

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

**TITLE:** Social Movements and the Church

**TERM:** Spring 2020-2021

**PROFESSOR:** Hunter Farrell

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**REGISTRATION:** LIMITED TO: 20  
# AUDITORS: 10

UNLIMITED \_\_\_\_\_  
NO AUDITORS \_\_\_\_\_

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Like most religions, Christianity can legitimate a society's status quo or disrupt it; it can integrate and justify the culture of the powerful or overturn entire social, economic and political systems. Historically, when this disruptive power has been generated at the intersections of the Christian Church and social movements, it has changed both, often profoundly. This course will reflect sociologically and theologically (looking at social movement theory and Christian theological arguments for and against social activism); inductively (examining eight case studies of Church engagement in social movement activism); and practically (delineating what social movements and the Church have to gain from their mutual relationship).

### CLASS OBJECTIVES:

1. Master the tools of social movement theory, using a case study of a recent Latin American environmental conflict.
2. Learn to reflect theologically and missiologically on the place of justice and social activism in the *missio Dei*.
3. Analyze U.S. Church engagement with global/national social movements using the case study method:
  - a. Civil Rights Movement (1954-68)
  - b. Farmworkers Movement (1965-72)
  - c. Anti-abortion Movement (1965-present)
  - d. Sanctuary Movement around U.S. military involvement in Central America (1980-91)
  - e. South African Anti-Apartheid Movement (1983-90)
  - f. LGBTQ Movement (1987-present)
  - g. Palestine's Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) Movement (2005-present)
  - h. Black Lives Matter (2013-present)
4. Understand mission as accompaniment: A missiological response to social movements
5. The mutual impacts of social movements and the Church: Rethinking church structures, leadership and resource mobilization—the church as movement.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/READING:

Required texts (for purchase)

- Marsh, Charles. *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From the Civil Rights Movement to Today*. (New York: Basic Books, 2005). ISBN 978-0465044160, \$17.95.

Articles or excerpts available online (to be listed in syllabus)

### ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

1. Class Leadership – attendance, preparation and class participation, including group work (20%)
2. Discussion Board posts based on weekly class readings (20%)
3. Small Group Assignment I: Use one social movement theory to analyze Anti-Extractive Industries Movement in Peru (10%)
4. Small Group Assignment II: Use an assigned social movement theory to analyze one of eight case studies (30%)
5. Final Project (1500 word “Open Letter” to congregation proposing accompaniment of local affiliate of national social movement) (20%)

**ATTENDANCE:** Required.