

Insurrection and Revolution: Political Uprisings in Sociological Perspective

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The wave of uprisings that came to be called the “Arab Spring” placed the issue of revolution back into public debate. At the same time, the appearance of massive oppositional movements across the globe in the past years (roughly grouped under the “Occupy” label) has signaled for many that the possibility of broad-scale political transformation even in the “First World” is not obsolete. This seminar delves into what scholars know about why and how revolutions take place, and what happens once a revolutionary government is set in motion. The first half of the course deals with theories seeking to explain the emergence of revolutions, while the second half takes a deeper look into particular case studies (such as the “Arab Spring”) that test the theories discussed.

Course Requirements

Short memos (20%): Seven memos synthesizing the main argument of one of the week’s readings in *one* page (double spaced). You can choose when to turn them in (one at a time). Although individual memos are not graded, as a whole they count for 20% of the grade. Memos should strive for accuracy and clarity in reproducing the readings’ main points.

Mid-term Essay (30%): A 5-page (double spaced) essay comparing and contrasting two sets of readings discussed in the course. The essays should strive for accuracy, nuance, and original thinking. **DUE MARCH 30TH.**

Final Research Paper (40%): A 15-20 page (double spaced) research paper based on an original topic of your choosing that studies an empirical case in light of some of the theoretical material discussed in the course. Essays can be based on primary sources or secondary literature, but must develop a clear original argument supported by concrete evidence. **DUE MAY 13TH.**

Participation (10%): Students should come to meetings having read the assignments and prepared to participate in discussion. You are encouraged – and expected – to raise questions and concerns that arise from the material.

Required Texts

Readings will be made available in digital format via bcourse.

Week 1: Introduction JAN 20TH

Course overview and logistics

Week 2: Definitions JAN 27TH

Arendt, Hannah. 1963. "The Meaning of Revolution" (pp. 21-60) in *On Revolution*. USA: Penguin Books.

Goldstone, Jack. 2003. "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions" in *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*. Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

CAUSES

Week 3: Class Struggle FEB 3RD

Marx, Karl. 1994 [1848]. Selections from "The Communist Manifesto" in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Hackett Publishing Company: USA.

Prezowski, Adam. 1985. "Proletariat into a Class: The Process of Class Formation" in *Capitalism and Social Democracy*. University of Cambridge Press.

Week 4: Class Struggle (continued) FEB 10TH

Lenin, V.I. 1975. Selections from "What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement," "The State and Revolution" in *The Lenin Anthology*. NY: Norton and Company.

Trotsky, Leon. Selections from "The History of the Russian Revolution"

Week 5: Relative Deprivation and Modernization Theory FEB 17TH

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. Introduction and Chpt. 2 in *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. "Political Participation: Modernization and Political Decay (pp. 32-59) and "Revolution and Political Order" (pp. 264-291) in *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Week 6: State-Centered Approaches FEB 24TH

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge University Press: USA. Introduction (pp. 1-33)

Goodwin, Jeff. 1990. "State-centered Approaches to Social Revolutions: Strengths and Limitations of A Theoretical Tradition" (pp. 9-36) in *Theorizing Revolutions: New Approaches From Across Disciplines*. Routledge: USA

Week 7: Resource Mobilization Theory MARCH 2ND

Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Introduction (pp. 1-15) and Chpt. 7 “Revolution and Rebellion”

Week 8: The Role of Culture MARCH 9TH

Sewell, William. 2005. “Historical Events As Transformations Of Structures: Inventing Revolution At The Bastille,” in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformations*. University of Chicago Press: USA.

Foran, John. 1997. “Discourses and Social Forces: The Role of Culture and Cultural Studies in Understanding Revolution” in *Theorizing Revolutions: New Approaches From Across Disciplines*. Routledge: USA

Week 9: Outcomes MARCH 16TH

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge University Press: USA. “What Changed and How: A Focus on State Building” (pp. 161-174)

Dartnion, Robert. 1989. “What Was Revolutionary About the French Revolution?” in *The New York Review of Books*.

Claudín, Fernando. 1977. "Democracy and Dictatorship in Lenin and Kautsky." *New Left Review*. 106: 59-78.

SPRING BREAK

Mid-term due MARCH 30TH

CASE STUDIES MARCH 30TH

Week 10: Peasant Revolutions

Moore, Barrington. 1967. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. Chpt. 9 “The Peasants and the Revolution”

Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in The Modern World*. Cambridge University Press: USA. “What Makes Peasants Revolutionary?” (pp. 213-240)

Week 11: The French Revolution APRIL 6TH

Lefebvre, Georges. 2005 [1947]. *The Coming of the French Revolution*. Princeton University Press: USA. Selections

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge University Press: USA. Selections (pp. 51-67; 118-128; 174-196)

Week 12: Decolonial Struggles APRIL 13TH

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press: N.Y. "Concerning Violence" (pp.35-48; 88-95; 152-157)

The Battle of Algiers. 1966. Film by Gillo Pontecorvo.

Week 13: Arab Spring APRIL 20TH

Gause III, F. Gregory. 2011. "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90. No. 4

Ramadan, Tariq. 2012. *Islam and the Arab Awakening*. Oxford University Press. "Made to order uprisings?" (pp. 6-23)

Prashad, Vijay. 2012. *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*. AK Press. Selections.

Week 14: Is Revolution A Possibility In the U.S.? APRIL 27TH

Anderson, Perry. 1965. "Problems of Socialist Strategy." (Pp. 221-290) in *Towards Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fukuyama, Francis. 1989. "The End of History?" In *The National Interest*, Summer 1989.

Zizek, Slavoj. 2011. Speech at Occupy Wall-Street. Available at: <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/736>

Week 15: Wrap-up

FINAL DUE MAY 13TH!!