

SOAN 3130 Protest, Resistance, and Collective Action
Winter 2019
University of Guelph, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Dr. L. Kowalchuk

Class Location: TBA

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 to 2:20

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30 to 4:00; appointments possible

Course Content and Objectives

A social movement is “a loose collectivity acting with some degree of organization, temporal continuity, and reliance on non-institutional forms of action to promote or resist change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part.”¹ These “non-institutional” forms of collective action encompass protest as well as other less disruptive ways in which ordinary people collectively pursue or defend their values, well-being, and interests. Stories about one or another type of social movement are ubiquitous in print, broadcast, and internet-based news media, and most people have taken part in, observed, or read about some form of collective action aimed at social, political, economic or other kind of change. Given that movements are so prevalent and have been the drivers of much social transformation, why do most people understand so little about them, starting with the very term itself? This course addresses this deficit in understanding and analysis.

One of the aims of the course is to give students a good foundation in the main theoretical perspectives that scholars have employed to understand social movements. The course will consider the usefulness of these theories in relation to examine several different types of social movements including those that resist oppression rooted in race/ethnicity, gender, and other subordinated identity categories; the environment; and political democracy. This means we will be looking at movements for climate justice including the resurgent indigenous movement in North America, the movement to halt climate change, Black Lives Matter, LGBT activism, and multi-sectoral movements of resistance against authoritarian projects. There will be considerable international focus in our course readings, lectures and discussion, but Canada and North America will feature prominently.

Required Readings

- ❖ Staggenborg, Suzanne, and Howard Ramos. 2015. *Social Movements* 3rd edition. Oxford University Press.
- ❖ D’Arcy, Stephen. 2013. *Languages of the Unheard: Why Militant Protest is Good for Democracy*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- ❖ A set of readings (journal articles and book chapters) available online via ARES.

¹ McAdam, Doug and David A. Snow. 2010. *Readings on Social Movements: Origins, Dynamics, and Outcomes*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 1.

Evaluation scheme

Quizzes on readings	20%
Mid-term exam	25%
Research assignment (annotated bibliography + concept map)	30%
<u>Final take-home exam</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%