

Youth, activism, and social movements

[Course number]

[Semester] [Year]

Jennifer Earl¹, Thomas V. Maher², Thomas Elliott³

¹University of Arizona

²Purdue University

³GitHub

Correspondence

Jennifer Earl, University of Arizona, USA.

Email: jenniferearl@email.arizona.edu

"It is quite possible that protest would not happen without protest songs, but that is one of the main reasons people write them, and that fact shapes what is written." - Roger Gould

Description: There has been considerable discussion about the level of youth civic and political engagement. Scholars have spent the last two decades debating how much youth engage, how they engage, and how that has changed. This has led to a disparate field, with scholars from youth studies, political communications, political sociology, and social movements all touching on aspects of youth political engagement but rarely intersecting. In this class we will highlight how these areas of work overlap, particularly the connections between youth activism and non-traditional political participation. Understanding the state of youth activism, and the factors that encourage youth participation is particularly important because, as we will discuss throughout the semester, youth have played a crucial role in many of the most effective social movements going back to the 1960s, and the youth of today will shape what politics looks like for the next generation. The course is divided into three sections, an introduction to youth political participation writ large, a discussion of youth activism on campus and why campuses (and youth) are wellsprings of contentiousness, and, finally, using the groundwork established in the first two-thirds of the course, we will explore how youth are changing the content and shape of political engagement today with each week focusing on a specific area.

Course Objectives: The goal of this course is to help you develop a deeper understanding of how young people participate in politics and social movements, as well as how social movements operate more broadly. Even if you are not interested in politics, you should walk away from this class with a deeper understanding of the challenges that youth interested politics face, as well as how youth are getting involved in new ways. In addition to a deeper understanding of the material, this course is also designed to help you develop and practice a broader set of critical thinking, data management and analysis, and professional writing skills.



Required Materials:

Books:

Dalton, Russell. 2013. *The Good Citizen; How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*. 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McAdam, Douglas. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press

Jenkins, Henry, Sangita Shresthova, Liana Gamber-Thompson, Neta Kligler-Vilenchik, and Arely Zimmerman. 2016. *By Any Media Necessary; the New Youth Activism*. New York: NYU Press.

Additional Readings:

There will be readings that will be available through the course website.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Participation & Discussion:	15%	Class Presentation:	5%
Case, Methods, & Theory Proposals: (5% each)		Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Paper:	25%	Final Exam:	<u>20%</u>
			100%

****Although I don't anticipate doing so, this syllabus is subject to change and you are responsible for being aware of the changes and responding to them accordingly****

Final Letter Grade:

A+	97-100%	B+	87-90%	C+	77-80%	D+	67-70%	F	0-60
A	94-97	B	84-87	C	74-77	D	64-67		
A-	90-94	B-	80-84	C-	70-74	D-	60-64		

Participation

Participation & Discussion:

A significant portion of activity in this class will be in-class discussion and participation. You will be expected to be a regular participant in class discussion. You will also be expected to complete small tasks and exercises outside of class (taking surveys, collecting data from a website, looking up information). A portion of your grade will be a product of your ability to complete these tasks, and to contribute to a fruitful and productive classroom environment. Some of these will be done outside of class, while others will require class attendance.

Research Paper

The lion's share of the work in this course will center on a 12-15 page research paper about a youth-oriented social movement (e.g., a movement on a college or high school campus, an organization that reaches out to recruit young participants, or an organization that is working on youth-centered issues). The paper will be based on a specific case selected by the student(s) (i.e., a specific movement organization, a group of organizations, or a specific protest event), original data collection on said case, and an application of course readings and secondary research.



Group Option: If you chose to do so, you may work in groups of up to three students on this paper. If you choose to work in a group, you will submit a single co-authored paper at the end of the semester, as well as an evaluation/grade for your group partner(s) that will be worth 15% of your final grade. As I describe below, there are several aspects of the paper writing process where you will be submitting individual work as well.

Case, Methods, & Theory Proposals

In order to facilitate writing excellent papers, I have broken the writing process up into several stages. See the section below on paper submissions for rules and instructions.

1. **Step 1: Select a case.** You will submit a 2-3 page paper identifying and describing your cases, and discussing why it is a transnational movement (Due January 26th). *If you are working in a group*, your paper should include a short paragraph that identifies the group members and describes how you plan to divide the work.
2. **Step 2: Selecting data and methods.** You will submit a 2-3 page paper that restates your case, poses a research question, identifies TWO sources of data that will help you answer your question, identifies the methods you will use, and how you will analyze your data (Due February 16th).
3. **Step 3: Theory proposal.** After the midterm, you will submit a 2-3 page **theory proposal** that restates your case, and provides an annotated bibliography for the theory articles you will use (March 23rd).

Research Presentation:

The final two weeks of class will be devoted to research presentations. You will be expected to give a 5-6 minute presentation on your research question and findings, and answer questions. Your grade will be based on a combination of peer and instructor evaluation. You will submit an extended abstract the Friday prior to your presentation (April 13th) that identifies your case, data, methods, findings, and theoretical argument (300-500 words) that will be a part of your final paper grade.

Final Paper:

You will submit a final paper on last day of the semester (April 27th). Your paper will be professionally written with an introduction, literature review, methods/case selection, analysis, and conclusion section. You will also include a work cited page in your preferred citation format (MLA/APA/ASA/etc.). All rules and instructions outlined in the paper submissions section below apply.

Exams

There will be two exams administered to test your understanding of the fundamental ideas, concepts, and theories discussed in this course and your ability to apply them. Each exam will cover material from that specific section of the course (i.e. the exams will *not* be cumulative), however, we will continue to reference and build on previous information in class as the semester progresses. Examinations will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. You will not be permitted to use any materials during the exam. I will distribute a study guide for the exam at least one week before the exam day. **Make up exams will only be given in the case of an extreme emergency and you must contact me or the sociology main office PRIOR to the scheduled exam. Appropriate documentation must be provided.**



On Paper Submissions

All papers will be submitted electronically through Blackboard's dropbox. Assignments are accepted when they have been fully uploaded to Blackboard (i.e. you should be able to click on the assignment and open it from Blackboard). Assignments will be due at 5pm the day assigned on the syllabus with the exception of the final paper which will be due at 11:59pm on April 25th. Late papers will be assessed a 10% deduction for each 24 hour period that they are late starting at the time they are due. If your paper is not properly submitted to Blackboard you will receive one reminder email with a 24 hour window to resubmit the paper before the paper will be treated as incomplete. **Paper extensions are only granted in the case of emergency, and appropriate documentation must be provided.**

On Class Attendance & Borderline Grades

Class attendance is a vital part of this course. In addition to covering subject matter that is not in the book, repeated exposure to course material will offer opportunities to think through complex concepts, identify examples, and be exposed to the concepts in a variety of ways will help you learn the material in a way that is broadly relevant for understanding the social world. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that regular course attendance is correlated with positive performance, and I strongly encourage you to attend class every day. However, you are adults, and so attendance is not a mandatory part of the course. I will take attendance (a sign-up sheet will be distributed at the beginning of every class (note, it is your responsibility to make sure your name is on the sign in sheet, no exceptions)). As a reward for students who attend class on a consistent basis, students who miss two or fewer days of class and are within .50% of a higher grade will be considered for a grade bump. If you miss more than 2 classes, you will receive the grade that you earned. If a serious situation arises that affects your attendance, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible. Finally, I do not distribute my notes or PowerPoint slides for any reason. If you miss a class or miss a section of the notes, you must get the information from one of your classmates.

My Expectations for you: I expect that you will:

1. Take responsibility for your performance in the course.
 - a. Your grade in this class is a direct result of your performance in the class. It is your responsibility to do the readings, attend class, and ask questions when you need clarification.
 - b. You will write professionally (i.e., proof-reading, engaging course material, citing sources, etc.).
 - c. You will inform me of issues and potential conflicts BEFORE they become a problem.
2. Respect your fellow classmates, and their efforts to learn.
 - a. Arrive to class on time, prepared to discuss the material for the day, and ready to devote your attention to the course for the entire class period.
 - b. Respect your fellow classmates and the classroom learning environment. Disruptive behavior (including intolerant, hateful, or disrespectful language intended to hurt or anger) will not be tolerated, and you will be dismissed from class for it.



What you can expect from me:

- 1. I will be organized and prepared for every class.
- 2. I will be clear, fair, and transparent.
 - a. I will be clear about my expectations for each assignment, and what you need to do in order to succeed in the course.
 - b. I will grade as fairly and transparently as possible.
- 3. I will be readily available (within reason) to answer any questions you have about the course.

Notes on Technology: I use Blackboard and the class list for course announcements and to send out readings, assignments, and notes, and I expect you to check your email on a semi-consistent basis this for this class. If you send me an email, I will respond within 24 business hours, but I do not guarantee that I will respond outside of business hours or during the weekend. Finally, I withhold the right to ask a student to leave class if their use of technology is in any way distracting to your classmates, or to me.

Notes on Resources: I encourage you to take advantage of as many resources that you have available to you as possible as this class progresses. I hold office hours for one hour before each class to answer questions, elaborate on concepts, or help with assignments. The ability to talk through concerns and concepts is often more beneficial than attempting to flesh out ideas and concepts through email. Finally, you should also get to know your classmates. By talking to them and developing friendships, you have someone to study with, share notes with, and clarify assignments. For this reason, I suggest you get the names and contact information of at least two of your student colleagues in this class.

	Name	Email	Phone #, Instagram, etc....
1			
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On Academic Misconduct¹:

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

¹ For further information on academic misconduct, please visit the university website at: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>



Course Schedule & Readings

All Course readings are posted to Blackboard.

Week 1: Introduction & Overview

Definitions, Problems & Issues: What is youth activism and why should we care?

-*The Good Citizen*

Ch. 1- *Citizenship and the Transformation of Society*

Ch. 2- *The Meaning and Measurement of Citizenship*

-Earl, Jennifer, Thomas V. Maher, and Thomas Elliott. "Youth, activism, and social movements." *Sociology Compass* 11.4 (2017).

Youth Political Participation

Week 2: Concerns about Youth Participation & Realities

Understanding the debate around youth political engagement: the pessimists and the optimists (this week should also include one day devoted to an overview of sociological methods).

-*The Good Citizen*

Ch. 3- *Forming Citizenship Norms*

Ch. 4- *Bowling Alone or Protesting with a Group*

-Gladwell, Malcolm. "Small change." *The New Yorker* 4.2010 (2010): 42-49.

-Earl, Jennifer, and Thomas Elliott. "Kids These Days" (2016).

Week 3: Youth Political Socialization

Outlining how youth "learn" to participate in politics, as well as the assumptions made about youth that impede their participation

Lee, Nam-Jin, Dhavan V. Shah, and Jack M. McLeod. 2013. "Processes of political socialization: A communication mediation approach to youth civic engagement." *Communication Research* 40.5: 669-697.

Gordon, Hava Rachel. 2007. "Allies within and without: How adolescent activists conceptualize ageism and navigate adult power in youth social movements." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 36.6: 631-668.

Taft, Jessica K. 2006. "'I'm Not a Politics Person': Teenage Girls, Oppositional Consciousness, and the Meaning of Politics." *Politics & Gender* 2.3: 329-352.

Week 4: Youth Political Participation

Outlining how youth participate in politics, and the structural impediments to participation (i.e. age, institutional trust, etc.)

-*The Good Citizen*

Ch. 7- *Images of Leviathan*

Ch. 9- *the Two Faces of Citizenship*

Dalton, Russell J. 2011. "Youth and participation beyond elections." *R. Dalton, Engaging Youth in Politics: Debating Democracy's Future* p. 112-131.



Youth Activism

Week 5: A History of Activism

A Broad discussion of the role that youth have played in major political changes and activist movements

-Freedom Summer-

Prologue- In Search of Volunteers

Ch. 1- America on the Eve of Freedom Summer

Morris, Aldon. 1981. "Black southern student sit-in movement: An analysis of internal organization." *American Sociological Review*: 744-767.

Week 6: Why Youth?

Understanding why youth are more likely to participate (drawing heavily on biographical availability and micromobilization theories) and what the implications are for social movements.

-Freedom Summer-

Ch. 2- The Biographical Roots of Activism

Ch. 3- Freedom High: the Summer of '64

Beyerlein, Kraig, and John Hipp. 2006. "A two-stage model for a two-stage process: How biographical availability matters for social movement mobilization." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 11.3: 299-320.

Week 7: Why Campus?

Understanding why campuses are such hotbeds of activism, and what that means for politics and activist organizations

-Freedom Summer-

Ch. 4- Taking Stock: the Immediate Impact of Freedom Summer

Ch. 5- Applying the Lessons of Mississippi

Van Dyke, Nella. 1998. "Hotbeds of activism: Locations of student protest." *Social Problems* 45.2: 205-220.

Munson, Ziad. 2010. "Mobilizing on campus: Conservative movements and today's college students." *Sociological Forum*. 25 (4): 769-786

Week 8: A Social Movement Society

Understanding how these aspects of youth activism fit within a broader trend towards more social movement activity overall.

-Freedom Summer-

Ch. 6- The Morning After: The Seventies and Beyond

Epilogue- Let it Shine

Meyer, David S., and Sidney Tarrow. 1998. "A movement society: Contentious politics for a new century." *The Social Movement Society: Contentious politics for a new century*: 1-28.

Caren, Neal, Raj Andrew Ghoshal, and Vanesa Ribas. 2011. "A social movement generation: Cohort and period trends in protest attendance and petition signing." *American Sociological Review* 76.1: 125-151.



Charting the Future of Political Engagement

Week 9: How Youth Are Changing Politics I (Tactics)

Our conceptualization of social movements and political activism have been shaped by the organizations and tactics of the 1960s, but youth are drawing on their own experiences to develop new organizational forms and tactics that expand movements' reach while upending who can participate and what participation looks like.

-By Any Media Necessary

Ch. 1- Youth Voice, Media, and Political Engagement: Introducing Core Concepts

Ch. 2- Watch 30 Minute Video on Internet, Become Social Activist" Kony 2012,

Invisible Children, and the Paradoxes of Participatory Politics

Milkman, Ruth. 2017. "A New Political Generation: Millennials and the Post-2008 Wave of Protest." *American Sociological Review* 82.1: 1-31.

Crossley, Alison Dahl. 2015. "Facebook feminism: social media, blogs, and new technologies of contemporary us feminism." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 20.2: 253-268.

Week 10: How Youth Are Changing Politics II (Redefining the Political)

Instead of waiting for youth to develop an interest in politics and seek out politically focused organizations, many youth are also developing an interest in politics through organizations that are proverbially meeting them where they are at: in the books, movies, music, and stories created by popular culture; disrupting the origins of political activism and what constitutes the political in the process

-By Any Media Necessary

Ch. 3- "Decreasing World Suck"- Harnessing Popular Culture for Fan Activism

Ch. 5- DREAMing Citizenship- Undocumented Youth, Coming Out, and Pathways to Participation

Earl, Jennifer, and Katrina Kimport. 2009. "Movement societies and digital protest: Fan activism and other nonpolitical protest online." *Sociological Theory* 27.3: 220-243.

Week 11: How Youth Are Changing Politics III (The Personal is Political)

Youth have also actively blurred the line between cultural and political contention by focusing on the intersection between politics and identity. While youth's focus on these issues has been treated as new by the media, this section will connect it to the long standing feminist notion of "the personal is political."

-By Any Media Necessary

Ch. 6- Bypassing the Ballot Box: How Libertarian Youth are Reimagining the Political

Ch. 7- It's Called Giving a Shit!: What Counts as "Politics"?

Hanisch, Carol. 1969. "The personal is political." *Radical feminism: A documentary reader* p. 113-16.

(<http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>)



Week 12: How Youth Are Changing Politics IV (Bringing the Economy Back In)

While bread and butter issues have always motivated political action, the 2007 Financial Collapse and mounting student debt have disrupted students' lives, and, in turn, shaped their motives for political engagement as well.

Gaby, Sarah, and Neal Caren. 2016. "The Rise of Inequality: How Social Movements Shape Discursive Fields." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 21.4: 413-429.

Milkman, Ruth. 2014. "Millennial movements: Occupy wall street and the dreamers." *Dissent* 61.3: 55-59.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2011. "Why Occupy Wall Street is not the tea party of the left." *Foreign Affairs*.

Week 13: How Youth Are Changing Politics V (Intersectionality)

Finally, youth have built on the work of previous generations by drawing on more intersectional thinking, simultaneously creating more inclusive organizations and new challenges for discussing activist identities.

Velasquez, Alcides, and Robert LaRose. 2015. "Youth collective activism through social media: The role of collective efficacy." *New Media & Society* 17.6: 899-918.

Terriquez, Veronica. 2015. "Intersectional mobilization, social movement spillover, and queer youth leadership in the immigrant rights movement." *Social Problems* 62.3: 343-362.

Elliott, Thomas, Jennifer Earl, and Thomas V. Maher. 2017. "Recruiting Inclusiveness: Intersectionality, Social Movements, and Youth Online." *Research on Social Movements, Conflict, and Change*. P. 279-311.