

DC Semester Program

Fall 2015

Working for Change: The History and Politics of Social Movements

Taught by Professor Heather Macdonald & Professor Suzanne Raitt

This semester focuses on the impact that change-makers are having and have had on the political and policy processes of our Nation's Capital. The hard work that lies behind some of the most far-reaching social movements in our nation's history is done here. The Mall has hosted some of the most famous demonstrations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and has become iconic as a symbol of mass protest and the mobilization of the American people for change. Students will learn about the history of American social movements and explore how they have been sustained and transformed. They will meet and engage leaders and activists from some of the most prominent and dynamic institutions committed to social change. The courses will be team-taught by two professors, a geologist and a literary critic, and will encompass movements that were spurred by scientific research (i.e., the environmental movement) as well as by cultural shifts (i.e., the civil rights and equality movements). With "change" as the focus, students will have considerable flexibility in determining their own path through the program, choosing to focus their internship, written work, and featured speaker in the area/approach of their choice.

Washington Program Internship

- *6 credit hours: INTR 499* or credit for a departmental or program-based internship
In an internship tailored to individual interests, students will have the opportunity to act as "change-makers" for an issue or movement of their choice, working on a combination of research, education, and/or activism. Students will work in a wide variety of institutions. Possible internships may include: helping to draft policy documents at the **National Resources Defense Council** or the **EPA**; collaborating with a team of curators on an exhibit at the **Smithsonian National Museum of American History**; organizing events for the **National Organization for Women**; performing research on climate policy at the **Heritage Foundation** or **NOAA**; examining legislation at the **Congressional Research Service**; supporting membership outreach at the **Human Rights Campaign**; promoting community education at the **NAACP**. Students will be graded on academic work completed in association with their internships.

Books that Launched Movements and the Movements They Launched

- *3 credit hours: CMST 450/GSWS 390/ENSP 249/AMST 350/ENGL 200*
In this course, students will read a selection of books that launched social movements. We will investigate what it was about these particular books that caught the public imagination. How did these authors use different evidence (scientific data, personal stories, statistics) and a variety of rhetorical strategies (satire, melodrama, homily) to persuade a range of audiences that what they were saying was important? We will also investigate what is required to harness the excitement generated by a single text and turn it into the basis of a broad-based movement. How are such movements conceived, built, and sustained?

Sustaining Social Movements: Research, Education, and Activism

- *3 credit hours: CMST 450/PUBL 390/GSWS 390/ENSP 249/AMST 350*
In this course, we will examine how social movements are sustained. We will investigate the strategies that individuals and organizations use to adapt to changing policies, leadership, and demographics. Students will be introduced to leaders, researchers, policy-makers, outreach specialists, and activists in the DC area. We will ask how they view the successes and continued challenges of their movement, and how they communicate those successes and challenges to multiple audiences, including policymakers, the general public, and other organizations.