

CMST 3169: Rhetoric of Social Movements<sup>1</sup>

Professor Bryan McCann, PhD

225 Coates Hall

Time: T Th 10:30am-11:50am

E-mail: bryanm@lsu.edu

Office: 227 Coates Hall

Office hours: T Th 12:00pm-1:00pm, or by appointment

Office phone: 225.578.6813

*“If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters . . . Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”*

*Frederick Douglass*

Course Catalogue Description

Persuasive strategies used to build social identities and collectively agitate for social change.

Additional Description

What is politics? If we are to believe the vast majority of news media and mainstream popular culture, politics takes place in ornate domed buildings or on the campaign trail. During the current Presidential election, it is difficult to envision a brand of politics that was not connected to the campaigns of people like Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, or Jeb Bush. Currently, politics is what we associate with nauseating gridlock in the halls of Congress and overblown rhetoric from both sides of the aisle. While the likes of *CNN*, *Fox News*, and *MSNBC* provide the average citizen with near 24-hour access to the day-to-day dynamics of electoral politics, contemporary political discourse often neglects the role of social movements as a key engine of American political history. However, as the emergence of the Black Lives Matter and Tea Party movements in the United States, as well as recent uprisings in Northern Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and several American cities suggest, protest continues to be a major force for making controversial issues visible and advancing changes in public policy. This course offers an exploration of protest and social change by scrutinizing their rhetorical dynamics in public culture.

Course Objectives

Students will develop a stronger appreciation for and critical understanding of the role of social movements in democratic culture. This will be accomplished by achieving the following:

- Engaging concepts that help explain the persuasive dynamics of social movements
- Understanding the exigencies that produce social movements

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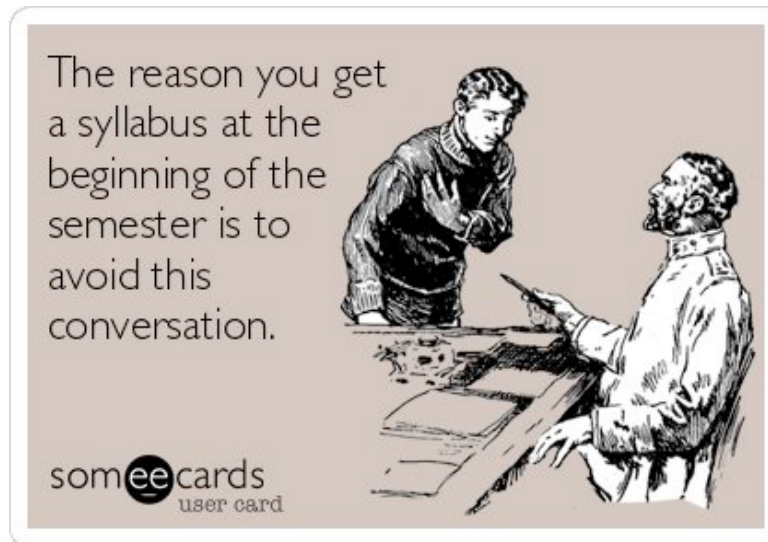
<sup>1</sup> I'm very grateful to my colleagues Joel Rollins, Kelly Young, and Chuck Morris for sharing their syllabi and ideas with me.

- Appreciating various ethical and other dilemmas faced by social movements
- Recognizing the role of the state and other institutions in suppressing social movements
- Understanding how changes in technology and global capitalism have changed the nature of social movements in the twenty-first century
- Examining case studies that illuminate the successes and failures of social movements across history

### Required Texts/Materials

- All readings/materials will be posted online.
- Access to and competency with online search engines and university libraries is essential for success in this course

### COURSE POLICIES



Office Hours and Availability If, for whatever reason, my posted office hours do not work for you, please do not hesitate to contact me and arrange an alternative meeting time. After one year of working at LSU, I still have no clue how to operate my office voicemail. Therefore, email is your best bet. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response to emails. I do not generally respond to emails on weekends.

The Communication Environment The study of social movements engages a wide range of philosophical, political, and ethical questions that often inspire strong, even visceral responses. I am committed to ensuring that our classroom is a hospitable environment where we can respectfully discuss and debate a wide range of relevant issues. Everyone should feel comfortable to speak their minds, but must do so in a way that enables others to do the same. You should also prepare to be held accountable for anything you say in class.

Participation and Attendance This class is discussion-oriented. Preparation for class and faithful attendance is directly correlated with success. In addition to missing vital information for successfully completing major assignments, you risk missing in-class assignments that will count toward your final grade.

If you plan to miss class or leave early for an unexcused reason (i.e. leaving for a family vacation, attending a job fair, studying for an exam in another class), please do not ask my permission. I will not prevent you from leaving, nor will I give you my blessing. We are all adults and, accordingly, are responsible for our own decisions. If you choose to prioritize something other than attending class during the scheduled time, that is your choice to make. You do not need my permission. However, you should also be mindful of the consequences for doing so.

I will, of course, excuse absences for university-sanctioned activities, religious observances, health reasons, personal emergencies, etc.

Readings This course will draw from a variety of materials, including book chapters, scholarly articles, films, and literature authored by grassroots activists. Some readings will be straightforward, whereas others will be more difficult. Most will be suitable for polite company, but a few will make you blush or want to throw the material across the room. Virtually all of them will challenge you to reconsider your ideas about the nature of social change in the United States. In some cases, you will passionately disagree with an author's argument. At other times, you will wonder where this author has been all of your life.

Regardless of the day's readings, I expect you to arrive having completed all of them and prepared to engage in thoughtful, mature discussion. One does not need to agree with all, or even most of an author's work to learn from it.

If you are aware of readings, online videos, etc. that reflect the day's discussion, you should feel free to share them with the class (provided they are appropriate) via Moodle or during the designated class session.

Workload Students are expected, in addition to time spent in class, to spend a minimum of an additional 6 hours per week reading and thinking about material and putting forth effort toward the completion of class assignments. Thus, students are expected to devote at least 9 hours per week toward the successful completion of CMST 3169.

Late Work Late work will automatically receive a 10% point deduction for each day it is late.

Academic Integrity I trust students in this class to do their own work. Students are responsible for adhering to the college's standards for academic conduct. Even revising another student's work, collaborating to share research with other students, or adapting your own work from another class is academic misconduct. Failure to acknowledge sources in written assignments or oral presentations constitutes plagiarism. If you are ever confused about how these policies apply to your own work, please play it safe and consult me.

If you do engage in academic dishonesty, you will automatically receive zero credit for the assignment in question, and risk failing the entire class and being subject to disciplinary action from the college and/or university. It is my policy to officially report all instances of academic dishonesty. For more information on this important issue, please look online at <https://grok.lsu.edu/Article.aspx?articleId=17072>

Drops/Withdrawals If you wish to drop this class, you must do so by 4:30pm on September 1. After this point, you will be issued a withdrawal grade. If you fail to withdraw by 4:30pm on November 6, you will receive and “F” for the semester.

Religious Observances It is LSU’s policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty and staff. Students with exams or classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify me well in advance (at least 2 weeks) so that we can work out a mutually agreeable alternative.

Special Needs Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, 225.578.5919.

E-mail All students must obtain and regularly check an email account. Expect periodic updates from me about what’s happening in class via Moodle as well.

E-mail is also the best and quickest way to get in touch with me outside of class.

I will not, under any circumstances, communicate grade information via email or over the phone.

Moodle Please check Moodle for updates to the class schedule, assignment guidelines, grade information, readings, etc.

Commitment to Conversation I believe in the right and responsibility of students to take an active interest in their education. If there is anything inside or outside this class that you care to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to do so.

I understand that “life happens” and will work with you to make REASONABLE accommodations for issues that may be negatively impacting your performance in this class. The sooner you consult me on such matters, the better.

While I am happy to discuss grades on individual assignments throughout the semester (provided you do so no sooner than 24 hours after but within two weeks of receiving the grade), I do not respond well to having responsibility for your entire academic future thrust upon me. In other words, how your performance in this class will impact your GPA, ability to graduate, scholarship eligibility, etc. are not sufficient grounds for discussing a grade on an assignment. More generally, I will not entertain discussions about final grades once the semester is over. If you wish to challenge your final grade, you must do so through the proper university channels. Please visit this link for further information:

[http://catalog.lsu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=27&hl=%22appeals%22&returnto=search#Grade\\_Appeals](http://catalog.lsu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=27&hl=%22appeals%22&returnto=search#Grade_Appeals)

Cell Phones, Laptops, etc. I am a technology junky and appreciate the important role smart phones, laptops, and the like play in our information society. That said, I also know they can function as a huge distraction in the classroom. If you have a cell phone, smart or otherwise, keep it in your

pocket and on silent (vibrate is not silent). Failure to do so will result in my confiscating your phone for the duration of the class period. Please feel free to use your laptop to take notes and otherwise organize course material; however, if I notice you chatting on Facebook, visiting non-class related websites, etc., you must discontinue your use of the computer for the rest of the semester. In other words, technology is fine as long as it doesn't call attention to itself.

***On exam days, any electronic devices must be turned off and securely in your bag. You will not receive a copy of the exam until your desk is void of any such devices and I will confiscate your exam if I see you making use of a cell phone, lap top, etc.***

Contractual Agreement Your acceptance of these conditions, as well as the policies outlined in this document, is implied by your continuance in the class. To maintain the integrity of everyone's grade, and ultimately, degree, all course policies are non-negotiable.

Everything in this document, including the daily schedule, is subject to revision or modification due to unforeseen circumstances.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Quizzes** There will be six unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, four of which (i.e. the ones on which you score highest) will count toward your final grade. These will be based solely on the assigned readings for that day and will consist of multiple choice and/or short response questions. You may use any notes on the readings, but *may not* consult the reading at any point during the quiz. Quizzes begin promptly at the beginning of class and will last for fifteen minutes. If you arrive to class late, you still must hand in your quiz at the same time as everybody else. If you show up after a quiz has been given, you may not retake it.

**Exams** There will be two exams (including a non-cumulative final) during the semester. Exams will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions, but may include short answer prompts. Exams will cover material from readings *and* lectures.

**Research Paper Option** In lieu of an exam, you may opt to write a 10-12 page paper that critically analyzes social movement rhetoric. ***You must consult me if you choose this option.*** An effective essay, at a minimum, will:

- Choose to critically analyze a piece of social movement rhetoric with high social relevance **(from a movement other than the one you and your group have selected)**
- Use materials from inside and outside of class to frame your discussion
- Provide concrete details from your case study. This includes, but is not limited to, direct quotations and visual examples
- Use an appropriate citation method (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago)
- Be free of spelling and grammatical errors

Each paper is due via email by 10:30am on the day of the exam. ***If you choose to write a paper, you may not take the concurrent exam.***

**Movement Presentations** Working in groups, you are responsible for professionally presenting a rhetorical history of a major social movement. An effective presentation, at a minimum, will:

- Clearly identify a discrete social movement with high social relevance
- Provide a concise, but thorough, history of the movement that illuminates both its internal development and the historical circumstances that inspired it (i.e. the social problems/institutions the movement targeted, institutional responses to the movement, salient cultural changes at the time)
- Identify a minimum of *three* distinct rhetorical strategies the movement used, providing clear examples of each (i.e. direct quotations, images, videos)
- Draw on materials from inside and outside of class to frame your analysis
- Effectively use visual and audio aids when appropriate
- Demonstrate professionalism and preparedness
- Equally distribute presentation time among participants
- Last 10-15 minutes

Keep in mind that presenting a rhetorical history of a movement is different from taking a position. It is not your job to support or oppose the movement's rhetoric, but focus on the strategies its participants used (or use) to advance an agenda.

In addition to the presentation, each group will be responsible for submitting a folder containing the following:

- A detailed outline of your presentation
- A timeline of your movement that indicates key events in the designated time period
- A bibliography citing a minimum of ten high quality sources, only three of which may be course readings (using an appropriate citation method)

**Participation** I will evaluate your participation on the basis of several factors, which include, but are not limited to, speaking in class, making use of my office hours, working effectively in groups, demonstrating improvement over the course of the semester, etc.

**Extra Credit** Over the course of the semester, I will make you aware of extra credit opportunities. They will typically involve viewing or attending an event relevant to course material and possibly completing a related assignment.

You may also choose to participate in the Department of Communication Studies's research projects that need human participants. These include surveys, experiments (no electronic shocks, I promise), or pilot tests of future texts or videos. For more information, please visit <http://uiswcmsweb.prod.lsu.edu/hss/cmst/Resources/Research%20Participation%20System/item56894.html>

Each full study is worth 1 credit and you may participate for a maximum of 2 credits.

If you currently engage, or plan to engage in some form of campus or local movement organizing, I *may* be able to offer you extra credit associated with this work. If this strikes your interest, please discuss it with me personally.

## POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR MOVEMENT PRESENTATIONS

While this is a fairly exhaustive list, you may select a topic not included below. You must, however, consult me if you choose to do so. Appropriate topics will be movements with a discrete history and significant social impact.

Occupy Wall Street (2011-Present)

American Temperance Movement (1851-1920)

Death Penalty Abolition Movement (1976-Present)

Anti-Abortion/Pro-Life Movement (1973-Present)

Slavery Abolition Movement (1780-1865)

Black Power Movement (1966-1972)

Gay Liberation Movement (1969-1981)

Gun Rights Movement (1994-Present)

Anti-Vietnam War Movement (1964-1975)

American Socialist Movement (1901-1936)

Women's Suffrage Movement (1848-1920)

Animal Rights Movement (1965-Present)

Modern Anti-War Movement (2003-Present)

Modern LGBTQ Rights Movement (1989-Present)

Tea Party Movement (2008-Present)

Modern Immigrant Rights Movement (2006-Present)

American Anarchist Movement (1905-1950)

Men's Movement (1970-Present)

Catholic Worker Movement (1933-Present)

Black Lives Matter Movement (2013-Present)

Liberation Theology (1955-Present)

Anti-LGBTQ Rights Movement (1977-Present)

American Indian Movement (1968-1978)

Prison Abolition Movement (1970-Present)

Farm Workers Rights Movement (1962-1972)

Puerto Rican Nationalist Movement (1968-1983)

Second Wave Feminist Movement (1963-1979)

U.S. HIV/AIDS Movement (1981-Present)

Modern U.S. Labor Movement (1981-Present)

9-11 Truth/New World Order Movement (2001-Present)

American Patriot Movement (1958-1996)

## AVAILABLE POINTS

Assignment	Actual Points	Possible Points
Exam/Essay 1		100
Exam/Essay 2		100
Movement Presentation		200
Quiz 1		25
Quiz 2		25
Quiz 3		25
Quiz 4		25
Participation		50
Extra Credit		0
<b>Total</b>		<b>550</b>

REGARDLESS OF YOUR POINT TOTAL, YOU CANNOT PASS THIS CLASS IF:

- 1) You miss more than two quizzes
- 2) You fail to complete one of the exams/essays
- 3) You a) fail to participate in the group project or b) behave in such a way that is seriously detrimental to your group's performance<sup>2</sup>

#### Grading Key

Outstanding achievement relative to requirements

493-550 = A

Above average relative to requirements

438-492 = B

Meeting basic course requirements

383-437 = C

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<sup>2</sup> If you and your fellow group members are struggling to work effectively together, I am happy to serve as a mediator. I will do so on the condition that you a) let me know well in advance of your presentation date and b) are able to arrange a time for all of us to meet in person to discuss the situation. In general, my bias is in favor of keeping groups intact. I am *not* interested in hearing about group problems following a disappointing grade.



Worthy of credit without meeting full requirements  
328-382 = D

Failing to meet basic requirements  
327 and below = F

SEMESTER SCHEDULE  
(SSD=Stewart, Smith, & Denton; BOJ=Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen)

	Topic	Reading	Due
Aug 25	Introduction: Politics by other means		
Aug 27	Culture and struggle (I)	Landy; Abu-Jamal; Peltier; McCorvey & Thomas; Sheehan	
Sep 1	Culture and struggle (II)	Hebdige; Lynskey; Dylan; Holiday; Green Day; A. Ginsberg; dead prez; Guthrie; Le Tigre; Wonder; RATM	
Sep 3	Citizenship	Goodnight & Hingstman; Douglass; Thompson (a.k.a. ?uestlove); Gross	
Sep 8	Nature and types of movements	SSD Ch 1	
Sep 10	Identity and coalitions (I)	Frank; Karen; Bhatia	
Sep 15	Identity and coalitions (II)	Dzodan; FreeQuency; Gillis, Zanichkowsky, & Chávez; Smith	
Sep 17	Other-centered movements (I)	Asenas, McCann, Feyh, & Cloud; Cole; Papier	
Sep 22	Persuasion and movements (I)	SSD Ch 3	
Sep 24	Persuasion and movements (II)	Darsey; <i>Jesus Camp</i> (I)	

Sep 29	Persuasion and movements (III)	Gould; <i>Jesus Camp</i> (II)	
Oct 1	Raising hell	BOJ Ch 2; King (I); King (II); Carmichael	
Oct 6	Moderates and radicals (I)	Obama; Hernandez; Jones; Shoemaker; Against Equality	
Oct 8	Moderates and radicals (II)	Hedges; Dupuy & Cook; Zero; Newsome	
Oct 13	Networked politics	Shirky; Dean; McDonald & Woo	
Oct 15	Exam review		
Oct 20	Exam 1		
Oct 22	Taming the masses (I)	BOJ Ch 3; Rosenfeld; Gould-Wartofsky; COINTELPRO	Select Movement Presentation topics
Oct 27	Taming the masses (II)	Film, <i>Let the Fire Burn</i>	
Oct 29	NO CLASS		
Nov 3	Taming the masses (III)	Film, <i>Let the Fire Burn</i>	
Nov 5	Revolution!	Davis; Adbusters; Boggs	
Nov 10	Violence (I)	Rand; Gitlin	
Nov 12	Violence (II)	B. Ginsberg; Coates; Rudolph; Williams	

Nov 17	NO CLASS		
Nov 19	NO CLASS		
Nov 24	Movement Presentations		
Nov 26	NO CLASS		
Dec 1	Movement Presentations		
Dec 3	Exam review		
Dec 7 (10:00am-12:00pm)	Final Exam		

### Readings, Films, and Music

“A Brief History of Revolution.” *Adbusters*, 1 September 2010.

<https://www.adbusters.org/magazine/92/brief-history-revolution.html>

Abu-Jamal, Mumia. *Live from Death Row*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.

Asenas, Jennifer, Bryan J. McCann, Kathleen Feyh, and Dana Cloud. “Saving Kenneth Foster:

Speaking with Others in the Belly of the Beast of Capital Punishment.” In *Communication Activism, Volume3: Struggleing for Social Justice Amidst Difference*, pp. 261-90. New York: Hampton Press, 2012.

Bhatia, Pooja. “American Populism is Back – On Both Sides of the Aisle.” *USA Today*, 4 August 2014. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/08/04/ozy-american-populism/13569321/>

Boggs, Grace Lee. *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bowers, John W., Donovan J. Ochs, and Richard J. Jensen. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, 2nd Edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Carmichael, Stokely. "Black Power," 29 October 1966.

<http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/carmichael-black-power-speech-text/>

Churchill, Ward, and Jim Vander Wall. *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret War against Dissent in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002.

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<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/nonviolence-as-compliance/391640/>

Cole, Teju. "The White-Savior Industrial Complex." *The Atlantic*, 21 March 2012.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/>

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<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html>

Dupuy, Tina, and Josh Cook. "Diversity of Tactics or Divide and Conquer?" *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*, 4 February 2012. <http://occupiedmedia.us/2012/02/diversity-of-tactics-or-divide-and-conquer/>

Dylan, Bob. "Blowin' in the Wind." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Columbia, 1963.

Dzodan, Flavia. "My Feminism Will Be Intersectional or It Will Be Bullshit!" *Tiger Beatdown*, 10 October 2011. <http://tigerbeatdown.com/2011/10/10/my-feminism-will-be-intersectional-or-it-will-be-bullshit>

Frank, Thomas. *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan/Owl.

FreeQuency. "On White People, Solidarity, and (Not) Marching for Mike Brown." *FreeQuency Frequently Writes*, 24 August 2014.

<http://freeqthamighty.tumblr.com/post/95573664816/on-white-people-solidarity-and-not-marching-for>

Gillis, Colin R., Anders Zaniczkowsky, and Karma R. Chávez. "Let Them Have Weddings: Cops, Cake, and (In)equality." *Madison Mutual Drift*, 17 June 2014.

<http://www.madmutualdrift.org/2014/06/cops-cake-and-inequality.html>

Ginsberg, Allen. "America." In his *Howl and Other Poems*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1956.

Ginsberg, Benjamin. "Why Violence Works." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 12 August 2013.

<http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Violence-Works/140951/>

Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Goodnight, G. Thomas and David B. Hingstman. "Studies in the Public Sphere." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 351-99.

Gould, Deborah B. *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Gould-Wartofsky, Michael. "Five Tools the Police Are Using in Their War against Activists," *The Nation*, 5 May 2015, <http://www.thenation.com/article/5-tools-police-are-using-their-war-against-activists/>

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Hernandez, Greg. "HRC's Joe Solmonese Responds to Critics." *Greg in Hollywood*, 14 October 2009. <http://greginhollywood.com/hrce-joe-solmonese-responds-to-critics-14030>

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*Jesus Camp*. Directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. 2006; Los Angeles: A&E Indie Films; New York: Loki Films.

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King, Jr., Martin Luther. "I Have a Dream." *ABC News*, 28 August 1963. <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/martin-luther-kings-speech-dream-full-text/story?id=14358231>

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Le Tigre. "Deceptacon." *Le Tigre*. Mr. Lady, 1999.

*Let the Fire Burn*. Directed by Jason Osder. 2013; New York: Zeitgeist Films.

Lynskey, Dorian. *33 Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day*. New York: HarperCollins.

"Marriage." *Against Equality: Queer Challenges to the Politics of Inclusion*, 2011.

<http://www.againstequality.org/about/marriage/>

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McDonald, Brent and John Woo. "#BlackTwitter after #Ferguson." *The New York times*, 10 August 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000003841604/blacktwitter-after-ferguson.html?smid=tw-share>

Moyers, Bill. "Mike Davis." *Bill Moyers Journal*, 20 March 2009.

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/03202009/transcript2.html>

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[http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2015/08/when\\_oppression\\_is\\_the\\_status\\_quo\\_disruption\\_is\\_a\\_moral\\_duty.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2015/08/when_oppression_is_the_status_quo_disruption_is_a_moral_duty.html)

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<http://www.armyofgod.com/EricRudolphStatement.html>

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*Veterans for Peace*, 8 August 2005.

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<http://www.austinchronicle.com/features/2010-06-11/1040127/>

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