

COMPARATIVE PROTEST POLITICS

NEW COURSE OFFERED in POLITICS DA, SoSS

This unit aims to provide students with an in-depth analytical understanding of contemporary protest politics or as described by Charles Tilly, *contentious politics*.



1. The course will provide students with an advanced theoretical knowledge of the established political science literature on protest. Theoretically, the goal is to expose students to the particular tension between structural and agency-based explanations of protest participation in political science.
2. The course will engage students with a recently developing literature, debating the role of social networks versus social media (and other ICTs) in the mass-mobilization process.
3. The seminars will help students develop a deeper empirical understanding of contemporary cases mass-protest. Students will be asked to reflect on the perceived recent rise in mass-mobilization globally (since the early 2000s).

WHY DO PEOPLE PROTEST?

WHAT EXPLAINS MASS-PROTEST POLITICS?

IS IT VOTING BY OTHER MEANS?

WHY DO WE SEE MORE PROTESTS?

WHAT DOES MASS

4. By employing critical case studies of recent mass-protests in Latin America, Europe, the MENA region and North America, the course aims to allow students the facility to critically engage with the theoretical literature, and join the on-going debate on the role of social media and its role in social mobilization.

Students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- A sophisticated understanding of the literature on protest politics; a broad knowledge of recent empirical cases of mass-protest in comparative perspective; and a broad knowledge on the developing debate about the role of social media in political processes.
- A capacity to engage analytically with the major debates in the literature on protest politics. An ability to employ comparative method and evidence based analysis in academic writing.
- Improved writing, argumentation, debating and presentation skills. The capacity to succinctly and analytically summarize and mobilize complex ideas.



“Its the economy stupid...”

“What about social networks - is that the same as social media?”

How do political scientists analyse protest?

Why is protest becoming a more and more common feature of ‘regular’ politics?

Is protest always democratising?

What is the role of agency in the making of mass-mobilisation?

What is the role of structure in the mobilisation process?

“what about the Facebook factor?”

“You say you want a #REVOLUTION ?”

Brief overview of the syllabus/topics

Students will be asked to reflect on the recent (since the early 2000s) global rise in mass-mobilization. What explains mass-protest? And why, in certain instances, do 'ordinary' citizens join-in protest en-masse?

In the first half of the course students will critically engage with the different theoretical perspectives employed in the study of mass-protest.

Students will be exposed to the particular tension between structural and agency-based explanations of protest participation in the literature.

Week One: Mass-Mobilization: When 'Ordinary' Citizens Join-In!

This week the lecture will be an introduction and orientation to the course. The seminars will tackle the question: What is Mass-Mobilization?

Week Two: From Emotions To Networks

This week will provide a historical overview of the theoretical developments in the academic literature prior to the 'structural turn' in the 1990s.

Week Three: Structural Understandings Of Protest

This week will focus in on the structural turn in protest mobilization literature students will be exposed to concepts such as: political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, social network theories of mobilization, and regional diffusion/contagion theory.

Week Four: Agency Protest & Ration Choice

This week will provide an overview of agency based explanations that centre on the [rational] calculi [decisions] individuals make when joining-in a protest. Students will

debate the literature that discusses the micro-level foundations of protest.

Week Five: Rights, Frames And Cultural

This week will investigate critical theories that expose the tensions of the above-mentioned dichotomous agency versus structure approaches in the dominant literature. The readings will focus on the role of rights, framing mechanisms and a variety of cultural based explanations of protest.

In the second half of the course, employing the theoretical knowledge gained in previous weeks, the unit aims to guide students as they explore contemporary empirical cases of mass-protest in different regions around the world.

Week Six: Orange Is The New Revolution: Mass-Protest In Eastern Europe

This week the discussion will include an overview of the so-called 'colour revolutions', which took place in eastern Europe between the mid 1990s and 2000s. These will be placed into comparison with the 'Velvet Revolutions' of 1989. We will investigate what is meant by the usage of the term revolution. The central case study analysed will be the 2004 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine. In seminars, students will debate the role of regional contagion/diffusion; as well as the role of political opportunity structures and resource mobilization, specifically reflecting on the involvement of foreign actors (governments and NGOs) as main funders of protest campaigns in the democratizing world.

Week Seven: No Money More Protest: The Anatomy Of An Economic Crisis Protest

This week the discussion will focus on 'Euro-crisis' and 'austerity' protests in Europe and the US. The case study will be the series of economic crisis related protest waves in

Greece often referred to as the 'dignity protests.' Students will debate the role of socio-economic variables and deprivation in the mobilization process. The discussion will turn to an investigation of the infringement of economic versus political rights as central triggers in the mobilization of 'ordinary' citizens.

Week Eight: Twitter/Facebook Made Me Do it?: The 'Arab Spring'

This week the discussion will focus on the wave of protests often referred to as 'The Arab Spring' or the 'Arab Awakening'. The predominant focus of will be on the 'January 25th Revolution' in Egypt. The discussion will return to the regional diffusion debate, but will also introduce a developing focus in literature on the rise of the use of ICTs, and specifically social media, in the mobilization process.

Week Nine: We Don't Want No (World Cup) Football: Recent Protests in Latin America

This week the discussion will focus on the recent protests in Latin America including Student protests in Mexico, the #N8 Protests in Argentina and the V for Vinegar Protests in Brazil. The main theme of the discussion will be on the role of local versus, national versus international triggers, targets and claims of protesters. For instance the Brazilians were protesting both the World Cup expenses (an international event) and the rise of local transport costs.

Week Ten: The EuroMaidan: Social Networks Versus Social Media

We will end off with an in-depth study of recent EuroMaidan protests in Ukraine and we will also place these in comparative perspective with the 'Peace and Solidarity Protests' Russia. The discussion will focus on extending the debate on role of social media versus social networks, but also on the potential nationally divisive nature of protests, and the possible geo-political repercussions of mass-mobilization.

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