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 synthetizing 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**


**CAUSES**

**Week 3: Class Struggle FEB 3RD**


**Week 4: Class Struggle (continued) FEB 10TH**


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

**Week 5: Relative Deprivation and Modernization Theory FEB 17TH**


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


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)


SPRING BREAK

Mid-term due MARCH 30TH

CASE STUDIES MARCH 30TH

Week 10: Peasant Revolutions


Week 11: The French Revolution APRIL 6TH


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


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


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


Week 15: Wrap-up

FINAL DUE MAY 13TH!!