SOC 190.6: THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT
SPRING 2013
WEDNESDAYS 10-12, 475 BARROWS

INSTRUCTOR: EMILY BRISSETTE
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Mail box: 410 Barrows
Office hours: Thursdays 10-12, 487 Barrows or by appointment

Coming on the heels of the revolts of the Arab Spring and rebellions against austerity policies in Spain, Wisconsin and elsewhere, the Occupy movement—with its tents, general assemblies, strange hand gestures and human mic—captured the national imagination and spread quickly throughout the US. Despite the claims that the movement had no demands, it put issues of economic inequality and human need on the table. How do we make sense of this movement—where it came from, what it looked like, what it meant, where it went or where it might yet go? How do we think about the tactical questions it raised (what’s effective? what’s legitimate protest?) or the pressure points it revealed? These are questions that both scholars and activists are asking, and that we will explore in this class. The class will be research intensive: because sociological accounts of the movement are only just beginning to emerge, we will be forging our own individual and collective analyses, by collecting archival data (from the Internet) and analyzing it in light of what we know about previous movements. Each week we will look to the existing literature on past social movements for tools to think through different dimensions of the Occupy movement and put these tools into conversation with primary documents from and about the movement.

REQUIRED TEXTS
• Kate Khatib, Margaret Killjoy, and Mike McGuire, editors. 2012. We Are Many: Reflections on Movement Strategy from Occupation to Liberation. Oakland: AK Press.
• Course Reader (denoted by: ®), available from Replica Copy at 2138 Oxford Street (at Center St), Berkeley, (510) 549-9991

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
20% Attendance and Participation
30% Five Memos (Due Mondays by 9pm)
50% Final Project
   5% Statement of Research Topic (Due 2/20)
   10% Literature Review (Due 4/3)
   10% Presentation (Due 4/24 or 5/1)
   25% Final Product (Due 5/10)

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
One of the things that I would suggest (though this is an empirical question we can explore) is that if all social movements require commitment, the Occupy movement required a particularly intensive form of commitment. Because of its openness—because
anyone could be involved in decision-making—belonging to the movement required presence and active participation, usually in the camps or lengthy general assemblies. Those who were present and participating forged critical relationships with one another, generating a sense of solidarity, sharing skills and resources, deepening their sense of capaciousness—and sometimes audacity. This class will not demand of you sleepless nights, long exposure to the cold, or confrontations with the police. But you will need to commit to the class. This means coming to class each week having read and thought about the material; collecting data and sharing your analyses with your classmates as assigned (see below on memos); and participating actively and respectfully in class discussion. We will create space together for everyone to be heard, even and especially dissenting voices, and strive to embrace disagreements as opportunities for further reflection and growth.

MEMOS
You will be collecting and analyzing a bit of data on the Occupy movement over the course of the semester. The memos will give you an opportunity to reflect on what you’re seeing in that data, in part by drawing on what we know about other social movements. There are a total of five memos over the course of the semester. You will submit the first two to me, and I will give you feedback and guidance on how you might sharpen your analysis and push your thinking further. You will then write another three memos (on assigned weeks) which you will offer to your colleagues in the class in the spirit of dialogue and collaboration. Each of you will have examined a small piece of data; we will put these together, and build on them each week, to create a fuller picture than any one of you could manage alone. Please see the attached instructions for due dates and specific details on each memo.

FINAL PROJECT
The final project will ask you to draw on course readings, the data that you and your classmates have collected each week, plus additional library and empirical research. More details will be forthcoming, but you will be encouraged to work with a partner on this project. Everyone will write a literature review (to ensure that you have each had the experience before graduation), but the final project can take the form of either a paper or a short film. During the last two class sessions, you will present your research to the class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WHY OCCUPY?
January 23rd: Course Introduction
*film: “History of an Occupation” Fault Lines, Al Jazeera (in class)*

January 30th: Against Austerity  Memos due: Mon 1/28
- Francis Fox Piven (2012) “Is Occupy Over?” pp.373-379 in *We Are Many*
February 6th: Antecedents

- Ryan Harvey (2012) “Occupy Before and Beyond” pp.123-133 in *We Are Many*

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3FQXYdvHCg&list=PLJzAxNN7QPPcyKqR9V_Sluaovv-9H0pvnz
Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWc2kY60Rji&list=PLJzAxNN7QPPcyKqR9V_Sluaovv-9H0pvnz

February 13th: General Assembly

- Andrew Cornell (2012) “Consensus: What it Is, What it Isn’t, Where it Comes From, and Where it Must Go” pp.163-173 in *We Are Many*

Recommended:

February 20th: Occupation

- (2010) “We Are the Crisis: A Report on the California Occupation Movement” pp.1-6 and “Anti-Capital Projects Q&A” pp.19-20 in *After the Fall: Communiqués from Occupied California* ®
- Joshua Clover (2012) “The Coming Occupation” pp.95-103 in *We Are Many*

**Statement of Research Topic Due**
February 27th: Prefigurative Politics

Group C memo due: Mon 2/25

- Brissette, Occupy syllabus, 4

- David Graeber “OWS’s Anarchist Roots” Al Jazeera, Nov 30, 2011 ®
- Aaron Bady (2011) “The Oakland Commune” SSRC Dispatches ®

TACTICS

March 6th: The Art of Protest

Group A memo due: Mon 3/4

- Michael Premo (2012) “Unlocking the Radical Imagination” pp.315-324 in We Are Many
- Jaime Omar Yassin (2012) “Farmers, Cloud Communities and Issue-Driven Occupations” pp.351-359 in We Are Many

March 13th: Leveraging Disruption

Group B memo due: Mon 3/11


film: “Occupy Wall Street: Surviving the Winter” Al Jazeera (in class)

March 20th: Debating Violence

Group C memo due: Mon 3/18


Recommended:

Brissette, Occupy syllabus, 4

March 27th: Have a Great Spring Break!

SUSTAINING STRUGGLE?

April 3rd: Solidarity and Emotion  
Group A memo due: Mon 4/1


**Literature Review Due**

April 10th: Racialized Divisions  
Group B memo due: Mon 4/8


• Manissa McCleave Maharawal (2012) “So Real it Hurts” pp.174-5 and “Reflections from the People of Color Caucus at Occupy Wall Street” pp.177-183 in We Are Many

• Croatoan (2012) “Who is Oakland?: Anti-Oppression Activism, the Politics of Safety, and State Cooptation” pp.81-87 in We Are Many

• Low End Theory (2012) “Anxious Attachments: Scattered Thoughts on ‘People of Color,’ Class Disavowal, and the Limits of ‘Racism’” ®

April 17th: Repression/Anti-repression  
Group C memo due: Mon 4/15


• Mike King (n.d.) “Disruption is Not Permitted: Negotiated Management as Social Control” unpublished manuscript *will be distributed


April 24th & May 1st: Presentations

(no assigned readings)

Final Projects due: Friday, May 10th.
Please put a hard copy of papers in my box in 410 Barrows by 4:00 pm
Instructions for Memos

You will write a total of 5 memos over the course of the semester, putting a small bit of data which you collect into conversation with the readings for that week. Memos will likely be between 1 and 2 pages single-spaced.

Everyone must write memos 1 and 2. These will be submitted to me by email (ebrisset@berkeley.edu) by 9pm on the Monday before class.

Memo 1: Due Monday January 28th (everyone)
Select 1 Occupy site and use its website to explore what issues activists raise and how that Occupy defines itself. Using that data and the readings for this week, sketch an (initial) answer to the question(s): why Occupy? what is the movement about?

Memo 2: Due Monday February 4th (everyone)
Find 1-2 articles from a news/commentary site discussing the Occupy movement in relation to some other movement (e.g., the Arab Spring, Wisconsin, Indignados in Spain, the global justice movement, or...). Drawing from the readings for this week (and being sure to engage either Tarrow or Katsiaficas), sketch how you see Occupy situated in relation to other movements. Feel free to revisit (and revise as necessary) your initial reflections on what the movement is about. Possible websites to explore include:

Counterpunch: www.counterpunch.org
The Indypendent: http://www.indypendent.org
Jadaliyya: http://www.jadaliyya.com/
Al Jazeera: http://www.aljazeera.com/
The Guardian: www.guardian.co.uk/

Memos 3-5: Topics and Due Dates as noted
For these memos, you will be divided into 3 groups (A, B, and C) and write a memo only during the weeks noted on the syllabus for your group. These three memos will be submitted to the class as a whole, so that we can dialogue across these individual efforts and build collaboratively upon them. Please see the table below for due dates.

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Group A</th>
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<td>Defining Characteristics</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
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<td>Tactics</td>
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<td>Movement Sustenance</td>
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You will have much more latitude with these memos, selecting your own data sources from across the wide range of archival materials available online (e.g., news articles; fliers and posters; hours of livestream, YouTube, and other videos; facebook pages; blog posts; official statements from Occupy sites; GA minutes and resolutions). As with the earlier memos, you should make an effort to analyze your data by relating it to course readings.