acceptable), single-

spaced, with the front being 12. The deadline for the paper submission will be announced later. You are welcome to discuss with me about your topics.

### **Lectures**

If a class is cancelled because of a holiday, the lecture scheduled for that class will be postponed to the next class.

Readings with \* are optional.

### **Week 1: Introduction to social movements**

Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-12 (The study of movements).

\*Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 5-19 (The Classical model of social movements examined).

### **Week 2: Individuals and collective action: motivations for participation**

1. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, pp. 1-3.

2. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp. 110-124 (movement networks).

\* Bert Klandermans, et.al, "Identity Processes in Collective Action Participation: Farmers' Identity and Farmers' Protest in the Netherlands and Spain," *Political Psychology*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2002), pp. 235-251 (skipping the technical part if you feel it is difficult, read pp. 235-240).

### **Week 3: Political opportunities and collective action**

Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 76-90.

\* Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp. 165-192 (The political context of social movements).

### **Week 4: Leadership in collective action**

Sharon Erickson Nepstad and Clifford Bon, "When do leaders matter? Hypotheses on leadership dynamics in social movements," *Mobilization*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2015), PP. 1-22; Read, pp. 1-5.

2. Yongshun Cai, *The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong* (a forthcoming manuscript), chapter 5: "Leadership of the Occupy Movement in Hong Kong," pp. 1-21.

### **Week 5: Strategies and Tactics**

1. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp.181-192.
2. Abigail A. Fuller, "What Works? Evidence from Research on Nonviolent Social movements," pp. 1-5.

### **Week 6: Tiananmen: Watching the video**

Craig Calhoun, "Revolution and repression in Tiananmen square," *Society*, 26, no. 6 (1989), pp. 21-38.

\*Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 239-266.

### **Week 7: Issue Framing and cultural resistance**

1. David Snow and Robert Benford, "Ideology, Frame resonance, and participant mobilization," in Bert Klandermans et. al (ed)., *International Social Movement Research* (London: Jai Press, 1988), pp. 197-204.
2. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp. 74-82.

### **Week 8: State Response to protests: the Jasmine Revolution**

Zoltan Barany, "The role of the military," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2011), pp. 28-39.

Peter Shraeder and Hamadi Redissi, "Ben Ali's Fall," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2011), pp. 5-19.

### **Week 9: New social media and social protests**

Philip Howard and Muzammi Hussain, "The Role of Digital Media," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2011), pp. 35-48.

\*Marion G. Müller and Celina Hübner , "How Facebook Facilitated the Jasmine Revolution. Conceptualizing the Functions of Online Social Network Communication," *Journal of Social Media Studies*, no. 1 (2014), pp. 17-33.

\*Clay Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan./Feb. 2011.

### **Week 10: Sustaining social movement (1): The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong**

1. Yongshun Cai, *The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong*, chapter 4: “Determined participants and sustained movement,” pp. 1-26.
2. Nicolas Somma, “The Chilean student movement of 2011-2012: challenging the marketization of education,” *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, vol. 4, no. 2 (November 2012), pp. 296-309.

**Week 11: Sustaining social movement (2): The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong**

Yongshun Cai, *The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong*, chapter 7: “Tactical escalation and its limits,” pp. 1-24.

**Week 12: Consequences of social protests**

Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1999), pp.227-237.

\*Yongshun Cai, *Collective Resistance in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), chapter 8.

**Week 13 In-class Assessment.**