



**IDS 2935:
Religion and Social Movements
Summer A 2023**

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 explores the role of religion 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, environmental protection, LGBTQ rights, animal rights, immigration reform, and gender justice. We will pay particular attention to the distinctive ways in which religion enters into the formation, identity, practices, and outcomes of various movements.

This course is taking place during a time of radical changes in social movements and political culture. Class readings, activities, and discussions will address these events and help us analyze 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. We will explore, in particular, the ways that movements have adjusted to the COVID-19 pandemic by moving many activities online.

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 faith-based movements contribute to the solution of social problems?
- How do social movement activists use tools and data from the social and natural sciences to strengthen and understand their work?
- How do social movements use social media and other virtual resources in their organizing efforts?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected religious communities and social movements, both in the issues they address and in the ways they address them?

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.

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.

I encourage you to seek help from the university's Writing Studio (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. Please read and follow the [Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#), produced by the UF Center for Teaching Excellence. This is helpful not only for online courses but for in person classes as well!

3. *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.

4. *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](#).

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

8. *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.uf 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

Readings

All required readings will be available on our course Canvas site or online.

If possible, 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 28 (on social movement theories) and Sunday, June 11 (on religion's role in social movements); 30% of total grade each.

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

Working in small groups, students will choose an organization or religious community to study. We will select movements to study in discussion sections on May XX. You will conduct primary research to the extent possible, including analysis of primary documents and social media, interviews, and participant-observation to the extent possible given the requirements of social distancing. Your research will support several assignments, both individual and collective:

3. *Poster* (group project) about the movement, addressing the origins, strategies, and goals, due by midnight, June 21. 15% of total grade.
4. *Research report* (individual project). Write a report on your experience researching a contemporary movement (about 750-1000 words), due June 23. 25% of total grade.

SCHEDULE

MODULE ONE: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Week One

- Mon. 5/15 Introduction to the class: Why study social movements? Why study religion in social movements?
- Tues. 5/16 Discussion sections:
Getting to know each other
- Wed. 5/17 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. 5/18 Discussion sections
In small groups, make a list of all the contemporary social movements you can (collectively) think of.
- Fri. 5/19 Asynchronous learning:
Read: Gunder Frank and Fuentes, “Nine Theses on Social Movements.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, No. 35 (Aug. 29, 1987): 1503-1507; 1509-1510
Write: Using “Nine Theses” and the other readings and lectures, categorize the movements your group listed yesterday. Think about terms from the readings, e.g. goals, impact, composition, ideology, membership, tactics.

Week Two

- Mon. 5/22 Lecture: Social movement theories
Read: Almeida, “Chapter 3: Theories of Social Movements” and “Ch. 5: The Framing Process”
- Tues. 5/23 Discussion sections
What methods and theories are most helpful for studying social movements? How do methods and theories account for religion – or not? What is a theory supposed to do, anyway?
- Wed. 5/24 Lecture: Activist commitment
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. 5/25 Discussion sections
Listen: Kailasah Satyarthi, ["How to Make Peace? Get Angry"](#)

Fri. 5/26 Asynchronous learning: Work on essays
Read: [Strunk, *Elements of Style*](#)

Sun 5/28 First paper due at midnight

MODULE TWO: UNDERSTANDING RELIGION'S ROLE IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Mon. 5/29 **Memorial Day, no class**

Tues. 5/30 Discussion sections
Read: Jack Delehanty, "How We Think about Religion and Why it Matters for Social Movements."
[Mobilizing Ideas blog.](#)

Wed. 5/31 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. 6/1 Discussion sections:
List all the relationships of religion to social change, with examples.

Fri. 6/2 Asynchronous learning:
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)
Listen: ["Activism and Belief,"](#) with Rosemary Hancock

Mon. 6/5 Lecture: Religion and social movement ideologies
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. 6/6 Discussion sections: Select topics and groups for final projects
- Wed. 6/7 Lecture: Religious institutions and social movement organizing
 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.
- Thurs. 6/8 Discussion sections
 Read: ["All We Want is Equality': Religious Exemptions and Discrimination against LGBT People in the United States](#)
 Listen: ["The History of Pitting LGBTQ+ Rights Versus Religious Freedom"](#)
- Fri. 6/9 Asynchronous learning: Work on essays
 Reading: Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*
- Sun. 6/11 Second paper due at midnight**

MODULE THREE: CASE STUDIES

- Mon. 6/12 Lecture: Congregation-based Organizing
 Read: Richard Wood, "Faith in Action: Religious Resources for Political Success in Three Congregations." *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Winter, 1994): 397-417.
- Tues. 6/13 Discussion sections:
 What issues have people in your local community (Gainesville or elsewhere) organized around? How have they done so, and what has been the impact? What has been the role of religious communities in these efforts?
 Read: Dennis Jacobsen, *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing* (Fortress Press, 2001), Ch. 3-4.
- Wed. 6/14 Lecture: Religion and Environmental movements
 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.
- Darren E. Sherkat and Christopher G. Ellison, "Structuring the Religion-Environment Connection: Identifying Religious Influences on Environmental

Concern and Activism.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46, No. 1 (March 2007): 71-85.

- Thurs. 6/15 Discussion sections:
Watch: [The Accidental Environmentalist](#)
- Fri. 6/16 Asynchronous learning:
Read: Saul Alinsky, [“13 Rules for Organizing”](#)
Watch: Interview with Saul Alinsky, [“I’d Organize Hell”](#)
- Mon. 6/19 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.
- Tues. 6/20 Discussion sections
Watch: [The Black Church and Black Lives Matter](#)
Listen: [Interview with John Lewis](#)
- Wed. 6/21 Lecture: Religion and Black Lives Matter
Read: Erica Lizza, [“Race, Religion, and Black Lives Matter.”](#) *Berkley Center* (April 23, 2018).

Vincent Lloyd, et al. [“Religion, Secularism, and Black Lives Matter.”](#) *The Immanent Frame* (Sept. 22, 2016).

Alejandra Molina, [“BLM is a ‘Spiritual Movement,’ Says Co-Founder](#)
Patrisse Cullors.” *Religion News Service* (June 15, 2020).

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

Wed. 6/21 Posters due by midnight

Thurs. 6/22 Discussion sections: Poster sections in class

Fri. 6/23 Asynchronous learning: Finish research report

Research report due by midnight

RUBRICS AND GRADING SCALE

See separate sheets.