

**IDS 2935:  
Religion and Social Movements  
Summer A 2024**

Instructor: Anna Peterson

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Schedule: Lectures, Monday and Wednesday; Discussion sections, Tuesday and Thursday; asynchronous learning on Fridays.

Office Hours: TBA

## **I. DESCRIPTION**

This class analyzes the various roles that religion plays in movements for social change. We will address core questions in the study of social movements – how movements emerge, why people join, how they mobilize resources, what strategies and tactics they employ, and what goals they seek – by examining a range of case studies, including civil rights and anti-racist organizing, abortion, environmental protection, LGBTQ rights, animal rights, and immigration reform, among others. We will pay particular attention to the distinctive ways in which influences into the emergence, ideologies, practices, and outcomes of various movements.

This course takes place during a time of polarization and change in political culture, in the US and beyond. Class readings, activities, and discussions will address these events and help us understand and evaluate them. We will pay particular attention to the role of the media (including social media) in both interpreting social changes and contributing to them. While there will be some emphasis on US-based movements, course materials and lectures will address movements around the world and in various religious traditions.

As a Quest 2 course, this class is not a broad survey but rather a focused examination of the ways that perspectives, methods, and resources from the social and behavioral sciences can help us understand and address real-world issues. It will be organized around a number of guiding questions:

- How and why do people organize collectively to address social problems?
- How do religious ideas, communities, and leaders contribute to social movements?
- How do activists use tools and data from the social and natural sciences to strengthen and understand their work?
- How do activists use social media and other virtual resources in their organizing efforts?

We will explore these questions by reading literature from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including economics, history, political science, psychology, religious studies, and sociology. We will also read primary sources, including documents produced by the movements themselves and oral histories. In addition, we will examine scientific research, survey data, and other resources that movement activists use to understand the problems they are addressing, public attitudes towards these issues, and effective ways to resolve problems. Students will also engage in independent and group research throughout the semester, documenting the ways organizations and congregations are responding to contemporary challenges.

### **Team-based learning**

This class utilizes an approach called team based learning, in which students learn from each other. Students will be put into teams during the first week of class, in discussion sections. Many of your discussion sections and some of the lectures will involve work in your teams. Your capstone project will also involve team based research and a group presentation. For more information about team-based learning, please see [here](#).

### **General Education**

This course meets the general education requirements for Diversity (D) and Social/Behavioral Sciences (S), as well as 2000 words towards the university writing requirement. It also counts as an elective for Religion majors and minors. Please see separate sheet for Quest and General Education goals, objectives, and learning outcomes.

### **Writing Requirement**

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. This course carries 2000 words that count towards the University Writing Requirement. You must minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course. It is possible to fail to meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component. The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written work with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support (when appropriate), style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics, using the writing rubric attached to this syllabus. More specific guidelines for individual assignments will be provided later in the semester.

### **Writing assistance and style guidelines**

I encourage you to seek help from the university's Writing Studio ([www.writing.ufl.edu](http://www.writing.ufl.edu)), which offers support for writing in all fields and can be very helpful both in developing your first drafts and in polishing those drafts.

I recommend the Chicago manual of style (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>) as a guide for writing format and style. However, you may use a different style guide, as long as you check with me first and make sure to use the same format consistently.

## **II. CLASS POLICIES, RULES, AND RESOURCES**

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies, found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Please let me know about any planned absences (for religious holidays, athletic events, or other reasons) as soon as possible. For unplanned absences (due to illness or emergency), please let me know as soon as possible and provide documentation (e.g, doctor's note).

2. *Make-up policy:* I will arrange for a make-up or early in-class exam with sufficient notice. If you have an emergency that requires you to miss an assignment, please contact me as soon as

you are able. If you do not receive an extension from the instructor, assignment will be marked down a half grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Honor Code*: The [honor code](#) applies to this and all courses taken at UF: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines may result in judicial action and sanctions, as specified in the [Student Conduct Code](#).

4. *Accommodation for Disabilities*: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

5. *Counseling and Emergency Resources*: Please let me know if you need support facing challenges that affect your academic performance. There are many resources available for students, and I will be glad to help you get the assistance you need in order to thrive at UF. Some resources include:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.
- e. For security issues, please contact the University Police Department: 392-1111, or 911 for general emergencies.

6. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate

7. *COVID policies*: In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

\* If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl](http://one.ufl) for screening/testing and vaccination opportunities.

\* If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.

\* Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

### III. ASSIGNMENTS, READINGS, AND SCHEDULE

All required readings will be available on our course Canvas site or online. However, I recommend that you purchase Paul Almeida, *Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Mobilization* (California, 2019), which is an excellent introduction to the study of social movements. I have posted the required chapters on Canvas, but I think you will find the rest of the book very helpful if you are able to read it.

#### Required Assignments

1. Active, informed *participation* in class discussions, in both the lecture sections on Mondays and Wednesdays and the discussion sections on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You should complete all assigned readings, podcasts, and/or videos **BEFORE** the relevant lecture or discussion section.
2. *Two short essays* based on the readings (1000 words min each), due Sunday, May 26 (on social movement theories) and Sunday, June 9 (on religion's role in social movements); 20% of total grade each.

#### *Assignments 3 and 4 will be based on your engagement with a specific movement.*

Working in small groups ("learning communities"), students will choose an organization or religious community to study. Each group will develop a research plan, which should include primary research such as analysis of primary documents and social media, interviews, and participant-observation. This research will largely take place outside class, although there will be a few opportunities to study your selected movement during discussion section meetings.

Your learning community's research will support two different assignments, one individual and one collective:

3. *Poster* (group project) about the movement, addressing the origins, strategies, and goals, due by midnight, June 19. 20% of total grade.
4. *Research report* (individual project). Write a report on your experience researching a contemporary movement (about 750-1000 words), due June 21. 20% of total grade.
5. Participation. Your participation grade will be based on punctual attendance and engagement in the class. Not everyone is comfortable speaking up, especially in large lecture halls.

Discussion sections and learning communities/teams will provide numerous opportunities for active engagement even if you do not speak up in the lecture. Points will be deducted for habitual lateness and absences and for failure to engage and pay full attention to the instructor and your peers. Do not look at your phone, tablet, or computer during class unless it is directly relevant to the class.

6. Reading quizzes. There will be occasional unannounced reading quizzes, in lecture and/or discussion sections. 5% of total grade.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **MODULE ONE: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

#### **Week One**

Mon 5/13 Introduction to the class: Why study social movements? Why study religion in social movements?

Tues. 5/14 Discussion sections: Creation of learning communities! And introduce each other!

Creation of learning communities. Please look through some of these sites to learn more about team-based learning:

<https://instructionalmoves.gse.harvard.edu/team-based-learning>  
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/team-based-learning/>

We won't be doing everything suggested on these sites, but they will give you an idea of what TBL looks like.

After the creation of the learning communities/teams, every team will meet and prepare to introduce one other member of the group to the whole class.

Wed. 5/15 Lecture: Introduction to the study of social movements

Read: Paul Almeida, Chapter 1: "Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Action" and Chapter 2: "How to Study Social Movements," in *Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Mobilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

Thurs. 5/16 Discussion sections: Choose your movement!

In your learning community, choose the movement you will study for your final project and other activities.

Fri. 5/17 Asynchronous learning: Why do people join social movements?

Listen:

Kailasah Satyarthi, [“How to Make Peace? Get Angry”](#) (2015)

Malala Yousafzai, [“Activism, Changemakers, and Hope for the Future”](#) (2020)

Xiye Bastida, [“If You Adults Won’t Save the World, We Will.”](#) (2020)

## **Week Two**

Mon. 5/20      Lecture: Social movement theories

Read: Almeida, “Chapter 3: Theories of Social Movements”

Tues. 5/21      Discussion sections: Digital ethnography

In your learning community/team, analyze websites and social media accounts of your selected movement.

Wed. 5/22      Lecture: Discussion sections: How and why people join (and stay in) social movements

Read: James Downton and Paul Wehr, “Persistent Pacifism: How Activist Commitment Is Developed and Sustained.” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (Sep. 1998): 531-550.

Recommended: Almeida, “Chapter 6: Individual Recruitment and Participation,”

Thurs. 5/23      Ideas in social movements

Read: Almeida, Ch. 5: The Framing Process

Discuss in teams: What ideas are most important in your movement? Where do they come from?

Fri. 5/24      Asynchronous learning: Work on essays

Read: [Strunk, \*Elements of Style\*](#)

**Sun 5/26      First paper due at midnight**

## **MODULE TWO: UNDERSTANDING RELIGION’S ROLE IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Mon. 5/27      **Memorial Day, no class**

Tues. 5/28      Discussion sections: How we think about religion in social movements

Read: Gene Burns and Fred Kniss, “Religion and Social Movements,” *The Wiley-Blackwell*

*Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*, ed. David Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam (Blackwell, 2013)

Read: Jack Delehanty, “How We Think about Religion and Why it Matters for Social Movements.” [Mobilizing Ideas blog](#).

Wed. 5/29      Lecture: How religion contributes to social movements

Read: Rhys Williams, “Religion as Political Resource: Culture or Ideology?” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35, no. 4 (Dec. 1996): 368-378.

Thurs. 5/30      Discussion sections: Religion’s role in your movement

Teams will discuss the roles that religion plays in their movement and make a list of at least three ways it contributes and how. Then you will share this with the whole class (discussion section).

Fri. 5/31      Asynchronous learning: Global complexities

Listen:

Karima Bennoune, [“When People of Muslim Faith Challenge Fundamentalism.”](#) (2014)

Ndidi Nwueneli, [“The Role of Faith and Belief in Modern Africa.”](#) (2017)

Do these two talks challenge common stereotypes about religion’s social and political roles? How? Which ones?

Mon. 6/3      Lecture: Religion and animal rights

Read: Charles Peek et al., “Religion and Ideological Support for Social Movements: The Case of Animal Rights.” *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no.3 (Sep. 1997): 429-439.

Rachel L. Austin and Clifton P. Flynn, “Traversing the Gap between Religion and Animal Rights: Framing and Networks as a Conceptual Bridge.” *Journal of Animal Ethics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 2015): 144-158.

Tues. 6/4      Discussion sections: Religion as a source of resources for social movements

Richard Wood, “Faith in Action: Religious Resources for Political Success in Three Congregations.” *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Winter, 1994): 397-417.

Discuss how religion serves as a resource for your team’s movement

Wed. 6/5      Lecture: Framing religion's role in social movements

Thurs. 6/6      Discussion sections: Religious institutions and social movements

Read: Andrea Rottman, "God Loves Them as They Are: How Religion Helped Pass Gay Rights in Wisconsin." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 99, No. 2 (Winter 2015–2016): 2-13.

Fri. 6/7      Asynchronous learning: Work on essays

Reading: Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*

**Sun. 6/9      Second paper due at midnight**

### **MODULE THREE: CASE STUDIES**

Mon. 6/10      Lecture: Anti-abortion activism and religion

Read: Heumann, Silke and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 2015. "When and Why Religious Groups Become Political Players: The Pro-Life Movement in Nicaragua." In *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest*. Ed. James M. Jasper and Jan Willem Duyvendak. Amsterdam University Press, 251-274.

Tues. 6/11      Discussion sections: Indigenous activism

Read:

LaPier, Rosalyn. "Understanding Native American religion is important for resolving the Dakota Access Pipeline crisis." *Intercontinental Cry*, 14 Nov. 2019,  
<https://intercontinentalcry.org/understanding-native-american-religion-is-important-for-resolving-the-dakota-access-pipeline-crisis/>

"Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Takes NODAPL to the United Nations." Indian Law Resource Center, Sept. 20, 2016.  
<https://indianlaw.org/undrip/Standing-Rock-Sioux-Tribe-Takes-NODAPL-to-the-United-Nations>

Campbell, Peter. "Those Are Our Eiffel Towers, Our Pyramids': Why Standing Rock Is about Much More than Oil." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 15 May 2017,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/may/15/those-are-our-eiffel-towers-our-pyramids-why-standing-rock-is-about-much-more-than-oil>.

Wed. 6/12      Lecture: Religion and environmental justice

Read: Amy Hay, "A New Earthly Vision: Religious Community Activism in the Love Canal



Chemical Disaster,” *Environmental History* 14, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 502-526.

Thurs. 6/13 Discussion sections: The equal rights amendment

Mathews, Donald G., "Spiritual Warfare": Cultural Fundamentalism and the Equal Rights Amendment.” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 3, No. 2 (Summer, 1993), pp. 129-154.

Fri. 6/14 Asynchronous learning: Rastafarianism

Kitzinger, Sheila. [“Protest and Mysticism: The Rastafari Cult of Jamaica.”](#) *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1969, pp. 240-262.

Watch:

[Interview with Bob Marley](#)

Bob Marley, ["Redemption Song"](#)

Mon. 6/17 Lecture: The Civil Rights Movement and BLM

Read: Dewey M. Clayton, “Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative Analysis of Two Social Movements in the United States.” *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 49, no. 5 (2018): 448-480.

Hebah Farrag, [“The Spirit in Black Lives Matter: New Spiritual Community in Black Radical Organizing.”](#) *Transition*, no. 125 (2018), pp. 76–88.

Recommended:

Watch: [The Black Church and Black Lives Matter](#)

Listen: [Interview with John Lewis](#)

Tues. 6/18 Discussion sections: Historical connections

In learning communities, discuss how your movement is related to past ones. Identify key similarities and differences. What accounts for them? Are the differences strengths or differences?

Wed. 6/19 No class: Juneteenth holiday

**\*\*Posters due by midnight**

Thurs. 6/20 Discussion sections: Presentations!

Fri. 6/21      Asynchronous learning: Finish research report

**\*Research report due by midnight\***

**RUBRICS AND GRADING SCALE**

See separate sheets.ara