COMM 514: Seminar–Social Movements as Rhetorical Form
Spring, 2008
2:00-4:50 T, ASC 328

Professor: Dr. Randy Lake
Office: ASC 206C
Hours: 12:30-2:30 Th, and by appointment (I typically will be in the office four days a week, so appointments should be fairly easy to obtain.)
Telephone: (213) 740-3946
E-mail: rlake@usc.edu (This is the most efficient way to reach me. I check my e-mail regularly during the weekday, when I am in the office. However, weekends and evenings are much more sporadic so, if you e-mail me at these times, please do not expect an immediate reply.)

Objectives:
This seminar will investigate the roles played by communication in processes of social change, and will examine varying theoretical approaches to the study of the rhetoric of social movements. In addition, we will explore several case studies of movements in action.

Website:
There is a course website, located at blackboard.usc.edu. All students enrolled in this course have access to the website through their USC username and password.
This website is an official place for posting information relevant to the class, such as announcements, assignments, and grades, for discussing lecture materials, and so on. You are as responsible for knowing any material posted to the website as you would be responsible for material distributed or discussed during class.

Texts:
- Charles E. Morris, III, and Stephen H. Browne, Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest (State College, PA: Strata, 2001). An anthology containing many important and classic essays pertinent to the course, some of which we will read.
- Other readings as assigned

Suggested:
- Social Movement Studies. An academic journal published quarterly by Taylor & Francis.

Assignments:
First and foremost, discussion. In a graduate seminar, your participation is extremely important; I will lecture only sparingly.

Weekly reactions to readings. You may wish to synthesize the readings and identify key issues, concepts, etc., critique, and/or ask questions and otherwise seek clarification. These reactions (which will not be graded) will help guide our discussion; in order to facilitate this, please post your comments to the Discussion Board section of the website for the appropriate week no later than 10:00 p.m. each Monday evening.

Reports, on topics or additional readings, as assigned. Please prepare handouts as appropriate to supplement your oral presentation. Handouts should synopsize essential points; these points should be amplified and illustrated during presentation.

One seminar project, on a topic of your choosing, suitable given course content, and approved by me in advance. Collaborative projects are possible. Strive for a paper that, at the end of the term, is ready for submission to a professional conference, if not for publication. Approx. 25-30 pages. Due final class session, Tuesday, April 29, at which it will be presented.

Technology:
Please turn off cell phones before coming to class. I am not fond of computers being used to take notes during class because, in my experience, they interfere with the form and level of interaction that we are seeking. I will tolerate them on a trial basis, but reserve the right to banish them should they become intrusive or hamper your participation. (Needless to say, computers never should be used for nonclass-related activities.)

Tentative Weekly Schedule:
Some minor adjustments in the following undoubtedly will be necessary as the semester progresses.

January


22 MEANWHILE, OVER IN SOCIOLOGY . . . Melucci, Pt. 1 (Chs. 1-4); Jasper, Chs. 2-4


**February**

5  THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

REPORT: John Waite Bowers & Donovan Ochs, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*

12  RETHINKING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUDIENCE

19  WSCA Due to the Western States Communication Association convention in Denver, we will not meet today.

26  RETHINKING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT PURPOSE AND STRATEGY
Comic Frame”; Susan Huxman, “The Tragi-Comic Rhetorical ‘Dance’ of Marginalized Groups: The Case of Mennonites in the Great War”
REPORT: Barbara Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s

March

4
THE ASCENDENCE OF CULTURE Duncombe, Introduction, Chs. 1-3; Melucci, Pt. 2 (Chs. 5-6, 8-10)

11
REPORT: Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Man Cannot Speak For Her, Vol. I

18
Spring break–no class

25
RESISTING CULTURE/CULTURAL RESISTANCE Duncombe, Chs. 4-5, 7; Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse”

April

1
RETHINKING CULTURE Melucci, Pt. 3 (Chs. 11-14)

8
15 (HOW) DOES POLITICS STILL MATTER? OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Melucci, Pt. 4 (Chs. 15-20); Duncombe, Ch. 8

22 W(H)ITHER MOVEMENT STUDIES? DISPERSED, DEFUNCT, OR DA BOMB?

29 Presentation of Student Projects, and Wrap-Up