

## GIA/UAP 5274 COMPARATIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Professor Wilma A. Dunaway 105 Architecture Annex E-Mail [wdunaway@vt.edu](mailto:wdunaway@vt.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays & Thursdays 2:00 to 3:30

### Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the underlying causes for the emergence, persistence, and/or demise of social movements within diverse societies and cultures.
- Describe the benefits and threats of social movements for societies and for nation-states.
- Explain the relationship between collective identities, class, culture, religion, race/ethnicity, or gender and the emergence of social movements.
- Differentiate between forms of movement activism and government reactions to those diverse tactics.
- Compare the processes and geopolitics of movement activism in rich countries with resistance in poor nations.
- Explain the debates among and the limitations of the dominant theoretical paradigms about social movements.
- Understand the linkages between social movements and bureaucratic, professional NGOs.

### Class Format and Skills Development

- Work on Communication Skills and Professional Presentation of Self:** This class will focus on improving listening and verbal communication skills because "strong presentation of self" and critical verbal skills will be essential in your future job interview process and in your workplace. Every student will be called upon several times every class, and a discussion grade will be recorded for every student every class. Unlike most graduate seminars, we will work directly upon the development of strong professional communication skills. Part of your grade will reflect the degree to which you participate actively in this process and the degree to which you show improvement.

- Written Assignments:** You will write 7 assignments that will be responses to synthesis questions about assigned readings.

### Course Grading Requirements

- 40% Structured Class Discussions
- 60% Written Assignments

### Course Readings

All readings are provided online through this course webpage:

<http://courseware.vt.edu/users/wdunaway/gia5274>

NOTE: When prompted, type in your PID and password.

### Policies about Missed Discussions, Written Assignments and Makeup:

- I expect you to be in every class and to be adequately prepared. A discussion grade will be recorded for every student for every class. An absence will be recorded as an F, and silence when present will be recorded as a D.
- There is NO MAKEUP for missed discussions. To allow for an emergency, I will drop one discussion grade at end of semester.
- Because the study questions are discussed at length in class, written homework will NOT be accepted; ATTE.
- If you fail to submit an assignment, you must make arrangements with the professor for a different makeup assignment.
- Only 1 makeup will be permitted. Special circumstances for absences that will require makeup beyond one missed assignment MUST be documented through the Dean of Students or a university official and approved by the professor.
- If absent, you may submit the written work via e-mail no later than 7:00 PM of the class date, and it will be accepted.

### How will class discussion be graded?

- Every student is expected to participate in class discussions, and your participation will be graded.
- You will be graded on your discussion participation in each half of the class, and you are expected to discuss more than once in each half of the class.
- In this class, silence is worse than a partially wrong answer! If you expect to earn better than a "D" for class discussion, you must be prepared to respond to questions about the reading assignments.
- An "adequate" response is one that reflects that you have done ALL the assigned readings. Your response does not have to be perfectly correct, but you must demonstrate that you are grappling with the ideas discussed in readings.
- You will be graded down for expressing ethnocentrism and for exhibiting an unwillingness to explore ideas that disagree with your own.
- Your own personal opinions will not be adequate; you must demonstrate that you have knowledge of the information and viewpoints reflected in the assignments.
- A question does not count as a full discussion grade.

## Discussion Distraction Rules

The most important communication skills you can learn are (a) listening and (b) focus on the group communication that is occurring. Your goals are (a) to learn new ideas through reading the assignments and (b) to learn to communicate those ideas effectively to others. For that reason, I will lower your discussion grade for violations of the following “distraction rules.”

- You may NOT flip through the assigned readings. You may refer only to your written notes or to a second copy of your written homework.
- Do NOT talk to your neighbor(s). You should be listening to what is being said by me or by your peers, NOT engaging in a side conversation.
- You may NOT use your laptop during discussion. If you are interacting with your laptop, you are NOT communicating or listening effectively. If you need to take notes, keep a few sheets of paper near at hand and take quick rough notes that do not break your concentration on the discussion.
- You may NOT eat during discussion. Eat before class or quickly during the short break.
- Make sure your cellphone does NOT ring and disturb class.

## Why so much emphasis upon communication skills?

1. Employers criticize U.S. college graduates for their weak verbal skills and their cultural ethnocentrism.
2. U.S. college graduates rank themselves weaker in verbal communication and public presentations than any other skills.
3. Americans are weaker at *listening* than persons from many other cultures. We treat communication like another form of competition in which someone must dominate "to win." This is not effective communication, especially in the workplace.
4. The 21st century workplace will require the ability to speak extemporaneously in group situations and, in those situations:
  - to be able to brainstorm with people whose ideas are very different from your own.
  - to construct and to communicate explanations and ideas clearly.
  - to be able to speak professionally and precisely, without slang or rambling.
  - to be able to speak clearly without anger or emotion.
  - to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of opposing viewpoints.
  - and to know how to integrate timid or quiet persons into the communication process.
5. The majority of your college classes will teach you to be good at objective test-taking and writing. Very few college classes focus on building verbal skills.