

**SUBSTANTIVE AREA: Social Movements**

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**DATE: August 25, 2009**

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## **OVERALL SCOPE OF AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EXAM**

Sociologists studying social movements are fundamentally interested in explaining why social movements emerge (and why individuals participate in them), how they develop and interact with other actors in their environments, what makes them successful (or not) at achieving their goals, and how their activities affect the broader social and political landscapes. Increasingly, social movement scholars are sensitive to the need to account for transnational and global processes and institutions when considering these questions. Below are some broad questions that researchers in this area seek to answer with theories and empirical research:

- How is social movement emergence related to broader social, political, and economic processes?
- What explains variation in individual decisions to participate (or not) in social movements?
- How should we think about social movement outcomes? What factors influence the success or failure of social movements and the organizations that comprise them?
- What is the relationship between social movements and culture? What affects movement actors' choices about how to frame issues?
- How is social movement activity related to the broader (global, regional, and/or national) political economy and institutional context?
- How do movements shape collective identities?
- How do efforts by state authorities or other groups to repress social movements affect movement mobilization and other outcomes?

Students will be expected to be familiar with the history and roots of the field, including theories of collective behavior and social-psychological approaches, as well as the dominant theoretical perspectives and the latest empirical research in the field. Much work on social movements has been done by experts in fields other than sociology (i.e., anthropology, psychology, political science). While students are not expected to master the relevant literature from fields outside of sociology for this exam, they should be familiar with research from other disciplines when it

clearly intersects with sociological work in this area. Finally, students should understand important methodological innovations and debates within our field of study.

## **EXAM PREPARATION**

### *USE OF READING LISTS*

The committee provides a general reading list for students interested in taking this area. It is suggested that students consult with their advisors about how to use this list as they begin preparing for this exam. (See attached at the end of this document.)

### *REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED COURSES*

Graduate level courses on social movements and related topics are offered on a regular basis in the department. These courses are extraordinarily valuable for preparing for the social movement area exam. Also, participation in social movement training seminars, which are offered every semester and can be taken multiple times, will also help you to prepare for the area exam and are strongly recommended.

### *EXAM FORMAT*

The exam is typically divided into four sections, and students will be asked to choose one question of two in each section. However, the committee may also **require** students to answer specific questions. Some questions from past exams may appear again on future exams (perhaps with modifications), but the majority of questions will be new questions. Students will not be asked to write possible exam questions.

### *EXAM SCHEDULING*

The committee will write and offer **ONLY ONE EXAM** per semester. If students fail the exam, they must wait until the next semester before they may retake this exam.

### *EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CITATIONS*

The committee prefers that students follow ASA guidelines regarding citations: author(s) and year of publication are preferable. Students need not memorize the titles of articles, but you should be able to provide enough information so examiners know what you're referring to.

### *MISCELLANEOUS*

## **EXAM RESULTS**

### *POLICIES REGARDING RE-WRITES*

Students will be assigned one of three grades for their exam: pass with distinction, pass, or fail. Students will **not** be allowed to rewrite parts of their exams in order to change a failing grade to a passing one.

### *FEEDBACK*

The examining committee will make every effort to provide results to students within three weeks of exams. This time frame may be amended prior to the exam for exams in the summer or if members of the examination committee require adjustments to this schedule. The student will be notified of the results by e-mail. The student will then be asked to schedule a meeting with the committee chair to discuss both strengths and weaknesses of the students' performance. This meeting will be scheduled for all students, regardless of whether they pass or fail the exam. Other committee members may provide written feedback to each student, or they may set up a separate meeting to discuss the students' exam performance. This decision will be left at the discretion of faculty on the committee.

## ATTACHMENTS

### Social Movements Area Exam Reading List

(revised August 2008)

**Note:** Graduate students who elect to take the Social Movements Area Exam are expected to be familiar with the debates in the entire social movement literature. This includes works not included on this list. This list is intended to assist students by identifying some of the more important readings. Students may wish to consult two recent edited collections of topical reviews in the field for guidance on recent literature: *Handbook of Social Movements: Social Movements Across Disciplines*, Bert Klandermans and Connie Roggeband, Eds. (2007, Springer) and *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, David Snow, Sarah Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, eds. (2004, Blackwell).

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