

PIA5300: POLITICS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN DEVELOPING ASIA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Politics and Social Movements in Developing Asia

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

5300

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

AIS5000 Social Movements and the Development Process

Equivalent Courses

AIS5300 Politics and Social Movements in Developing Asia

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Social movements are a critical component of modern governance. Collective action and protest events often capture the world's imagination. But how do they come into being? When are they more likely to emerge? How do social groups mobilize, and choose protest tactics? Why some people come to participate and become activists, while others do not? Why do so many social movements fail in achieving their initial goals but, in the end, still transform societies? This course offers a critical engagement with these questions. It is designed to generate a robust understanding of theories explaining social movements, their origins and development, and the outcomes of such struggles. Focusing on Asia, the course examines the impact of collective action and unconventional politics on thematic issues such as political change, gender equality, environmental change, ethnic and religious identity. It concludes with a reflection on (old and new) tools and repertoires that social movements tend to mobilise - including arts and social media - to help students better grasp the many approaches to, and outcomes of, collective action, protest, and claim-making.

Course Aims:

The course seeks to assess and summarise competing theories on the origins, mobilisation and success (and failure) of social movements challenging the status quo of powerful social, political, economic and cultural systems. Through unpacking this exciting phenomenon, it offers students the analytical tools and background to critically review, assess and reflect on the world's historical as well as emerging social movements. Students will be able to explain the role of social movements and collective action in modern Asian societies and evaluate the normative and practical implications of their impact.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs | | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|---|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Describe and compare major concepts and theorizations of contentious politics and social movements | | x | x | x |
| 2 | Explain the origins, mobilization and role of social movements in contemporary societies and evaluate their impact on politics and society | | x | x | x |
| 3 | Discuss important historical and contemporary social movements and unconventional politics, while connecting them to less-studied cases in Asia | | x | x | x |
| 4 | Develop critical tools to assess when social movements might emerge, succeed or fail, and an ability to communicate in nuanced terms on the subject | | x | x | x |

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs | | Brief Description | CILO No. | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|----------------------|---|------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Lectures | Students will engage with various theoretical approaches and frameworks presented by the instructor | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |
| 2 | Reading and analysis | Students will engage with appropriate readings and analyse visual materials shown in class | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |
| 3 | Class discussions | Students will actively participate in case based-discussions of social movements mobilization and unconventional politics | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |
| 4 | Research and writing | Students will use relevant materials and apply skills to write essays and papers as set by the instructor | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

| ATs | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- " for nil entry) | Allow Use of GenAI? | |
|-----|---|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----|
| 1 | Participation in class | 1, 2, 4 | 10 | Weekly | Yes |
| 2 | Group presentation and Q&A | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 20 | Weekly (once per team) | No |
| 3 | Book review (c. 1,500 words) | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 30 | Week 5 | No |
| 4 | Protest Case Study (c. 2,000-word research paper) | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 40 | Week 11 | No |

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Attendance and participation in class debates and exercises (including online) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of contribution to class discussions and intervention

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Continuous contributions to classroom discussions and interventions that show a high level of analysis

Good

(B+, B, B-) Frequent contributions to classroom discussions and interventions with a good analysis level

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Infrequent contributions to classroom discussions but which reveal attempts at analysis

Marginal

(D) Few contributions to classroom discussions and contributions that show little analytical insight

Failure

(F) No contributions to classroom discussions and repeated absence

Assessment Task

Group presentation (teamwork) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of argument, structure of class presentation Cohesiveness of overall presentation oral delivery visual aids Evidence of critical research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellently structured, supporting an analytical argument backed by excellent research and answering set topic or question, clear speech, excellent use of powerpoint or similar tools

Good

(B+, B, B-) A good structure at least partially supporting an analytical argument, backed by good research answering set topic or question, clear speech, good use of powerpoint or similar tools

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Adequate structure, to some extent supporting an analytical argument backed by some research, providing some answers to a set topic or question, adequate speech and use of powerpoint

Marginal

(D) Limited structure that provides little support to analytical argument backed by little research providing few answers to a set topic or question, unadequate speech or use of powerpoint

Failure

(F) No recognizable structure without any analytical argument backed by no discernible research, providing no answers to a set topic or question, poor speech and use of powerpoint or similar tools

Assessment Task

Book review (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality and structure of paper; evidence-based argument; clarity of position taken; evidence of critical thinking and significant research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, good range and quality of materials incorporated into text, limited spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension

Marginal

(D) Descriptive argument, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text

Assessment Task

Research paper (protest case study) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality and structure of paper; evidence-based argument; clarity of position taken; evidence of critical thinking and significant research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, good range and quality of materials incorporated into text, limited spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension

Marginal

(D) Descriptive argument, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text

Assessment Task

Attendance and participation in class debates and exercises (including online) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of contribution to class discussions and intervention

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Continuous contributions to classroom discussions and interventions that show a high level of analysis

Good

(B+, B) Frequent contributions to classroom discussions and interventions which reveal some attempts at analysis

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Infrequent contributions to classroom discussions and contributions that show little analytical insight

Failure

(F) No contributions to classroom discussions and repeated absence

Assessment Task

Group presentation (teamwork) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of argument, structure of class presentation Cohesiveness of overall presentation; oral delivery visual aids; evidence of critical research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellently structured, supporting an analytical argument backed by excellent research and answering set topic or question, clear speech, excellent use of PowerPoint decks or similar tools

Good

(B+, B) A good structure at least partially supporting an analytical argument, backed by some research, providing some answers to a set topic or question, adequate speech and use of PowerPoint decks.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Adequate structure, to some extent supporting an analytical argument but backed by little research providing few answers to a set topic or question, inadequate speech or use of PowerPoint decks.

Failure

(F) No recognizable structure without any analytical argument backed by no discernible research, providing no answers to a set topic or question, poor speech and use of PowerPoint decks or similar tools

Assessment Task

Book review (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality and structure of paper; evidence-based argument; clarity of position taken; evidence of critical thinking and significant research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes.

Good

(B+, B) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, but limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text.

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text.

Assessment Task

Research paper (protest case study) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality and structure of paper; evidence-based argument; clarity of position taken; evidence of critical thinking and significant research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes.

Good

(B+, B) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, but limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text.

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Social movements; contentious politics; repertoires of contention; collective action; political opportunity structure; resource mobilisation; grievances; tactical innovation; abeyance; claim-making; free riding; transnational advocacy network; framing process; free spaces; environmental activism; riots; strikes; civil resistance; social media; social networks; slacktivism; flash activism; e-campaigning; social actors; civil society; democracy; political change; state-society relations.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

| Title | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Amenta, E., N. Caren, E. Chiarello and Yang Su. 2010. "The Political Consequences of Social Movements", Annual Review of Sociology 36: 287-307. |
| 2 | Gillan, Kevin, 2020. "Social Movements, Protests and the Practices of Social Change", in G. Ritzer and W.W. Murphy, eds., The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Sociology, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 301-18. |
| 3 | Tarrow, Sidney, 2011. Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics (3rd edition), New York: Cambridge University Press. |

Additional Readings

| Title | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Alagappa, Muthiah, ed., 2004. Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press. |

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|----|---|
| 2 | Almeida, Paul, 2019. <i>Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Action</i> , Berkeley CA: University of California Press. |
| 3 | Cai, Yongshun, 2010. <i>Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail</i> , Stanford CA: Stanford University Press. |
| 4 | Chen, Xi, 2012. <i>Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China</i> , New York: Cambridge University Press. |
| 5 | della Porta, Donatella and Mario Diani, 2006. <i>Social Movement: An Introduction</i> , Oxford: Blackwell. |
| 6 | Eyerman, Ron and A. Jamison, 1998. <i>Music and Social Movements</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. |
| 7 | Ford, Michele, 2009. <i>Workers and Intellectuals: NGOs, Trade Unions and the Indonesian Labour Movement</i> , Singapore: NUS Press. |
| 8 | Ford, Michele, ed., 2013. <i>Social Activism in Southeast Asia</i> , Abingdon: Routledge. |
| 9 | Fu, Diana, 2017. <i>Mobilizing without the Masses, Control and Contention in China</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. |
| 10 | Goodwin, J. and James M. Jasper, eds., 2004. <i>Rethinking Social Movements</i> , Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. |
| 11 | Jasper, James M., 2014. <i>Protest: A Cultural Introduction to Social Movements</i> , Cambridge, MA: Polity. |
| 12 | Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink, 1998. <i>Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics</i> , Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press. |
| 13 | Liu, Hwa-Jen, 2015. <i>Leverage of the Weak. Labor and Environmental Movements in Taiwan and South Korea</i> , Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. |
| 14 | McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow & Charles Tilly, 2001. <i>Dynamics of Contention</i> , New York: Cambridge University Press. |
| 15 | O' Brien, Kevin, ed., 2008. <i>Popular Protest in China</i> , Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. |
| 16 | Pathania, Gaurav, 2018. <i>University as Site of Resistance: Identity and Student Politics</i> , Oxford: OUP. |
| 17 | Staggenborg, Suzanne, and H. Ramos, 2016. <i>Social Movements [3rd edition]</i> , Oxford: Oxford University Press. |
| 18 | Tilly, Charles, 2003. <i>The Politics of Collective Violence</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. |
| 19 | -----, 2004. <i>Social Movements 1768-2004</i> , NY: Cambridge University Press. |
| 20 | Weiss, Meredith L. and Edward Aspinall, eds., 2012. <i>Student Activism in Asia: Between Protest and Powerlessness</i> , Minneapolis MN, University of Minnesota Press. |