

# Bellevue College

## Activism & Social Change – SOC 122

Fully Online Course  
2017 Fall Quarter  
September 18<sup>th</sup> – December 7<sup>th</sup>  
Sara Sutler-Cohen, MA, Ph.D.

Office Hours are by appointment and conducted online or on the phone.

[Email](#) | [Website](#) | [Scout Coaching](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Can one person make a difference? What does making a difference look like? Using literature, film, music, and news media to look at past and present social movements, examine what makes us engage in acts of political protest, and critically analyze why some resistance efforts are successful and others are not. In this course, you will be acquainted with basic concepts and perspectives in Sociology with an



Interdisciplinary Engagement as you become aware of and explore the importance and power of social change from a variety of activist movements, from art to politics to public education in the U.S. In this interdisciplinary course, we explore how artists have historically responded to the call for social change. Drawing from breadth of perspectives, we will investigate a variety of themes and issues, such as artistic citizenry, feminist movements, religious freedom, rights of children, disability rights, (and many others) and their general role in social movements. We will also look at the role of social institutions in invoking new social consciousness and cultivating social change. We investigate activism in the public sphere, the tensions between movements, what role politics or mass media play, and the impact of activist expression toward shifting social change in society. Key in this course will be for you to mediate between movements and thinkers who are heard, seen, and silenced within particular social conditions. Discovering how and why some social movements fare better than others will be an important component.

**A NOTE ABOUT COURSE CONTENT:** Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we talk about provocative material. Please be advised that when we explore controversial topics, they will always be framed within an academic context. Keeping in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it's an opportunity for learning, and you may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, listen to, or discuss. Please note, however, that you will be responsible for any course material you miss if you choose not to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about content or climate, feel free to speak with me about it right away.

**READING REQUIREMENTS:**

- *Course Reader* made available on our Canvas Site.
- Documents are in Power Point, Microsoft Word, and PDF formats.

**LEARNING AND COURSE OUTCOMES:** By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an increased knowledge of social movements and activism both historically and contemporarily;
- Apply theories of mobilization and movement formation to social activism;
- Explain the general dynamics of social movements including organizational strategies, resource mobilization, and collective identity;
- Describe types of social movements, including identity movements, political movements, grassroots movements, and institutionalized movements;
- Discuss the institutionalization of social movements into law and policy; and
- Explore the role of art, literature, music, and/or popular culture in activism.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have medical information to share with me in the event of an emergency, please contact me via email. Emergency preparedness is important! If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, please see me immediately so I can also refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you prefer, you may contact them directly by going to B132 or by calling 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110. Information is also available on their [website](#).

**EXPLORE THE LMC!** The Library Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the LMC at least once a week, but you can also access it via the web. Talk to a Reference Librarian at the Library (D-126), by calling (425) 564-6161, or by [email](#).

- [LMC Research Guide](#)
- [Main Library Media Center](#)
- [For article databases](#)

**GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS:**

- Check into our online classroom no less than *four times per week* (yes – I do keep track!). This means you log on and surf around the site. No need to check in with me on this one. Make this class work for you on your own time. We're on the Honor System with your presence in class.
- Complete readings and homework assignments *on time*. I do not check whether you complete your readings; again, this is on the honor system. You do need to read your required material to complete homework assignments.
- Late homework assignments *are accepted*, but *late exams are not*. Understand that this is *set in stone*. Take it seriously.
  - Late homework is docked 10% for every day the work is late, including Saturdays and Sundays, except for Discussion Boards (see special note, below).

➤ Special Note on Discussion Boards:

1. Initial Posts are due on Thursdays by midnight.
  2. You are required to respond to the *Initial Posts* of at least two colleagues in your Main DBs. These responses are due Sundays by midnight (you may respond to people anytime between Thursdays and Sundays).
  3. To have an opportunity to receive full credit for Main DBs, you must complete the Initial Post *and* Responses. Initial Posts only receive half-credit. Responses-only receive zero credit. Take care to note this. However, to receive credit for Main Discussions, you have to participate in the discussion during the week of the discussion. In other words, when it's active. Think of it this way: if we were in a brick and mortar classroom and you arrived to participate in the discussion a week later, nobody would be there, correct? Same deal here.
  4. If you are late on your DBs, I deduct based on your Initial Posts.
- I expect that your behavior in our classroom is respectful. Continued disrespectful behavior in my class will result in your grade lowering. Please keep your postings to discussion boards (DBs) thoughtful and polite. One-on-one conversations should be taken offline, so our DBs don't get clogged. If you find at any point that you are uncomfortable with anything posted to a DB, please email me right away. Be wary of soapboxing in this class; you may be tempted to present your opinion and editorialize, but refrain from doing this.

**Remember: Falling behind can be hazardous to your health!**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation*:	150 points
Discussion Boards (5):	250 points
Think?/Act! Assignments (3):	225 points
Midterm Examination (1):	100 points
Final Exam (1):	150 points
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>825 points</b>

Participation points accrue with various short assignments in the Discussion Area, such as your

Introductory DB. These are labeled **PARTICIPATION DBs**.

The Main DB assignments are labeled **MAIN DBs**.

All are required.

*The Fine Print* (or, what I really mean by that table above):

**Attendance & Participation:** Check in no less than four times per week, be engaged with all of your discussion board assignments, provoke energetic and polite discussion, listen/read/comprehend actively, work respectfully with your colleagues in class, take loads of notes from your readings, look up words you don't understand, ask questions, think critically about the world around you, etc. Make use of the Q&A Board as

well. This is not scored, but even if you don't have questions, you might be able to answer somebody's query – so have some presence there.

**Main Discussion Board Assignments:** The work done in the Discussion Board area will have you engage course material and work closely together. You are expected to participate in these assignments in order to generate critical discussion amongst one another. These assignments are always due on Thursdays and Sundays (your initial post goes up Thursday and your responses to one another are due Sundays). Your DBs are graded on two things: your original post and your responses (two of them) to colleagues of yours in the class. You must do both to earn full credit. A submission with no responses posted earns ½ credit at most, and responses without an original submission receive zero credit.

**"Participation" Discussion Board Assignments:** These are meant to support you throughout the course and will include things like Introductions & Feedback for the course. They are all required and the grades are folded into your overall Participation Grade.

**Think?/Act! Assignments:** These short assignments are an opportunity to put your learning to use as you explore the world of Activism and Social Change using the Sociological Imagination.

**For all of your written work:** Submit proofread work **only**. Work not proofread will be returned *once* for a rewrite, expected to be handed in within 48 hours. If you need help with your writing, please make use of the following student support services:

- [Academic Success Center](#)
- [Academic Tutoring Center](#)
- [TRiO Student Support Services](#)
- [Writing Lab @ BC](#)

**Required Writing Guidelines (emphasis on *required*):**

- ***You must follow the required writing guidelines in the syllabus. Not doing so will result in your grade lowering by 2 points per assignment.***
- Twelve-point sized Times font, *double-spaced*. Single spaced assignments will be docked points.
- 1" margins all around
- APA Citations where appropriate – credit must be given even where any *ideas* presented in the paper are not your own (see notes below about avoiding plagiarism)
- Title pages and bibliographies *are not counted* as pages due
- Student information is at the top left of the page, single spaced
- There are no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Paragraphs contain no less than four sentences.
- Magazines, newspapers, journals, and books are *italicized*. Movie titles, article titles, song titles, etc. are "in quotation marks." Quotes inside of a quotation use 'single quotation marks.'
- Avoid the universal "we", "our", "us" – ask yourself: Can I speak for everyone? If you cannot, do not write it. Avoid phrasing such as "nowadays..." and "since the beginning of time." Be accurate. Know what you're writing and why.

- *Do not ever use* Wikipedia, CliffNotes, or other such encyclopedic references or online dictionaries. Wikipedia is not peer-reviewed and therefore unreliable. Do your research. If you're going to research online (which is encouraged and totally legit), make sure you understand what you're seeking. Do a deep dive into the internet to find your stuff.
- Be sure that no more than 20% of your papers are outside sources. You must be providing your analysis while you draw from material presented to you in class.

**Your written work is evaluated on:**

1) Content

- a. You are expected to fulfill the entire assignment. Doing the minimum amount of work expected will likely get you a passing grade, but not an outstanding one. You're expected to go the extra mile.
- b. Fully developing your argument(s) and making use of examples and evidence to support your argument(s).
- c. The flow of thought throughout the paper, with strong analyses and conclusions, should be consistent throughout your writing. I add points to your final grade for continued improvement.

2) Writing Style

- a. Excellent command of the written English language. In other words, most excellent grammar. **NOTE: If you struggle with grammar and spelling or are an ESL student, please let me know! I'm happy to work with you and point you in the right direction.**
- b. Your demonstrated clarity of thought.
- c. Good organization and attention to detail.
- d. The clear and present persuasiveness of your argument/s.
- e. Your ability to be creative, thoughtful, and clever. Make it an interesting read.
- f. PROOFREAD your work. Please do a spell/grammar check before you hand it in. Read it out loud to yourself, too! It helps.
- g. Dude, like totally don't write **colloquially**. A conversation is a conversation. A paper is an entirely different way of presenting your research and ideas. ☺

**Preventing Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty occurring when students use information or material from outside sources and do not properly cite those sources. This is grounds for disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and its consequences. Plagiarism occurs if:

- a. You do not cite quotations and/or attribute borrowed ideas.
- b. You fail to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks.
- c. You do not write summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words and/or doesn't document his/her source.
- d. You turn in work created by another person.

- e. You submit or use your prior work for a current or past course, or work from one current course in another course *without express permission* from your professors. This may also be considered academic dishonesty.
- f. Consequences: If it is determined that you have plagiarized or engaged in other forms of academic dishonesty, you will likely fail the assignment and possibly the course, despite points earned through other work. Acts of academic dishonesty are reviewed for disciplinary action.

### **Grading:**

Please use the following rubric to help explain the grade you're given for a given assignment. I offer comments on all of your written work and general comments on the Discussion Boards – sometimes more, sometimes less. Please read my comments and do not hesitate to come to me with any questions you ever have on a grade you receive. There is no limit to how many times you email me! My email door is *always* open.

**90-100 = A.** “A” work shows me you’re engaged with all course material by utilizing quotes and ideas. It is writing *completely free* from grammar and spelling errors, demonstrating your command not only of the English language but of the form and flow of a solid piece of written work. I also like to see/read/hear your “writing voice.” That is, I want your style to come through! Your arguments should be solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You should demonstrate a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class media and how they intersect with one another. Your ideas should be “fleshed out” and not just a series of statements, in other words.

**80-89 = B.** The “B” tells me you’re doing very good work. You may have a couple of grammar issues, but your work is still tidy, and the writing is still strong. You have a firm grasp on the themes in the course, but you may not be as well-versed in the readings and media and/or lecture material as you could be. I should see that you’re being challenged and that you’re struggling with the course issues and themes, and what they represent to you in an interconnected way. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others.

**70-79 = C.** “C” work means that you’re not as invested in the material as I would like to see. Your writing is relatively weaker than it could be and you’re not thinking as critically as I would like you to. You write the bare minimum of the length requirement. Some of what you point out I may not follow logically, and your use of the course materials may not be as solid as it could be. You omit some of the important points raised in class.

**60-69 = D.** Ah, the “D.” “D” is for “Don’t be Discouraged.” I will work closely with each of you as much as time allows, getting you up to speed in class. Your struggles should not be with writing so much at this point but if they are, please see me immediately. “D” work is not proofread, nor does it deal critically with the themes in the course. It responds, perhaps, to one part of one of the readings but there is the little-to-no integration of material, and you’re not responding to the questions raised in the

assignment. Demonstrated an understanding of the course materials is not presented clearly, or at all. (NOTE: A “D” and below may be rewritten **once** if you choose to do so. It must be turned in within 72 hours, and I enter the better grade.)

**A: 94-100**  
**A-: 90-93**  
**B+: 87-89**  
**B: 84-86**  
**B-: 80-83**  
**C+: 77-79**  
**C: 74-76**  
**C-: 70-73**  
**D+: 67-69**  
**D: 64-66**  
**D-: 60-63**  
**F: 59 and below**

**COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

ASSIGNMENTS ARE ALWAYS DUE BY MIDNIGHT

PLEASE DO NOT WORK AHEAD MORE THAN TWO WEEKS

THE SYLLABUS SCHEDULE IS MIRRORED IN THE MODULES SECTION OF THE COURSE.

**Week One: September 18**

**Readings:**

- [The Wisdom of Sociology](#)
- [“Everyday Activists” by Peter Kaufman](#)

**Assignments:**

- Participation DB I: Introductions. Due Sunday, 9/24
  - This discussion does not require you to respond to your colleagues.
- Participation DB 2: Activism & Social Change: What do YOU think it is? Due Sunday 9/24
  - This discussion does not require you to respond to your colleagues.

**Week Two: September 25**

**Video:**

- [Democracy Now! Interview: Angela Davis on Prison Abolition, the War on Drugs, and Why Social Movements Shouldn't Wait on Obama](#)

**Recommended Film**

- [Free Angela and All Political Prisoners](#)
  - This film is available for streaming at a cost on several sites. Amazon had the least expensive. Not required. Strongly recommended.

**Reading:**

- You will read an article you find on your own this week, based on one of the many topics in Professor Davis's talk on *Democracy Now*. Her topics are: incarceration and the current prison system, envisioning a future decarceration, poverty and lack of education in relation to incarceration, racial inequality in relation to incarceration, the prison system as a replacement for mental health institution, health care for prisoners, prison reform, women in prison, drug addiction, political prisoners, and the Prison Industrial Complex overall. You should choose an article which elaborates on *one* of these topics. Make sure your article is [peer reviewed](#). If you are unsure, email me the bibliographic notation and I'll confirm for you.

Assignment:

- Main DB I Due Thursday, 9/28, responses by Sunday, 10/1

Week Three: October 2

Video:

- [TEDx Talk. Jackson Katz: Violence Against Women – it's a men's issue](#)

Readings:

- [Privilege 101: A Quick & Dirty Guide](#)
- [Robot Hugs: Strips & Pieces](#)
- [Rock Bottom: Why Mastodon's misogynistic new video misfires](#)
  - [Mastodon: The Motherload \(video\)](#)
  - Please also note that this does not represent heavy metal culture overall. The writer of this article is a die-hard metalhead!

Assignments:

- Think?/Act! I. Due Sunday, 10/8

Week Four: October 9

Readings:

- Sudbury, J. (2009). Maroon Abolitionists: Black Gender-oppressed Activists in Anti-Prison Movement in the U.S. and Canada. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 9(1), 1-29

Websites:

- [Support CeCe McDonald](#)
  - Click on "CeCe's Blog" and read two blog entries
- [Laverne Cox-Speaking Engagement](#)

Assignments:

- Main DB 2: Initial Submission Due Thursday, 10/12; Responses Due Sunday, 10/15

Week Five: October 16

Readings:

- None*. Please take this week to study for your midterm examination.

Assignments:

- Midterm Essay due Sunday, 10/22
- Participation DB 3: How are we doing? Due Sunday, 10/22

Week Six: October 23

Readings:



- Teresa Correa & Sun Ho Jeong (2011) RACE AND ONLINE CONTENT CREATION, Information, Communication & Society, 14:5, 638-659.
- Kopacz, M. A., & Lawton, B. (2011). Rating the YouTube Indian: Viewer Ratings of Native American Portrayals on a Viral Video Site. *American Indian Quarterly*, 35(2), 241-257.
- [An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube](#) by Dr. Michael Wesch

**Assignments:**

- Main DB 3: Initial submission Thursday, 10/26, Responses Due Sunday, 10/29

**Week Seven: October 30**

**Reading:**

- Brack, G., Lassiter, P. S., Kitzinger, R., Hill, M., McMahon, H., & Fall, K.A. (2013). Individual Psychology on the Virtual Frontier: Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Gaming. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 69(1), 24-40.

**Website:**

- Boundless website on [Social Capital](#)

**Film/Video Screenings:**

- [Free To Play: The Movie](#)
  - [Film Website](#)
- [Game Theory: Why Do You Play Video Games?](#)

**Assignments:**

- Think?/Act! Assignment 2. Due Sunday, 11/5

**Week Eight: November 6**

**Readings:**

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. (May 21, 2014). "The Case For Reparations: Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole." Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- Website: [Black Lives Matter](#)
  - Explore the site in its entirety, but the required bit is all three sections on the *About* link.
- Listen to the interview with Coates on NPR's *All Things Considered*: <http://www.npr.org/2014/05/23/315279271/the-atlantics-ta-nehisi-coates-builds-a-case-for-reparations>
- Watch the interview with Coates on *Moyer's & Company*: <http://billmoyers.com/episode/facing-the-truth-the-case-for-reparations/>
  - Explore the "Dig Deeper" areas below the video player on the Moyer's page.

**Assignments:**

- Think?/Act! Paper 3. Due Sunday, 11/12

**Week Nine: November 13**

**Readings:**

- Lynch, T. (2004). Funerals-R-Us: From Funeral Home to Mega-Industry. *Generations*, 28 (2), 11-14.
- [Infinity Burial Project Blog: The Infinity Mushroom](#)

**Film:**

- [The Undertaking. Frontline.](#)

**Assignments:**

- Main DB 4: Initial submission Thursday, 11/16, Responses Due Sunday, 11/19

**Week Ten: November 20**  
**Holiday November 23, 24**

**Readings:**

- None.

**Assignments:**

- Main DB 5: Initial Submission due Tuesday 11/21, Responses due Wednesday, 11/22.

**Week Eleven: November 27**

**Readings:**

- No readings. Congrats! You made it!

**Assignments:**

- Final Participation DB 4, due Sunday, 12/3

**Finals Week: December 5-7**

**Final Exam will be open from 8 am 12/5 through midnight 12/7**  
**The exam will time out after four hours. Do not start the exam unless you intend to finish it during your chosen period.**

*Let's have a wonderful term!*

**About the Professor:**

I'm an adjunct professor of Sociology and Cultural Studies here at BC as well as at Colorado State University-Global Campus. I'm a Career Coach, Professional Editor & Indexer, and a writer. I have several projects at the moment, including editing a volume of essays on Jews & heavy metal, indexing a book on the gay and lesbian history of jazz music in Ohio, writing a cookbook, and editing my science fiction novel. I received my Ph.D. in Sociology (with an emphasis in American Studies) from UC Santa Cruz. I received my first MA in Sociology from Humboldt State University and my second MA in Sociology from UCSC, my BA in Sociology and Journalism from Mills College, and my AA in English and Creative Writing from Vista Community College. I run a creative writing workshop, have a houseful of teenagers and young adults, a husband, and a cat named Gimli, Son of Gloin, Cousin of Balin. You can check out my websites at the top of this syllabus if you're so inclined. I look forward to working with each of you this quarter!