Sample Syllabi – Subject to Change

Revolution and Resistance in the Modern World

Instructor: Basil Salem

Course Description:
This course introduces students to the history and theory of rebellion, revolt, and resistance. From peasant rebellions to urban uprisings, from heretical movements to nationalist struggles, the course examines how communities resisted and negotiated structures of power, be they bureaucratic, religious, social, or political. In doing so, we will learn about the context in which these events occurred and encounter the people who led and made up these movements—women and men, mystics and soldiers, farmers and artisans, teachers and journalists. We will trace the changes that occurred to the nature of resistance across time and space, whether through swords and muskets on the streets of Paris and Istanbul in the early modern period, or through print journalism and secret meetings in Cairo and London in the modern period.

Class Time:
Class will be divided into two periods. In the first session, we will focus on discussing and analyzing the assigned text (please see below for more details on participation). The second session will be dedicated to activities that help us apply the knowledge we learned in the first session. This will range from analyzing primary sources (paintings, edicts, revolutionary pamphlets etc.) to writing (in-groups of 3 or 4) our own imaginary manifestos, pamphlets, resistance poetry, set in the time-period and context in question.

Readings:
All readings will be available on canvas. As you can see under the reading schedule below, each day is dedicated to a different reading or set of readings. We will not be reading the entire text but a selection which will be available as a pdf on canvas under “files”.

Grading
Participation: 50%
Your participation grade is dependent, in large part, on your contribution to class discussion. To receive a full participation grade, students must a) be prepared, in each class, to point to the main claim/thesis/theme of the reading, and b) be prepared to marshal evidence from the text to support an argument or further class discussion (this requires that you try to become as familiar as possible with the text i.e. read the text closely, take notes, and mark paragraphs/sentences that you think are of particular significance).

Paper 1: 10%
Write a 1-2 page paper, double-spaced, summarizing Ibn Khaldun or Niccolo Machiavelli’s theory of state power. You should rely on the readings for week 1 to complete this assignment.

Paper 2: 10%
Write a 2-3 page paper, double-spaced, discussing 3 factors that motivate people to revolt. You should rely on the readings from week 1 and week 2 to complete this assignment.
Paper 3: **30%**

Write a 4-5 page paper, double-spaced, in which you answer the following question: What impact does resistance (in the various forms that we’ve encountered it so far) have on the structure of power in society?

* Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor or the teaching assistant before each paper, particularly the final paper.

** Please submit the papers as doc or docx under the “assignments” tab in canvas.

Academic Policy:

“It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another’s statements or ideas of work as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously.

Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor.”

*Quoted from the University of Chicago Student Manual https://studentmanual.sites.uchicago.edu/Policies#Honesty

Reading Schedule

**Week 1: Power and Resistance in the Medieval and Early Modern World**

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*

Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Samuel Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt (1200-1425)*

Samuel Cohn, *Lust for Liberty* (continued)

**Week 2: Class Consciousness and the Will of the People**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*
C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*

**Week 3: Resistance in the Hegemonic State**

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*

Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt, and the Rise of Arab Nationalism*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*

Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

James C. Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance*