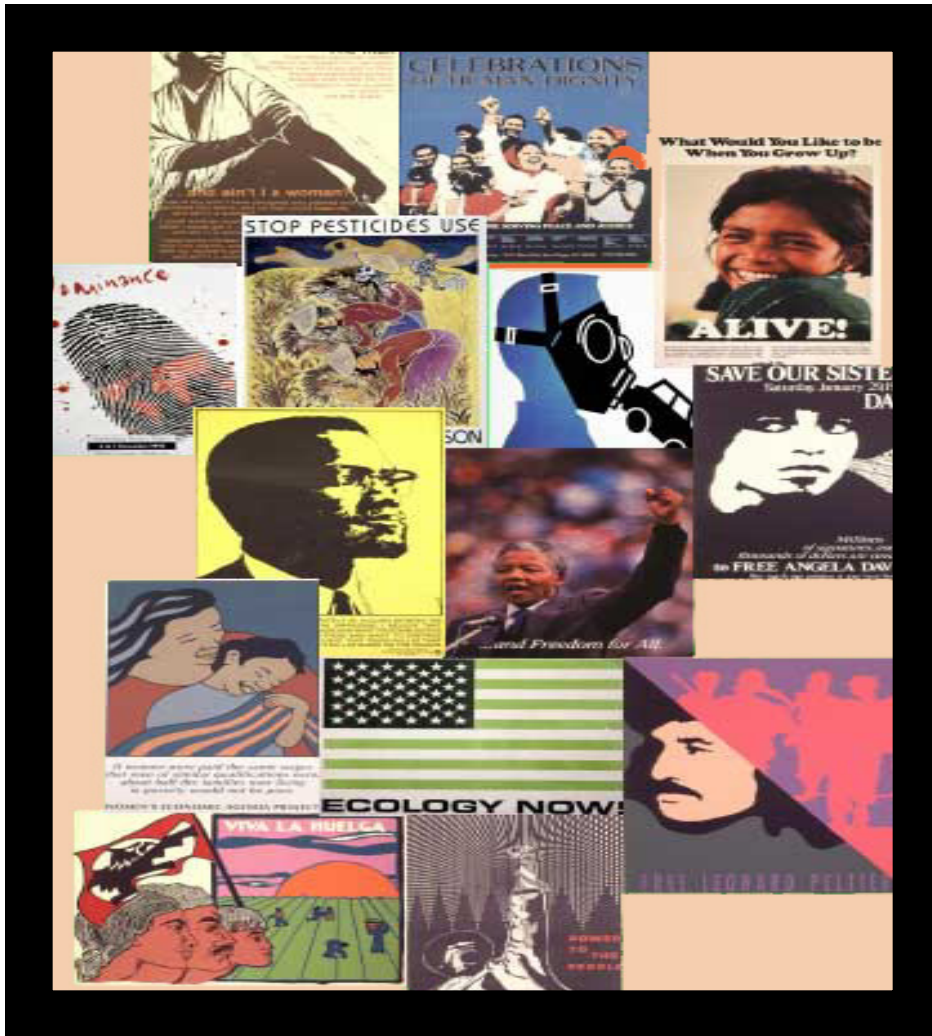


**Community
Organizing and
Movements**



MWF 1:20-2:30 pm
Stevenson 301A
Dr. Meta Mendel-Reyes
mendel-reyesm@berea.edu
(the best way to reach me).

Office: Carter G. Woodson Center 208
Phone: 3940

Office Hours:
M 3-5 & by Th 10-12
& by appt.

Open door policy: If the door is open, you may check to see if I'm available.

TA: Amos Izerimana
Contact info & office hours to be posted on Moodle.

Introduction

This course explores peace and social justice in practice, focusing on movements and community organizing. Our focus is not so much on the “what” and “why” of peace and social justice but on the “how”: how have people attempted to bring their visions of a peaceful, more just world into reality? Throughout history, groups of people have struggled for peace and social justice, utilizing the methods of nonviolent direct action and organizing. Despite opposition from elites willing to use intimidation and violence, these methods have achieved extraordinary successes, including ending legal segregation and winning women’s right to vote. A contemporary example is the recent outpouring of protest against the murders of young Black men by the police. While there is no blueprint for success, we can learn a lot by studying lessons from experienced community organizers and movement activists.

In keeping with our goal of applying what we are learning, we will practice movement-building/organizing ourselves. There will be an extended Active Learning Experience project in which students will be divided into teams that will run a mini-campaign around an issue of the group's choice. Past examples have included campaigns for Berea College to increase faculty diversity and for a regular community forum with the police.

This course emphasizes interactive learning, because students learn best when they take charge of their own education. Studies show that knowledge is retained more deeply and for a longer period when students discover it for themselves, through facilitated activities and projects, outside as well as inside the classroom.

This is a Moodle course, and nearly all class materials (except books) will be distributed electronically. It will be your responsibility to check Moodle frequently for course updates and to pay attention to news forum posts (emails).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe, analyze, and compare theories and case studies of nonviolent social movements and community organizing.
2. Describe and analyze key practices in community organizing and movement-building.
3. Demonstrate skills in movement building and community organizing.

READINGS (to be purchased and brought to class when we are discussing them):

- Lee Staples, *Roots to Power: A Manual for Community Organizing*, 3rd edition (be sure to get the right edition)
- Mark and Paul Engler, *This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt is Shaping the 21st Century*
- War Resisters' International, [Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns](#) (available to download)
- Greg Jobin-Leeds and Agitarte, *When We Fight We Win: Twenty-First Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World*.

Additional material will be placed on Moodle.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Final grades will be based on 1000 points.

Mini-Campaign	400 total
Issue (submit here, 1 per team)	25
Strategic Analysis	100
Campaign Plan and timeline	100
Evaluations (2)	50
Campaign Presentation	25
Final Campaign Report and Evaluation (team)	50
Individual Campaign Report and Evaluation	50
Introductory Reflective Essay	50
Final Reflective Essay	50
Movement essay/presentation	100
Interview essay/presentation	100
P-cards	75
Reading Quizzes	100
Class Participation	100
Film review	25

Letter and Percentage Equivalent

A Grades	B Grades	C Grades	D Grades	F Grade
A 100-93%/pts.	B+ 89-88	C+ 79-78	D+ 69-68	F <60
A- 92-90	B 87-83	C 77-73	D 67-63	
	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60	

Berea College Grading Scale: The quality of a student’s academic achievement in each Berea College course is reported through final course grades in a grading scale adopted by the Faculty: A = Excellent work; B = Good Work; C = Competent work; D = Poor work; F = Failing work. Note that A is reserved for excellent work; good work earns a B.

Midterm Grade: Your midterm grades will reflect the work you have completed up to the halfway point of the semester. The midterm grade will **not reflect 50%** of your final grade because the majority of the assignments will not be completed until the 2nd half of the semester. Your progress grade will be on Moodle; be aware that it is approximate and

higher than the final grade because Moodle counts assignments yet to be completed as if they were 100%.

Discussion of grades: Please let me know about any calculation errors. I will be happy to discuss any grade that you receive on any assignment, but these conversations must take place between 24 hours to one week after you receive the grade. Grade discussions are not productive unless you have had time to read my comments and look over your work while it's still fresh.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS

More information about assignments can be found in the Course Schedule on Moodle, and will be provided in class. With each assignment, I will do my best to make sure that my expectations are clear, but if you have questions, please feel free to email me or Amos, or come to see me during office hours or by appointment.

Mini-Campaign: The Mini-Campaign will give you an opportunity to practice community organizing and movement-building skills. In teams, you will select a real issue and objective, develop a campaign plan, implement your campaign, and evaluate it. The Mini-Campaign will take 4 months of the semester. The assignment includes a campaign plan, strategic analysis, campaign evaluations, and a final campaign report and oral presentation. It is by far the largest grade item in the course, and will be a group grade except for part of the final report.

Reflective Essays: There will be 2 reflective essays, one at the beginning and one at the end of the course. The first will explore your starting identity and views on peace, social justice, social movements, and community organizing; and the second will explore ways in which the class has affected your view of yourself as an activist.

Movement essay: You will research, write an essay, and give an oral presentation on an actual movement.

Interview essay: You will conduct an interview with a community organizer or movement activist, write an essay, and give a presentation to the class.

P-cards: For each class where there is reading assigned, you will complete a p-card (participation card), which contains your takeaways from the reading, something that interested or disturbed you, and a question you have. P-cards must be typed and submitted to Moodle ***before class***; a late p-card will be counted as a 0. You will be called on randomly to share your p-card with the class.

Reading Quizzes: There will be reading quizzes on most days. All you need to do to prepare is to keep up with the reading; the quizzes are not meant to be tricky. In cases of excused absence, the grade for that quiz will be the average of your quizzes to that point.

Class Participation: Your grade will be based on your participation in class discussion *and* clear demonstration that you have read and thought about the readings. Every student starts with a C; it will go up or down (or stay the same) depending on the level of your class participation. Be prepared to be called on.

Participation also includes general attentiveness (e.g. no sleeping – it counts as an absence) and taking part in class activities. It's also important to “share the air”; monopolizing the conversation lowers your class participation grade. Everyone starts with a C in class participation; your grade will go up or down depending on whether you meet these basic expectations:

- Participating in class discussion without monopolizing it.
- Interest in and respect for the contributions of other class members.

All of us need to keep in mind that we bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to the course, and will be discussing issues that some or all of us feel strongly about. This is an opportunity for learning from each other, and for practicing honest yet respectful dialogue. Realistically, however, I will be surprised if there are no times when the tension in the classroom makes it an uncomfortable place to be. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us that we learn through what he called “creative tension,” conflict that is neither buried under deceptive surface agreement nor escalated into an exchange of personal attacks. So, let's try to step out of our comfort zones and be creative about any tension that results.

As a class, we'll put together a list of expectations that all of us will be expected to follow (me, too).

Course Policies

Attendance in class and at required out-of-class events is mandatory. Attendance is essential for your learning, and your absences affect the rest of us, too. This is a discussion-based course, and you must be present to contribute and to know what is happening in the class. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed, and for being thoroughly prepared to participate in the next session; look at Moodle to see what you missed before contacting Amos or me. Tardies disrupt class, and two tardies count as an absence. You may miss 3 classes *for any reason* (you do not need to contact me), so plan ahead; you never know when you will need to miss class, so try not to use up your free absences early in the semester. Starting with the 4th absence, each absence will lower your final grade by 1/3 (e.g. B- becomes C+), and 6 absences could mean failure in the course. The only exception to these policies is for documented ***emergencies*** and certain academic reasons - you must contact me in advance (unless impossible) and provide written evidence on the day you return to class.

Submission of assignments: Assignments should be submitted to Moodle *before class* on the due date, unless directed otherwise. Please, don't submit assignments by email, they can easily get mixed up with the tremendous amount of email I get every day. In the event that you can't connect to Moodle, you may email the assignment to me by the due date to show me that you did it. The assignment still needs to be submitted to Moodle as soon as you can access it, because that is where the grading takes place.

Late assignments: Each day or portion of the day that an assignment is late will reduce your grade on that assignment by 1/3. No assignments will be accepted after 1 week.

Academic honesty: Each student is responsible for reading and complying with Berea College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy, which is published in the Student Handbook under Student Rights and Responsibilities, begins as follows: *Students are expected to be scrupulous in their observance of high standards of honesty in regard to tests, assignments, term papers, and all other procedures relating to class work. Academic dishonesty as used here includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, theft of examinations or other materials from an instructor's files or office or from a room in which these are being copied, copying of an instructor's test material without the permission of the instructor, theft of computer files from another person, or attributing to one's self the work of others, with or without the others' permission....*

Please note: Berea faculty are required by the college to **report** any incidents of academic dishonesty to the Office of Academic Services. The academic dishonesty report becomes part of the student's file. If the offense is particularly serious or there is a second incident, the student will be referred to the formal judicial process. At minimum, any case of academic honesty will result in failing this course.

Communication: I try my best to be available to students, and to respond to questions about the course or your performance. The easiest way to reach me is to come to office hours or through email; in nearly all cases, I will return your message within 24 hours, usually earlier. Your feedback on any aspect of the class is always welcome. At midterm, you will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the class. Student feedback is very important to me, and I often make changes in response to it or to my own observation of the learning process.

Student Bill of Rights: I comply with the following Bill of Rights.

- a. We have the right to be recognized as individuals.
- b. We have the right to voice an opinion that is based on a self-chosen value system.
- c. We have the right to dissent or differ from the professor and from others in the class, and a responsibility to challenge others and be challenged.

d. We have the right to personal dignity not to be infringed by the conduct of the professor or other students.

e. We have the right to a curriculum that is inclusive of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and age.

(adapted from Conwell Strickland, Excellence in University Teaching, and Tina Pippen, University of Louisville)

Computer policy:

In general, you will not need to bring your laptop to class, except for a few sessions about which you will be notified in advance. Otherwise, you may not turn it on for any reason. When we do use laptops in class, you must use them only as directed, and lower the top when they are no longer required. If I have to remind you more than once, it will affect your class participation grade.

Cell phones: All cell phones are to be turned off and stowed prior to class (out of sight). If I have to remind you more than once, it will affect your class participation grade.

Disability Statement (in accordance with Federal law)

Berea College will provide reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities so that learning experiences are accessible. If you experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please see Lisa Ladanyi (Disability & Accessibility Services, 110 Lincoln Hall, 985-3327, lisa.ladanyi@berea.edu) to discuss options. Students must provide their instructor(s) with an accommodation letter before any accommodations will be provided. Accommodations are not provided retroactively. Please meet with your instructor(s) in a confidential environment to discuss arrangements for these accommodations.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

The course schedule, and reading and other assignments can be found on Moodle. Readings are to be completed and thought about before class on the day in which they appear in the schedule. Written and other assignments are due before class on the day indicated with ***Due***.

Important: The professor reserves the right to update the schedule or assignments in response to student feedback, observations of student learning, or availability of guests. Revisions to assignments will appear on Moodle and will be announced in class whenever possible. ***It is essential*** that you check Moodle for updates frequently and watch for email announcements related to the course.

This is an important time in the history of the United States to be studying organizing and movements. I'm looking forward to learning with you this semester!