**Social Change: What is it and How does it Happen?**

The Ohio State University - First Year Seminar

***Course Number:*** TBD (One credit hour, A-E)

***Instructor:*** Leslie MacColman, PhD***,*** [maccolman.2@osu.edu](mailto:maccolman.2@osu.edu)

***Class Meetings:*** Once weekly for 55 minutes. Dates, times, and location TBD

***Course Description:***

Social change is all around us. Sometimes it occurs slowly, almost imperceptibly. At other times, it occurs in rapid bursts, generating conflict, resistance, or even violence. However, we rarely pause to consider what social change actually is, how it occurs, and how we, as individuals, contribute to it. In this seminar, we will examine the social change from the perspective of sociology and related social science disciplines, in order to understand how changing patterns of human interaction can produce profound societal transformations. We will explore the causes, consequences, and dynamics of large-scale social change, in the US and globally. We will learn about the concepts and theories used by researchers to explain social change and apply them to make sense of the world around us. Among other topics, we will examine phenomena like the rise of global capitalism, the growth of minority populations in the US, vaccine skepticism, the civil rights movement, transnational networks, and international development cooperation. Last but not least, we will consider how our academic, professional, and personal pathways can help us become agents of positive social change.

***Course Objectives***

By the end of this course, each student will:

* Be able to think critically and analytically about social change processes, including their causes, consequences, and dynamics
* Understand how sociology and other social science disciplines engage with the topic of social change
* Have a clearer vision of their desired future trajectory, including academic pathways and other avenues for supporting positive social change

***Course Dynamics***

We will meet once weekly for 55 minutes. In most classes, I will begin by giving a short lecture (10-15 minutes) to outline key concepts or discuss a specific case. However, the majority of our class time will be dedicated to discussion. All students are expected to come to class having read the assigned texts. Discussions will be led by a different group of students each week. Others should come to class prepared to ask questions or describe their reactions to the readings

***Required Readings***

Assigned readings consist of book chapters, academic articles, and long-format journalistic pieces that address different aspects of social change. Most of the texts are drawn from sociology, but some come from political science, peace studies, development studies, or related fields. Weekly readings are listed in the class outline. You do not need to purchase any books, since I will make all of the readings available on Carmen.

***Course Requirements***

Your grade will be based on four components, as follows:

* Attendance = 10%
* Participation = 30%
* Guided discussion of class reading = 30%
* Final presentation = 30%

*Attendance:* You are expected to attend all class sessions, unless you experience some kind of emergency. Over the course of the semester, you are allowed one unexcused absence. Further unexcused absences may lead to a reduction in your attendance grade.

*Participation:* You are expected to participate actively in class discussions, verbally or via submission of written questions. In order to encourage close reading and stimulate meaningful discussion, each student should come to class with one question about the assigned reading. Submission of thoughtful questions each week will earn you full participation points.

*Guided Discussion:* Each class will have one or two student moderators. You will be assigned to a specific week at the beginning of the semester based on your interest and availability. As the student moderator, you are expected to prepare by outlining the reading, summarizing key ideas, and developing original discussion questions. During class, you will field questions from your peers about the reading and help guide the conversation by posing discussion questions of your own. I will be available to help student moderators before and during classes.

*Final Presentation:* Each student will work alone or with one other person to research a real-life social change process. I will provide a list of possible topics to choose from, but you are also free to come up with your own (in consultation with me). You will do independent research on the topic you have chosen then analyze it in light of class readings. Instead of a final paper, you will prepare a 10-minute Power Point presentation and a one-page summary sheet to accompany it. The summary sheets will be distributed to everyone in class when you do your final presentation.

***Grading***

On the basis of your cumulative scores on the components described above, I will assign your final course grade using the standard OSU grading scale, as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 93-100 | 90-92 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 70-72 | 67-69 | 60-66 | <60 |
| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | F |

***Regulations and Policies***

**It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct**<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>**.**

**The following statement about disability services** (recommended 16 point font):  
**The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options.  To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services.  After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information:**[slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu)**; 614-292-3307;**[slds.osu.edu](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/)**; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue**.

***Weekly Outline***

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| Week | Topic | Assigned Readings\* |
| 1 | Defining Social Change | TBD |
| 2 | Dimensions of Social Change | Gladwell (2010) – Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted |
| 3 | Economic Processes from the Industrial Revolution to the Present | Reich (2008) – Supercapitalism: The Transformation of Business, Democracy, and Everyday Life, Chapter 2 |
| 4 | Demographic Drivers of Social Change | Camarillo & Bonilla (2001) - Hispanics in a Multicultural Society: A New American Dilemma? |
| 5 | Culture: A Cause or a Consequence | Estep (2017) - Neighborhood political composition and personal belief exemptions from immunization requirements in California Kindergartens, 2000–2015 |
| 6 | Political Contestation and Social Movements | Snow, Soule & Kriesi (2004): Mapping the Terrain – Chapter 1, Blackwell Companion to Social Movements |
| 7 | Social Movements: Successes and Failures | Ehrenberg (2017) - What can we learn from Occupy’s failure? |
| 8 | Civil Resistance vs. Revolutionary Violence | Stephan & Chenoweth (2008) - Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict |
| 9 | International Development Cooperation | Gore (2013) – The New Development Cooperation Landscape: Actors, Approaches, Architecture |
| 10 | Transnational Activism | Della Porta & Tarrow (2005) – Transnational Processes and Social Activism – Chapter 1, Transnational Protest and Global Activism |
| 11 | Social Change in the Digital Age | TBD |
| 12 | Career Choices and Personal Pathways | TBD |
| 13 | Final Presentations (5) | Summary sheet for each presentation |
| 14 | Final Presentations (5) | Summary sheet for each presentation |
| *\*Readings subject to modification prior to the start of the semester* | | |