



UCDC

## Activism, Protest, and Social Movements: Taking on the Power Structure in Washington, DC

Instructor: Dale A. Crowell

Zoom : Link in Canvas

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Office Hours: By appointment

### Course Instructor

I am the Congressional Liaison for the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC. In that capacity, I advise 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 I 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. I have 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. In my scholarly life, I was a McNair Scholar, an APSA Minority Fellow, and am a PhD candidate in American Politics. I earned my MA in Congressional and Presidential Studies at the Catholic University of America and 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 discussing protests and other 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 virtually with advocacy leaders and activists to discuss the strategies used to pressure decision makers—sometimes successfully and sometimes not—for political outcomes. We 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 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 hear from advocacy leaders 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 develop research, observation, and analytical skills to more effectively understand the role of social movements within the dynamics of political and policy fights and change in Washington, DC.*

Objective #1: Students will undertake individual research to identify the variables important to the development, evolution, and effectiveness of social movements.

*Goal #2: Students will experience a cultural, historical, policy or other event in the District of Columbia that relates to their course.*

Objective #2: Students will attend (virtually) at least one advocacy-related events such as a Congressional hearing, Hill briefing, think tank seminar or lecture, or NGO/advocacy/nonprofit event and will write a memo for that event explaining the significance and impact of that event on the broader goals of its related social movement.

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

Objective #3: Students will write one advocacy event memo, one advocate interview, and one Op-Ed as well as possibly lead at least one class discussion and give a presentation on their memos, interviews, or 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**

Canvas will be our “classroom,” in which the link to our Zoom classroom and office hours will be found, and where all of our course materials will be located.

Course materials may include a combination of scholarly articles, news articles, court cases, videos, podcasts, and more. Many readings are electronic and available online; others will be available in PDF format on Canvas. Documents will be stored in Files, and our weekly materials will be easily accessible in weekly Modules.

The majority of the readings will include selections from David S. Meyer's *The Politics of Protest: Social Movements in America, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, Oxford University Press, 2015. Other selections will be drawn from Sidney Tarrow's *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, Cambridge University Press, 2011; and Leslie Crutchfield's *How Change Happens: Why Some Social Movements Succeed While Others Don't*, among others. The books are available for purchase online and the selected readings will also be provided on Canvas.

Please note, the specific readings will be made available through Canvas. However, some of the items such as news articles and blog entries—as listed in the syllabus—will be available via links 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 be strongly encouraged to read whichever daily news sources they are accustomed to reading and to share their observations 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 afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. PT from **January 5<sup>th</sup> through April 13<sup>th</sup>**. Students are expected 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 three written assignments. One will be to produce a briefing memo covering an event or activity held by an advocacy organization addressing an issue in Washington, DC. Another will be an interview of a leader or advocate from an advocacy organization. The third will be an Op-Ed column with a presentation and discussion of an argument related to an issue that involves a community-based or grassroots advocacy organization and their stated policy or political issue or campaign.

**Attendance:** Attendance is important for your successful progress in class, but also for the class community and camaraderie. This is especially true in a remote environment. Please be sure that your internship supervisor understand that you will be in class every Tuesday, 2pm-5pm (PT) and attend to these rules:

- *Absences require an explanation*, whether it be illness (of self or family member or other person in your care), rolling blackouts, tech issues, and more. I will honor your need for privacy, but I do expect a reason. Just let me know, in advance if possible, but as soon after as you can.
  - *This includes internship-related absences. Sometimes a special event comes up that occurs during class period. Let me know and I will consider excusing you.*
- *I am very likely to excuse absences, but you MUST give me an explanation.*
  - *If you do not provide an explanation, I will consider it an unexcused absence and will lower your final participation grade to the next grade (eg. A- will become a B+) for each absence.*

Participation (Synchronous and Asynchronous): Participation (Synchronous and Asynchronous): Participation is very important for this class, and everyone will be expected to contribute in a substantively meaningful way to the class discussion.

- Be prepared to participate in one way or another, including verbally in “class,” in Zoom chat, or Canvas discussion, for participation credit.
- Expect to use Zoom Breakout Rooms at times for small group interaction.
- Participation cannot be made up. In the event of an explained absence, you may be able to complete a different assignment to earn participation points.

Reading Assignments: 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 use it for your graded class discussion leads (if relevant) EVEN IF we do not discuss it in 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.

Quizzes: A total of four quizzes based on the readings, class discussions, and presentations by speakers will be given throughout the semester. The quizzes will be administered during asynchronous time but will have a time limit for them to be completed. Quizzes may include True/False, Multiple Choice, Identification Matches or similar types of questions.

Advocacy Briefing Memo: You will attend virtually or watch a pre-recorded advocacy-related event (e.g. Congressional hearing, Hill briefing, constituent meetings, public policy event, interest group conference, etc.) submitted for my approval and prepare a two-page, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font memo describing the event (who, what, where, when, why, and how), and give your assessment of (1) the goal of each event, (2) whether or not each event had the desired impact, and (3) provide your recommendations on how to improve such events for the future. More information about these two assignments will be provided and discussed once the course is underway.

Advocacy Leader Interview: You will identify, with my approval, an advocacy/lobbying leader in Washington to interview and prepare a three-to-five page double-spaced Times New Roman 12 point font paper summarizing the interview with the subject. Specifically, you should ask about the subject’s background, how they became involved in their issue, how they arrived in Washington, some of their successes, examples of frustrations or setbacks, and their plans for pursuing their issue goals for the future. Unlike the memos, which should practice formal policy-oriented writing styles, the interview paper should be more conversational—but not too informal—and follow a human interest style found in a news media outlet or periodical.

Advocacy Op-Ed: The advocacy Op-Ed (opinion column) 650 to 700 words, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font) will be (1) an analysis on 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 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. More detailed information about this assignment will be provided and discussed once the course is underway.

### **Grading Standards and Measurement**

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, Participation, and Discussion (35%)

Quizzes (20%)

Advocacy Event Briefing Memo (15%)

Advocacy Leader Interview (15%)

Final Advocacy Op-Ed (15%)

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**

Keeping up with the work in a class like this is very important. The assignments are scaffolded, which means they build on each other and rely on the completion of the one before.

Assignment deadlines are firm to keep us on track, but also to provide predictability in your schedules. Still, life happens and you may find that you miss a deadline. Been there, done that.

I encourage you to submit late assignments rather than not submit at all. While you are likely to be docked points for lateness if you haven't provided an excuse, I don't judge! You are much better off with some points than no points, and you're definitely better off with feedback than no feedback. So, get in your work even if you take a bit of a hit on points.

I do dock points for late assignments that are not accompanied by an excuse because deadlines are important and we want to be fair to those who meet them.

*For every 24-hour period after the date and time that the assignment is due, the grade received for the assignment will be decreased by one (1) part of a grade. The 24 hour periods include weekends. For example, if you turn in an A quality assignment on Wednesday before 11:59p, after it was due on Monday at 11:59p, then the assignment will be 2 days late and you will earn a B+ on that assignment. If you turn in a B quality assignment at that same time, you will earn a C+.*

You may submit assignments early, but I don't grade assignments early.

### **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.

### **[Statement on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence](#)**

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

Students who wish to report sexual misconduct or to ask questions about UCDC policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct may do so with any UCDC faculty or staff, or contact Debbie Deas, Acting Director of Student Services (debbie.deas@ucdc.edu, 202-872- 8937). Please note that 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

### January 5: Introduction to Course, Overview, Assignments, and Expectations

- Read course syllabus, come prepared with questions
- 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>)
- For Asynchronous Learning*—"Do protests really work?" CNN Video, 2018 (<https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2018/03/23/do-protests-work-orig-acl.cnn>)

### January 12: Overview of Social Movements, Protest, and Civic Activism

- Sidney Tarrow, Introduction and Chapter 1
- David Meyer, Introduction and Chapter 1
- For Asynchronous Learning*—Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter From Birmingham Jail', *The Atlantic*, August 1, 1963 (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/1963/08/martin-luther-kings-letter-from-birmingham-jail/274668/>)

### January 19: Background: Social Movements & the American System of Advocacy

- Marshall Ganz on Fighting for Social Change (<https://billmoyers.com/segment/marshall-ganz-on-making-social-movements-matter/>)
- Workshop on Memo Writing
- For Asynchronous Discussion Post*—Meyer, Chapter 2 and Leslie Crutchfield, Introduction

### January 26: Who Becomes an Activist and What Do Their Groups and Movements Look Like?

- Meyer, Chapters 3, 4
- Crutchfield, Chapter 4
- For Asynchronous Discussion Post*—C-SPAN Oral Histories: Canvas Discussion about Hank Thomas (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?440932-1/hank-thomas-oral-history-interview>) and The Radicalization of Kevin Greeson (<https://www.propublica.org/article/the-radicalization-of-kevin-greeson>)
- Quiz 1 – To Be Completed Asynchronously by 11:59 p.m., February 1**

### February 2: Which Way to Go? Choosing the Best Approach

- Meyer, Chapter 5
- Crutchfield, Chapter 2
- Interview Writing Workshop
- For Asynchronous Discussion Post*—*The Psychology of Protest and Activism* (<https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/protest-activism>)

### February 9: Spreading the Word—Changes in Communication and Media

- Meyer, Chapter 6
- “How Social Media Has Changed Civil Rights Protests,” *New York Times*, June 18, 2020 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/technology/social-media-protests.html>)
- “How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks,” *Advances in Political Psychology*, Vol. 39, Suppl. 1, 2018 (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/pops.12478>)
- Op-Ed Writing Workshop

For Asynchronous Discussion Post—The Social Dilemma on Netflix

(<https://www.netflix.com/title/81254224>)

-Finalize appointments for individual advocacy interviews

Quiz 2 – To Be Completed Asynchronously by 11:59 p.m., February 15

### **February 16: Peaceful Protest—The Cycles and Legacy of Social Movements and Protests**

-Meyer, Chapter 7

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

**EVENT MEMO DUE**

### **February 23: From Aspiration to Policy**

-Crutchfield, Chapter 3

-Meyer, Chapter 8

-Other Articles TBD

### **March 2: Going Mainstream—The Broader Adoption of Protest as Advocacy**

-Meyer, Chapter 9

-Crutchfield, Chapter 5

**ADVOCACY INTERVIEW DUE**

### **March 9: From Protest to Policy—Effecting Lasting Change**

-Meyer, Chapter 10, 11

-Crutchfield, Conclusion

Quiz 3 -- To Be Completed Asynchronously by 11:59 p.m., March 15

### **March 16: Spring Break**

### **March 23: The Second Amendment versus Gun Control or The Fight Over Global Warming**

-Articles TBD

-Tentative Guest Speaker(s)

### **March 30: Whither Immigration Reform?**

-Tentative Guest Speaker(s)

### **April 6: What About Counter Movements?**

-Articles TBD

-Tentative Guest Speaker(s)

Quiz 4 To Be Completed Asynchronously by 11:59 p.m., April 12

### **April 13: Where Do We Go from Here?**

-Discussion and review of the current condition of social movements and their positions in national politics in America

-Recording of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Speech "Where Do We Go from Here?" delivered August 16, 1967 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m1PRN9VCfw>)

**OP-ED DUE**