

**History 557/Sociology 591**  
Revolutions and revolutionary movements  
Ian Roxborough  
Fall 2002

**Tuesdays 7:00 – 10:00, N403**

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SBS S-445

**Introduction**

Revolutions are dramatic events that – at least in some ways – shatter the existing fabric of social order. Besides being interesting in themselves, they enable us to look at large issues of social change and stability, legitimation, ideology, inequality, authority, and the role of ideas, interests and force in politics.

Revolutions are also notoriously difficult to define. Some writers only look at “big,” “successful” revolutions. Others think that we should also look at “small” revolutions, “failed” revolutions, and also-rans. I think this latter group is right and, as a consequence, I have organized the course to look at revolutionary movements and failed revolutions *as well as* the more standard big revolutions. This means that we will look at a variety of social movements, some of which have been labeled guerrilla wars, civil wars, and insurgencies. This broader scope will better help us address questions such as: “what sorts of social movements are involved in revolutionary activity?”; “when does a social movement find that it is revolutionary?”; “what makes for success and failure?”; “do revolutions really change society?” Since part of the reason, at least, for the success or failure of revolution lies in the response of the government, we will also look briefly at counter-insurgency.

This will be a reading course, aimed at surveying the literature in the field. We will cover the major theories and historiographical approaches, and I have attempted to provide a reasonably wide coverage in terms of period and region. In terms of the inevitable choice between breadth and depth, I have generally opted for breadth, and I have tried to select readings which will introduce you to a wide range of methods of analyzing revolutions. Cases include the French revolution of 1789 and its sequels, the American revolution, the Mexican, Russian and Iranian revolutions, insurgencies in Central America, Peru and elsewhere, and Vietnam. The course is cross-listed between history and sociology.

## Requirements

Obviously, class attendance and pre-seminar preparation is mandatory and necessary. We are a community of learners, and you owe it to the rest of us to be intellectually committed. Discussions will constitute a major part of the course, and the quality of these discussions will depend on the degree of your engagement. The class needs your contributions!

Evaluation will be based on your informed and active participation in class, and on some relatively easy writing assignments:

1) **Each week** you are to prepare **1-3 questions** that could be used to lead class discussion. The purpose of the questions is to get you to think critically about the issues we will be considering in this course. The questions should be brief and clear, not paragraph-long rambling excursions. Please send these to the group email list by early Tuesday afternoon so I can anticipate the directions you want the seminar to go when we meet. (If, for some reason, you are unable to attend, please send the questions anyway.) It would help other participants if you could email your questions to everyone in time for us all to think about them before the seminar meets. **There is no point in emailing your questions five minutes before the class meets. That is irresponsible behavior.** Please allow the rest of us time to read all the questions, bearing in mind that we all have complicated schedules and may not be able to read our email in the hour or so before class.

2) **You then have choice of either (A) or (B)**

A) Eight short **critical evaluations** of the reading. (You may take a complete book, a chapter from a book, an article, or some combination of articles/chapters/books.) These critical comments should not be descriptions of the works we have read. They are **not** “book reports” or “book reviews.” You may assume that I have read these books and articles, so please don’t tell me what they say unless this is absolutely necessary to make your argument. I want you to focus on weaknesses in arguments, and/or on the ways in which authors’ arguments might be further developed. Or you can use the author to explore some theme that they don’t (in your judgement) discuss adequately. (I do not want reports of the “Oh, gosh, I really liked this book...” kind.) I want your critical **thinking**; I am looking for quality rather than quantity. Length: entirely up to you: no more than you need to make your point(s); probably 2-3 pages. These critical evaluations are due at the time we discuss the material. Don’t hand them in late: I will not read them if you do, and I will not count them towards the total of eight short papers that you have to do.

B) A seminar paper. This can be a research paper related to the course, or an extended review of the literature or theories. If you select this option, please discuss your paper with me by October 15 and give me a written outline or prospectus of the paper by November 12. There is no fixed format or length for

this paper. Please note that I do not intend to give incompletes in this course except in special circumstances.

3) **Attendance:** There are 13 sessions. I expect you to attend all sessions, having done the reading and prepared to contribute to the discussion. If you consistently miss sessions, I will reduce your grade for non-attendance

### Reading

Tues Sept 3: intro session; no reading

Tues Sept 10: Theories:

Theda Skocpol, "France, Russia, China: a structural analysis of social revolutions" in Theda Skocpol, Social Revolutions in the Modern World, 1994 (Xerox reader)

Timothy McDaniel, Modernization, Autocracy, Revolution: Iran and Russia,

Tues Sept 17 follows Mon schedule: **no class**

Tues Sept 24: French Revolution: historiographical themes.

Albert Soboul, "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World" in Gary Kates (ed), The French Revolution, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois, and the Origins of the French Revolution" in Gary Kates (ed), The French Revolution, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Francois Furet, "Interpreting the French Revolution" in Ronald Schechter (ed), The French Revolution, 2001 (Xerox reader)

Keith Baker, "On the Problem of the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution" in Ronald Schechter (ed), The French Revolution, 2001 (Xerox reader)

William Sewell, "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case" in Theda Skocpol, Social Revolutions in the Modern World, 1994 (Xerox reader)

Theda Skocpol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Construction of State Power: a reply to William Sewell" in Theda Skocpol, Social Revolutions in the Modern World, 1994 (Xerox reader)

Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789" in Gary Kates (ed), The French Revolution, 1998 (Xerox reader)

John Markoff, "Violence, Emancipation, and Democracy" in Gary Kates (ed), The French Revolution, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Lynn Hunt, "The Band of Brothers" in Ronald Schechter (ed), The French Revolution, 2001 (Xerox reader)

Tues Oct 1: More theory.

Jeff Goodwin, No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991, 2001, chapters 1-2

Charles Tilly, "Conflict, Revolt and Revolution" chapter 1 of his European Revolutions, 1492-1992, 1993 (Xerox reader)

Timothy Wickham-Crowley, "Structural Theories of Revolution" in John Foran (ed), Theorizing Revolutions, 1997 (Xerox reader)

Timothy Wickham-Crowley, "Winners, Losers, and Also-Rans: Towards a Comparative Sociology of Latin American Guerrilla Movements" in Susan Eckstein (ed) Power and Popular Protest, 1989 (Xerox reader)

Eric Selbin, "Revolution in the Real World: Bringing Agency back in" in John Foran (ed), Theorizing Revolutions, 1997 (Xerox reader)

Tues Oct 8: The American Revolution.

Robert Gross, The Minutemen and Their World, 1976

Tues Oct 15: The American Revolution.

Alfred Young, The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution, 2000

Tues Oct 22: Urban space, class and revolution:

Roger Gould, Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune, 1995

Tues Oct 29: revolution and world system:

John Hart, Revolutionary Mexico, 1987. Be sure to read the chapters on Mexico **and** chapter 7 “Global Causation.”

Daniel Chirot, Social Change in the Modern Era, chapter 7, “Revolutions in the Periphery, 1910-1950” (Xerox reader)

Tues Nov 5: Vietnam.

Goodwin chapters 3-4

Jeffrey Paige, Agrarian Revolution, 1975, chapter 5 “Vietnam: Sharecropping” (Xerox reader)

Gabriel Kolko, Century of War, 1994, chapter 13 (“War, Revolution, and Reaction in Southeast Asia”) (Xerox reader)

Tues Nov 12: Vietnam.

Race, War Comes to Long An, 1972

Tues Nov 19: Central America:

Goodwin chapters 5-6

James Dunkerley, Power in the Isthmus, chapter 6 “The Nicaraguan Revolution: Origins” (Xerox reader)

Carlos Vilas, The Sandinista Revolution, chapter 3 “Economy and Politics in the Popular Insurrection”

Jeffrey Paige, Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America, 1997

Tues Nov 26: Sendero Luminoso in Peru:

Carlos Ivan Degregori, “Harvesting Storms: Peasant Rondas and the Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Ayacucho” in Steve Stern (ed), Shining and Other Paths, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Ponciano del Pino, “Family, Culture and Revolution: Everyday life with Sendero Luminoso” in Steve Stern (ed), Shining and Other Paths, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Orin Starn, "Villagers at Arms: War and Counterrevolution in the Central-South Andes" in Steve Stern (ed), Shining and Other Paths, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Jo-Marie Burt, "Shining Path and the Decisive Battle in Lima's Barriadas: the case of Villa El Salvador" in Steve Stern (ed), Shining and Other Paths, 1998 (Xerox reader)

Tues Dec 3: US counterinsurgency theory and practice:

D. Michael Shafer, Deadly paradigms, 1988, chapters 5 and 8-10 (Xerox reader)

Tues Dec 10 last class: Counter-revolution and terror.

Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Fear in Military Regimes: an Overview" in Juan Corradi et al (eds) Fear at the Edge, 1992 (Xerox reader)

Patricia Weiss Fagen, "Repression and State Security" in Juan Corradi et al (eds) Fear at the Edge, 1992 (Xerox reader)

Juan Rial, "Makers and Guardians of Fear: Controlled Terror in Uruguay" in Juan Corradi et al (eds) Fear at the Edge, 1992 (Xerox reader)

Dirk Kruijt, "Exercises in State Terrorism: the Counterinsurgency campaigns in Guatemala and Peru" in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds) Societies of Fear, 1999 (Xerox reader)

James Dunkerley, Power in the Isthmus, chapter 8 "El Salvador: the Long War" (Xerox reader)

James Dunkerley, Power in the Isthmus, chapter 9 "Guatemala: Garrison State" (Xerox reader)

Daniel Pecaú, "From the Banality of Violence to Real Terror: the case of Colombia" in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds) Societies of Fear, 1999 (Xerox reader)

Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "Epilogue: Notes on Terror, Violence, Fear and Democracy" in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds) Societies of Fear, 1999 (Xerox reader)