

Social Conflict and Social Change

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Course Description

Social conflict, whether manifesting itself through violent or non-violent means, occurs as a result of competing visions and agendas among groups with different social and political identities. *Social change* is a concept which can signify the strategies, goals and/or outcomes of socio-political transformative projects. It is important to note that even the struggle *against* change--i.e., to remain "the same" by adhering to time honored traditions or to go back to the way things "used to be"--produces its own kinds of changes and conflicts.

The purpose of this course is to think critically and comparatively about conflict and change from a sociological perspective. The first part of the semester is devoted to analyzing the conceptual frameworks for three particularly significant points of conflict: class, race and nation. We will consider them independently and in relation to one another. The second part of the semester is devoted to analyzing three differing paradigms for conflict and change in socio-political relations: equality, separatism and domination. Finally, we will consider in somewhat greater detail a few select cases in the US and overseas in order to apply a comparative approach to the analysis of conflict and change.

Aside from the topical materials covered in the readings and lectures, this course places a heavy emphasis on writing. The assignments are designed to encourage students to improve their writing skills, and to develop their reading skills and their abilities to provide constructive criticism and salient editorial comments to other students.

Requirements 1) Each student will write two 8-10 page analytical essays, each worth 20 percent of the grade. 2) Each student will write one 15-18 page research paper, worth 30 percent of the grade. In preparing the final version of this paper, students will exchange papers with assigned partners in order to provide one another with constructive criticism and editorial suggestions. 3) Each student will turn in a copy of his/her own written evaluations and editorial suggestions on the original version of the partner's paper, worth 10 percent of the grade. The purpose is to ensure that all students are making substantive and thoughtful contributions within the context of the paper exchange process. 4) Each student will come to class prepared to discuss the readings every week. Participation in class discussions is worth 20 percent of the grade.

Course Schedule

Readings

1 /23-25 Introduction

Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engles Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Tucker.

1/30 - 2/1 Class as Consciousness

Karl Marx, "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Tucker, ed.
Stanley Aronowitz, "The Decline and Rise of the Working-Class Identity" (Chapt.1) and "The White Working Class and the Transformation of American Politics" (Chapt. 6) in *The Politics of Identity*
See Film: *Matewan*

2/6-8 Class in Crisis

William J. Wilson, *the Truly Disadvantaged*

2/13-15 Race: Rights and Wrongs

Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: the Permanence of Racism*
Cornel West, *Race Matters*

2/20-22 Racism and Racialism

Daniel Segal, "The European: Allegories of Racial Purity," *Anthropology Today* 7/5 Oct. 1991)
Lucius Outlaw, "Toward a Critical Theory of Race," in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg
Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness," in Goldberg, ed.
Etienne Balibar, "Paradoxes of Universality," in Goldberg, ed.
"Scapegoating the Black Family: Black Women Speak," special issue of *The Nation*, June 24/31, 1989

2/27-29 Nations and/as Identity

Richard Handler, "Is Identity a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?" in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John Gillis
Daniel Segal and Richard Handler, "How European is Nationalism?" *Social Analysis* 32 (1992)
Katherine Verdery, "Beyond the Nation in Eastern Europe," *Social Text*, Spring 1994
Robert Hayden, "Constitutional Nationalism in the Formerly Yugoslav Republics," *Slavic Review*, Winter 1992
Edward Said, "Nationalism, Human Rights and Interpretation," *Raritan* 12 (Winter 1993)

3/5-7 Nations in/and Conflict

Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for understanding*, chapt. 3, 4, 9
Anton Shammas, "A Stone's Throw," *New York Review of Books*, March 31, 1988

First Paper Due 3/7

3/19-21 Equality: Is It Possible in a *Divided Society*?

James E. Jones, "The Rise and Fall of Affirmative Action," in *Race in America*, eds. Jones and Herbert Hill
Patricia Williams, "The Pain of Word Bondage," in *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*
Michael Kinsley, "The Spoils of Victimhood," *New Yorker*, March 27, 1995
Partha Chatterjee, "Religious Minorities and the Secular State: Reflections on an Indian Impasse," *Public Culture* 18 (1995)
See film: *Do the Right Thing*

3/26-28 Separatism: Problem or Solution?

Gary Peller, "Race Consciousness," *Duke Law Journal* (1990)
Clive Christie, "Partition, Separatism and National Identity: A Reassessment," *Political Quarterly* 63 (Jan-March 1992)

4/2-4 Domination: Governmental Power without Boundaries?

Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*
Michel Foucault, "Body/Power (Chap. 3) and "Two Lectures" (Chap. 5) in *Power/Knowledge*

4/9-11 Conflict in the New World Order: "Humanitarian" Intervention?

Michael Ignatieff, "The Seductiveness of Moral Disgust," *Index on Censorship*, May 1995
"Humanitarian Intervention and North-South Politics in the 90s," *Middle East Report* Nos. 187-88 (March-April/May-June 1994)

SECOND PAPER DUE 4/11 IN CLASS

4/16-18 Getting Past the Past: Can History and Justice Coexist?

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, chapt. 1, 15 and epilogue
Stanley Cohen, "State Crimes of Previous Regimes: Knowledge, Accountability, and the Policing of the Past," *Law and Social Inquiry* 20/1 (Winter 1995)
See film: *The Nasty Girl*

4/23-25 Palestine as a Case Study of Conflict and Change

Graham Usher, *Palestine in Crisis: The Struggle for Peace and Political Independence after Oslo*
Edward Said, "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," in Goldberg, ed.

4/30 - 5/2 Summary