ACTUAL PROCESSES AND THEORIES OF THE CURRENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Jakob Rigi  
MA and PHD level  
4 credits (8 ECTS)

Aims: This course aims exploring major instances of contemporary social protests which have surged in response to neo-liberalism and the economic crisis. It will cover the Alterglobalisation Movement, the working class struggle in China, the Arab Spring, Greek protests, French Riots, Occupy Wall Street and Indignados in Spain. It will also discuss the major theories on these movements.

The course has two parts:

Part I deals with the actual processes of these protests.

Part II reviews theories on these movements.

The first week is devoted to the French Revolution 1789-1794, and the European revolutions of 148-1849. The reason for this is that the messages of these revolutions still echo in anti-authoritarian movements of our time such as the Arab Spring and the Iranian Green Protest.

Week 2 deals with the main messages of 19th century revolutionary socialism. The reason is that these messages also echo, though not fully, in the contemporary anti-capitalist protests.

The rest of the course deals with the current anti-capitalist movements and the ways in which they have been theorized.

The learning consequences: The course will enable the students to have a focused empirical and theoretical understanding of contemporary social movements.

Method of teaching:  
Every session will start with a short lecture by the instructor, followed by a couple of short presentations by students and then an extensive discussion by all.

Mode of examination

1- Active participation 20%
2- Presentations 20%
3- A final paper 3000-3500 words 60%

The course`s material will be available electronically.
Students are required to read the main readings for each week and read optionally the supplementary readings.

**The Weekly Layout of the Course**

**PART I: THE ACTUAL PROCESSES**

**Week 1:** The French Revolution 1789-1894, and the European Revolutions of 1848-49

**Main Reading**


**Supplementary Reading**
Erik Honsbawm, Optional Reading from Hobsbawm above.

**Week 2:** The socialist Movement of 19th Century

**Main Readings**
Marx & Engels, *Communist Manifesto*
Marx, K, Selections from *Civil War In France*.

**Supplementary Reading**
John Read, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (on Russian Revolution)

**Week 3:** Alter Globalization Movement


**Supplementary Reading**
Week 4: Social struggle in China

Main Reading


Supplementary Reading


Week 5: The Arab Spring and the Political Protest in Iran

Main Reading
Rigi, J. 2012. ‘Iran at the crossroads of democracy and Dictatorship’ Focaal. 20 pages.


Supplementary reading

Week 6: Greek and French Riots

Main Reading


**Supplementary Reading**


---

**Week 7: Occupy Wall Street and Indignados**


The chapter on Spain from Castells, 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movement in the Age of Internet*.

**Supplementary Reading**

R. Johnson et al 2011, `The tactics of the port shut down`.

Winslaw, 2011, `Who is speaking for whom? The case of Occupy and the Longshoremen’s Union`, *CounterPunch*.

Wall Street of the Waterfront, from camps to ports`, *CounterPunch*.

West Coast Shutdown Sparks Debates`, *LABOR notes*.

---

**PART II: THEORIES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

**Week 7: The Agency of Labour**

**Main reading**


**Supplementary Reading**


Week 8: The Rebirth of History?

Main Reading

Supplementary Reading

Week 9: Risks and Dreams

Main Reading

Supplementary Reading

Week 10: Creating Commons

Main Reading


Supplementary reading
M. Bauwens, 2011, `The Emergence of Open Design and Open Manufacturing`, We-Magazine.

Week 11: The Role of the Internet and Forms of Organization

Main Reading
Fuchs, Ch. `Reflections on Manuel Castells` *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movement in the Age of Internet.*

**Supplementary Reading**
Selections from Castells, 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movement in the Age of Internet.*

**Week 12: Revolution?**

**Main Reading**

**Supplementary Reading**