

POLS 325, Autumn 2006
POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS:
Social Movements and Political Action
Room 13, Thursday, 2:00 – 4:45 pm

Asma Abbas
2-V, Hall College Centre
aabbas@simons-rock.edu; x7215
www.simons-rock.edu/~aabbas
Office hours: T, 1-2 pm; W, 1 – 3 pm; by appt.

The title of this course is more of a question I hope we can answer over the span of semester. The course explores the ways in which human beings create politics through collective action, ordinary and heroic, that finds its logics outside of given institutions, outside of *realpolitik* as we know it. By looking at social movements across the globe, and sporting different ideological, moral and pragmatic frames, we may be able to get at an alternate formulation of “real” politics, what it can and does mean, where it happens and who participates in it.

The course has two broad components. The first involves a review of the literature on political and social movements, and addressing questions such as: When and why movements occur? Who joins or supports movements? Who remains and who drops out? What is the role of emotions and ideas in movements? How are movements organised? What do movements do? What are movements moving? How are contemporary movements different from older ones? How do movements change, grow, and decline? What do they accomplish?

The second component is titled the *Social Action Workshop (SAW)* which will entail:

- (A) choice of a specific movement in history, and close analysis of the same on the basis of the work in the first component (examples contained within the required books are acceptable);
- (B) design of a movement or collective action scenario at Simon’s Rock, or practical involvement in an existing group or collective.

This course is consciously designed in response to an observed need for greater experiential learning on campus, where coursework can be held to the challenge, and requirements, of engaging with broader political and social issues.

Required Texts

Coles, Romand. *Beyond Gated Politics: Reflections for the Possibility of Democracy*. Minnesota, 2005
Della Porta, Donatella & Mario Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Blackwell, 2006
Goodwin, Jeff & James Jasper. *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*. Blackwell, 2003
Hardt, Michael & Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War & Democracy in the Age of Empire*. Penguin, 2004
McDonald, Kevin. *Global Movements: Action and Culture*. Blackwell, 2006

Course Requirements

- (1) active, thoughtful, and substantive class participation;
- (2) Proposals for SAW, both components
- (3) fortnightly report (research and analysis) on **SAW-A**;
- (4) fortnightly diaries/process notes/updates for **SAW-B**;
- (5) final projects: compilation, with concluding analysis and statement, of 3 & 4.

CLASS SCHEDULE

In the course schedule below, all references are to *The Social Movements Reader* (abbreviated as *SMR*), and *Social Movements: An Introduction* (abbreviated as *SMI*) unless otherwise stated. Readings marked with an asterisk are on electronic reserve. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus—you will be consulted for, and informed of, changes made.

Week I—31 August

NO CLASS (will be rescheduled)

Week II—7 September

SMR, Part I and Part II

SMI, Chapters 1 and 2

Week III—14 September

Proposals for SAW due in class

SMR, Part III and Part IV

SMI, Chapters 3 and 4

Week IV—21 September

SAW-A Report 1 Due

SMR, Part V

*Melucci, Alberto. *The Playing Self*. (selections TBA)

Week V—28 September

SAW-B Report 1 Due

SMR, Part VI

SMI, Chapters 5 and 6

Week VI—5 October

SAW-A Report 2 Due

SMR, Part VII

SMI, Chapter 7

FALL BREAK

Week VII—19 October

SAW-B Report 2 Due

SMR, Part VIII

SMI, Chapter 8

Week VIII—26 October

SAW-A Report 3 Due

SMR, Part IX and Part X

Week IX – 2 November

NO CLASS (will be rescheduled; probably arrange to schedule the skipped first week somewhere around here to spend more time on *Global Movements*)

McDonald, Kevin. *Global Movements* (TBA)

Week X – 9 November

SAW-B Report 3 Due

SML, Chapter 9

Coles, Romand. *Beyond Gated Politics* (TBA)

Week XI – 16 November

SAW-A Report 4 Due

Coles, Romand. *Beyond Gated Politics* (TBA)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week XII – 30 November

SAW-B Report 4 Due

Hardt & Negri, *Multitude* (TBA)

Week XIII – 7 December

Hard & Negri, *Multitude* (contd.)

Project Presentations

FINAL PROJECTS DUE – Friday, 22 December