

Soc 190.6: THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

SPRING 2013

WEDNESDAYS 10-12, 475 BARROWS

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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

- Sidney Tarrow (1998) “Political Opportunities and Constraints” pp. 71-90 in *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. ®
- Francis Fox Piven (2012) “Is Occupy Over?” pp.373-379 in *We Are Many*

- Immanuel Wallerstein (2012) “Upsurge in Movements around the Globe” pp.105-112 in *We Are Many*
- Mike King. “The Vacancies of Capitalism” *Counterpunch*, November 30, 2011. ®

February 6th: Antecedents

Memos due: Mon 2/4

- Sidney Tarrow (1998) “Cycles of Contention” pp.141-160 in *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. ®
- George Katsiaficas and David Zlutnick “The Eros Effect and the Arab Uprisings” *ZNet*, April 22, 2011. ®
- Aditya Nigam (2012) “The Arab Upsurge and the ‘Viral’ Revolutions of our Times” *Interface* 4(1): 165-177 ®
- Ryan Harvey (2012) “Occupy Before and Beyond” pp.123-133 in *We Are Many*

film: “Egypt Burning” *Al Jazeera* (1: “Egypt Burning” & 3: “The Fall of Mubarak”)

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3FQXYdyHCg&list=PLJzAxNN7QPPcyKqR9V_Sluovv-9h0pvnz

Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWc2kY60Rj4&list=PLJzAxNN7QPPcyKqR9V_Sluovv-9h0pvnz

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

February 13th: General Assembly

Group A memo due: Mon 2/11

- Francesca Polletta (2002) “A Band of Brothers Standing in a Circle of Trust: Southern Civil Rights Organizing, 1961-64” pp.55-87 and “Participatory Democracy in the New Left, 1960-67” pp.120-148 in *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ®
- 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*
- Chris Garces (2012) “People’s Mic and ‘Leaderful’ Charisma” in Hot Spots: Occupy, Anthropology, and the 2011 Global Uprisings. *Cultural Anthropology* [online] <http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/628>

Recommended:

- Marianne Maeckelbergh (2012) “Horizontal Democracy Now: From Alterglobalization to Occupation” *Interface* 4(1): 207-234.

February 20th: Occupation

Group B memo due: Mon 2/18

- Puneet Dhaliwal (2012) “Public Squares and Resistance: The Politics of Space in the *Indignados* Movement” *Interface* 4(1): 251-273. ®
- (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**

- Wini Breines (1982) “Politics as Community” pp.46-66 in *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*. New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press. ®
- Janferie Stone (2012) “Occupied Alcatraz: Native American Community and Activism” pp.81-91 in *West of Eden: Communes and Utopia in Northern California*, edited by Iain Boal, Janferie Stone, Michael Watts, & Cal Winslow. Oakland: PM Press. ®
- Marianne Maeckelbergh (2011) “Doing is Believing: Prefiguration as Strategic Practice in the Alterglobalization Movement” *Social Movement Studies* 10(1): 1-20. ®
- 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**

- James Jasper (1997) “Tastes in Tactics” pp.229-250 in *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ®
- David Graeber (2007) “On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets” pp.375-417 in *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. Oakland: AK Press. ®
- Michael Premo (2012) “Unlocking the Radical Imagination” pp.315-324 in *We Are Many*
- Janelle Treibitz (2012) “The Art of Cultural Resistance” pp.325-335 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**

- Francis Fox Piven & Richard Cloward (1977) “The Structuring of Protest” pp.1-37 in *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. New York: Pantheon. ®
- Frances Fox Piven (2006) “The Nature of Disruptive Power” pp.19-35 in *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. ®
- Kate Griffiths-Dingani (2012) “May Day, Precarity, Affective Labor, and the General Strike” in *Hot Spots: Occupy, Anthropology, and the 2011 Global Uprisings. Cultural Anthropology* [online] <http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/650>

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

March 20th: Debating Violence**Group C memo due: Mon 3/18**

- Janet Conway (2003) “Civil Resistance and the ‘Diversity of Tactics’ in the Anti-Globalization Movement: Problems of Violence, Silence, and Solidarity in Activist Politics” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 41(2&3): 505-530. ®
- AK Thompson (2010) “You Can’t Do Gender in a Riot” pp.107-128 in *Black Bloc, White Riot*. Oakland: AK Press. ®
- Chris Hedges “The Cancer in Occupy” *Truthdig*, February 6, 2012. ®
- David Graeber “Concerning the Violent Peace-Police: An Open Letter to Chris Hedges” *n+1*, February 9, 2012. ®

Recommended:

- Adam Hefty “After the Oakland General Strike, Tactical Debates Emerge: Let 99 Flowers Blossom” *Solidarity*, Nov 9, 2011. <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/3456>

March 27th: Have a Great Spring Break!

SUSTAINING STRUGGLE?

April 3rd: Solidarity and Emotion

Group A memo due: Mon 4/1

- Deborah Gould (2009) “The Pleasures and Intensities of Activism; or, Making a Place for Yourself in the Universe” pp.181-212 and “Solidarity and its Fracturing” pp.336-349, 378-394 in *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ®
- Marina Sitrin (2012) “Occupy Trust: The Role of Emotion in the New Movements” in *Hot Spots: Occupy, Anthropology, and the 2011 Global Uprisings*. *Cultural Anthropology* [online] <http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/652>

****Literature Review Due****

April 10th: Racialized Divisions

Group B memo due: Mon 4/8

- Francesca Polletta (2002) “Letting Which People Decide What? SNCC’s Crisis of Democracy, 1964-65” pp. 88-119 in *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ®
- 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

- AK Thompson (2010) “Semiotic Street Fights” pp.31-58 in *Black Bloc, White Riot*. Oakland: AK Press. ®
- Mike King (n.d.) “Disruption is Not Permitted: Negotiated Management as Social Control” unpublished manuscript *will be distributed
- George Ciccariello-Maher (2013) “Counterinsurgency and the Occupy Movement” in *Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency*. Oakland: AK Press. ®
- Occupy Oakland Anti-Repression Committee “Confronting the Many Faces of Repression” Oct 23, 2012. ®

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 (cbrisset@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 Independent: <http://www.independent.org>

Jadaliyya: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/>

Al Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

The Guardian: www.guardian.co.uk/

New York Times coverage:

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/o/occupy_wall_street/index.html

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.

#	Topic	Group A	Group B	Group C
3	<i>Defining Characteristics</i>	Feb13	Feb 20	Feb 27
4	<i>Tactics</i>	March 6	March 13	March 20
5	<i>Movement Sustenance</i>	April 3	April 10	April 17

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.