



UCDC

Activism, Protest, and the Politics of Change

Winter Quarter 2020

January 7 – March 10

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m., Room 317

Instructor: Dale A. Crowell

Office: Room 332

E-mail: dcrowellucdc@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., by appointment

Course Instructor

Dale is the Congressional Liaison for the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC. In that capacity, he advises the Organization's leadership on strategies to engage and communicate with the U.S. Congress to ensure that its priorities are understood by decision makers on Capitol Hill. Before that he managed press and media relations for the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, directed public relations for Bethesda-based Honest Tea, and served as the communications director for a member of Congress. He has also managed USAID and State Department-funded international development projects for various non-profit organizations promoting social, political, and economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean. He was a McNair Scholar, an APSA Minority Fellow, and is a PhD candidate in American Politics. Dale earned his MA in Congressional and Presidential Studies at the Catholic University of America and his BA in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland.

Course Description

How does social and political change happen in Washington? What strategies and techniques do underdogs use to take on entrenched and established powers in the nation's capital? Making real change is difficult. Yet, there are several examples of successful social movements in American history and politics that came to Washington and effectively changed the course of the nation's politics and history. This class will explore the history and stories of grassroots mobilization and advocacy on the national stage. By observing advocacy events and interacting with guest speakers, students will learn about the successes—and failures—of social groups' efforts to make lasting change in American politics and society.

The class will read about, discuss, and debate the dynamics of protest and advocacy and meet with advocacy leaders and activists to discuss the strategies used to pressure decision makers—sometimes successfully and sometimes not— for political outcomes. They will learn about agenda setting and messaging; as well as techniques used to influence the debate such as protests, advocacy campaigns, petitions, and electoral lobbying. Students will learn about and discuss which types of groups and

leaders engage in which strategies, and at what stage of the policy process they are most likely to be effective based upon the context of their particular policy or political goals.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to identify the actors who participate in grassroots action and how their efforts can translate into policy. Students will also meet with advocacy leaders directly to better understand the various sides of important social and political issues, and assess the effectiveness—or not—of individual social movements and advocacy initiatives, and learn how to write and present on the issues and material covered.

Learning Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Students will be able to relate their internship experience with the skills and substance learned in their course.

Objective #1: Students will discuss as part of their class participation how the weekly substance or skills learned applied to the work of their internship or their internship organization's goals or mission.

Goal #2: Students will be able to observe and analyze a congressional hearing and understand how advocacy leaders interact via this venue with members of Congress.

Objective #2: Students will observe (online) two congressional hearings and will write a memo for the second hearing to be evaluated interactively in class.

Goal #3: Students will be able to communicate persuasively in writing and orally.

Objective #3: Students will write one professional briefing memo and one team Op-Ed, as well as possibly participate in class discussion and give a presentation on their memos and team-led Op-Ed to the class.

Goal #4: Students will be able to critically examine competing arguments, and use empirical evidence to research and apply theory to practice.

Objective #4: Students will write an observation-based memo, conduct research and formulate an argument for an Op-Ed and present it to the class by the end of the quarter.

Course Materials and Accessibility

Among the materials for this course are a combination of book readings, articles, blog entries, YouTube videos, and other items. The majority of the readings will include significant selections from:

-David S. Meyer's *The Politics of Protest: Social Movements in America, 2nd Edition*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

-Leslie R. Crutchfield's *How Change Happens: Why Some Social Movements Succeed While Others Don't*, Wiley, 2018.

The books are available for purchase online.

Additionally, the specific readings will be made available through Dropbox and/or email. Some of the items such as news articles and blog entries—as listed in the syllabus—will be available online.

****Importantly, I reserve the right to make changes to the course materials as the term progresses. This includes, but is not limited to, adding and subtracting articles and other readings.****

Students are also strongly encouraged to read a good daily newspaper (or two or three) so they can follow the examples used in lectures and offer their own in class. *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Hill Newspaper*, *Roll Call*, and *Politico* are good places to start, but students should feel free to read which ever daily new sources they are accustomed to reading and bring those observations to share in class. Periodically, web readings may be assigned from these sources.

Additionally, the syllabus, updates, and other announcements about the course will be emailed to the class.

Class Meetings, Course Responsibilities, and Assignments

Class Meetings: Class will meet weekly on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 from **January 7-March 10, except for the week of February 11**. Students will be required to complete weekly readings and, depending on the level of voluntary participation and class discussion, may be assigned the responsibility of leading a portion of each class discussion on the weekly topic. There will be four short quizzes and two written assignments. The quizzes will cover the class readings and will be given at the beginning of the class on the dates noted in the course schedule. Regarding the written assignments, one will be to produce a briefing memo using a designated congressional hearing. The memo will be reviewed jointly in class as part of a workshop on memo writing. The second writing assignment will be a team-drafted Op-Ed column with an in-class presentation and discussion. Topics will be discussed and agreed upon in advance during the quarter.

Class Attendance: Attendance is required. Please be on time. Excused absences are usually extraordinary events such as the death of an immediate family member (parent, sibling, or grandparent), personal illness, or a major religious holiday that is recognized by the [UCDC calendar](#). **You MUST provide written documentation for each of these absences; and for religious holidays, you must submit your excuse one week in advance of the absence to be excused.** On occasion, and with at least 48-hours notice, you may request to be excused for one special internship or other DC event. If granted, it is likely you will be asked to report on your experience in class. For information about missed and late assignments, see below.

Note: Each *unexcused* absence will lower your final course grade to the next lower grade (e.g. A- will become a B+). You can avoid this by simply letting me know with advance notice that you will not be able to attend class.

Participation and Discussion: All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material, this includes posing questions about the material and outside, related observations based on your internships and what you are reading about current events in various news sources. Your participation grade also includes your questions and engagement for any in-class guest speakers. **You will be graded on the quality of your participation. Speak up, voice your thought-out views, and engage in the discussion. If you do not speak up or participate during class, I cannot give a full grade for this part of class. Your voice and opinion matter. Make sure you are heard.**

Participation is very important for this class, and everyone will be expected to contribute in a substantively meaningful way to the class discussion. You should always be ready to be asked for your input on any and all things assigned for class. **If you are shy, or anxious about speaking up in class, let me know privately and we can discuss other options for online group discussions or other short written assignments to help me evaluate your comprehension of the assigned readings.**

Reading Assignments and In-Class Quizzes: All the reading assigned in this syllabus—and any added throughout the semester—is required. This means that you should read all of the material BEFORE the class meeting and be ready to make your observations, EVEN IF we do not discuss them in-depth during class. I reserve the right to change the readings and the schedule if necessary as the term progresses. See the Weekly Schedule below for dates and assignments. You should bring assigned reading to class for discussion. **A total of four quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class sessions based on the readings as noted on the course schedule.**

Professional Briefing Memo: A part of the quarter will be dedicated to developing your professional writing skills. Specifically, we will conduct an in-class workshop on how to observe and evaluate a congressional hearing, take notes, and draft a professional briefing memo. Before the subsequent week, you will watch another online video of a specific congressional hearing and draft a memo using the model laid out from the previous week. The goal is for you to prepare a two-page, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font memo describing the hearing (including who, what, where, when, why, and how), and give your assessment of (1) the goal of the hearing, (2) the intended goal and messaging of the hearing witnesses, (3) an assessment of what impact, if any, you feel the advocacy witnesses provided in the hearing, and (3) provide your recommendations on next steps or how to improve for the witnesses as they continue to pursue their specific political or policy goals. More information about this assignment and the in-class evaluation will be provided and discussed once the course is underway.

Team Advocacy Op-Ed and Presentation: The second writing assignment will focus on a team advocacy Op-Ed (opinion column) that will be address an agreed-upon topic using between 650 to 750 words, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font) and will analyze a national-level issue of current debate in Washington, DC. The Op-Ed should include (a) a statement of the problem/issue, (b) a description of the involved sides or parties, (c) a description of the current state of the issue and (d) a proposed plan to accomplish a specific policy change or goal and an explanation on how that plan will impact the issue.

Essentially, you and your teammate(s) must identify the issue and intended goal, make a case for your preferred strategy or policy proposal, and provide an analysis of possible outcomes. You will be evaluated how well-written the Op-Ed is, including grammar, typos, organization and structure; and on the quality of the analysis and the thoroughness of the information included. More detailed information about this assignment will be provided and discussed once the course is underway. **As mentioned, you will work in teams to draft the Op-Eds to present them to a panel of communications professional during one of the two final class sessions.**

Individual assignments in this course will be worth various points but converted to a 100 point scale such that an A=100-93%, A-=92-90%, B+=89-87, B=86-83, B-=82-80, etc. **You should understand that only excellent work will earn an A. If the work is good, it will earn a B, and satisfactory work will earn a C.** You will earn Ds and Fs if your work is less than satisfactory or of poor quality. If you fail to complete the work, you will earn a 0 for the assignment. Incompletes will be allowed only under the most exceptional circumstances.

Final course grades will be proportioned as follows:

Class Attendance (15%)

Participation, and Discussion (25%)

In-Class Quizzes (20%)

Professional Briefing Memo (20%)

Team Op-Ed and Presentation (20%)

According to general university policies, final course grades earned in this class will be worth the following points: A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3.0, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2.0, C-=1.7, D=1.0, F=0. (NOTE: I will consider using A+ grades for students coming from campuses that issue them. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester.)

Course Communication Tools

I will use email for communicating with you this term. Unless you tell me otherwise, I will be communicating with you using the email address that you included as your primary address when you enrolled for classes. You are responsible for checking your email regularly for messages and feedback. You are responsible for letting me know if you change your email address.

Policy on Attendance

See Course Responsibilities and Assignments (above).

Policy on Missed and Late Assignments

Assignment deadlines are firm, and makeup assignments are permitted only for excused absences (see above). You may submit assignments early, but I do not guarantee early feedback.

Missed assignments. Assignments can be made up only for excused absences (see above). Be aware that you may be asked to turn in a written assignment *before* the deadline, and the makeup assignment may be different than the original assignment. If there is some other reason for you to miss an assignment (e.g. a previously scheduled family engagement), you must inform me within the first week of classes *to be considered* eligible to make up the assignment; this is not a guarantee that you will be allowed to make up the assignment. If you do not meet these conditions, you will receive a zero for the assignment. **IMPORTANT:** You should discuss make up assignments with me as soon as you are aware of them in office hours or by email; I will not discuss these arrangements in class.

Late assignments. All assignments are considered due at the beginning of each class period, even if I don't formally ask for them until later in the class. Assignments submitted after the time and date at

which they are due, and that are NOT accompanied by an acceptable excuse (as described previously) will be addressed as follows. **For every 24 hour period after the date and time that the assignment is due (including weekends), the grade received for the assignment will be decreased by two (2) parts of a grade.** The 24 hour periods include weekends. For example, if you turn in an A quality assignment on Friday before 11:00a, after it was due on Wednesday at 11:00a, then the assignment will be 2 days late and you will earn a maximum grade of B- on that assignment. If you turn in a B quality assignment at that same time, you will earn a C-.

Statement on Weather Emergencies

In the event of a weather emergency, UCDC follows the [federal government's decisions](#) about delays and closures. We will cross that bridge if/when we get there!

Policy on Academic Misconduct

UCDC has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of dishonesty. Students should refer to their home campus Student Code of Conduct for the regulations that apply to them. The burden is on each student to know what behaviors constitute cheating and plagiarism. Ignorance of these behaviors is not an adequate defense.

Policy on Classroom Conduct

I'm sure it goes without saying that we all must treat others in class with respect. We do not have to agree, but being polite and thoughtful in our interactions with each other is absolutely required. Also, in consideration of your classmates and me, you should observe the following rules: (1) DO set your cell phones to silent and answer them only in an emergency (e.g. child care or medical for you or an immediate family member). (2) Do NOT arrive late to class unless you have advanced approval. (3) Do NOT do homework for other classes or read material not related to this class, that includes surfing the web or using social media during class. For any of these infractions, you will be warned only once; after the warning, you may be excused from class and will be docked 2 percentage points of your total course grade for each infraction at the end of the term.

Statement on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Click on this link for the University of California statement on sexual harassment and sexual violence.

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

Students who wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct should contact UCDC's Counseling Services at UCDCCounseling@gmail.com. To report sexual misconduct to ask questions about UCDC policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact the UCDC Title IX administrator, Josh Brimmeier (202-974-6214 or josh.brimmeier@ucdc.edu). Because the

University of California is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, the confidentiality of reported misconduct cannot be guaranteed.

[Statement on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)

Click on this link for the University of California statement on accommodations for students with disabilities.

If you require accommodation for class, please let me know at our first meeting (if not earlier) so the necessary arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

PART I: A FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND PROTEST IN AMERICAN POLITICS

January 7: Course Overview and Framework on Contentious Politics, Social Movements, and Protest

- Review of course syllabus. Come prepared with questions.
- David Meyer, Introduction (pp. 1-7)
- Nathan Heller, "Is There Any Point to Protesting?" *The New Yorker*, August 21, 2017 (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/08/21/is-there-any-point-to-protesting>)
- "Do protests really work?" CNN Video, 2018
<https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2018/03/23/do-protests-work-orig-acl.cnn>

Recommended Reading:

- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Introduction & Ch. 1

January 14: Institutions, Activists, and Movements in American Political Advocacy

- Meyer, Chapters 1-4
- Review Senate Foreign Relations Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Hearing on Cuba, Feb. 3, 2015
<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/understanding-the-impact-of-us-policy-changes-on-human-rights-and-democracy-in-cuba>
- Discussion on How to Write a Professional Memo

Recommended Reading:

- Debra C. Minkoff, "The Sequencing of Social Movements." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 62, No. 5, pp. 779-799, 1997

January 21: Going to the Streets: Protests and Their Impact

- Meyer, Chapters 5-9
- Review House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Hearing—Generation Climate: Young Leaders Urge Climate Action Now, April 4, 2019
<https://climatecrisis.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/generation-climate-young-leaders-urge-climate-action-now>

QUIZ #1

Recommended Reading:

- Dan J. Wang and Sarah A. Soule, "Tactical Innovation in Social Movements: The Effects of Peripheral and Multi-Issue Protest." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 81, No. 3, pp. 517-548, 2016

January 28: Finishing the Framework—Why Do Movements Matter?

- Meyer, Chapters 10, 11
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD

EVENT MEMO DUE WITH IN-CLASS REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

PART II: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN POLITICS

February 4: Grassroots Mobilization and Federalism in America—The Debate Over Guns

- Crutchfield, Intro, Ch. 1 & 2
- Readings on the NRA, 2nd Amendment, and Gun Safety Debate
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD
- Op-Ed Writing Workshop

QUIZ #2

February 11: Communication, Persuasion, and Coalitions

- Crutchfield, Ch. 3 & 4
- No class discussion this week.
- Begin teamwork to draft Op-Eds

February 18: Resources and Empowering the Movement: The Criminal Justice Reform Example

- Crutchfield, Ch. 5 & 6
- Readings on Criminal Justice Reform
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD

QUIZ #3

February 25: What Steps Can Social Movements Take to Succeed? The Immigration Fight

- Crutchfield, Conclusion
- Readings on Immigration Reform
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD

QUIZ #4

March 3: How do Social Movements Evolve? From the Mattachine Society to Marriage Equality

- Readings on LGBTQ+ Rights Movement
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD

PRESENTATION OF TEAM-DRAFTED OP-EDS

March 10: Where Do We Go from Here? A Review

- Readings on Post-2016 Protest Resurgence (National Women's March, teacher strikes, March for Our Lives, Black Lives Matter, etc.)
- Guest Speaker(s), TBD

PRESENTATION OF TEAM-DRAFTED OP-EDS