SOSC 3530  Social Movements and Contentious Politics  
(Syllabus)

Instructor: Yongshun Cai  
Office: 2375  
E-mail: socai@ust.hk

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

TA: Wenbing Wu  
wwuau@connect.ust.hk

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 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**


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


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


**Week 4: Leadership in collective action**

Week 5: Strategies and Tactics


Week 6: Tiananmen: Watching the video


Week 7: Issue Framing and cultural resistance


Week 8: State Response to protests: the Jasmine Revolution


Week 9: New social media and social protests


Week 10: Sustaining social movement (I): The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong

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

**Week 12: Consequences of social protests**


**Week 13  In-class Assessment.**