Aims and Objectives

- To introduce and explore a selection of global social problems and dynamics of resistance from a sociological perspective;
- To develop a critical understanding of key sociological concepts, approaches and analyses to social problems such as inequality, neoliberalism, development, nationalism, globalisation, social movements, protest, transnationalism, democracy, discourse, political economy, control and pluralism.
- To introduce the sociological notion and methodological tool of intersectionality – bringing gender, race and class to the fore – to understand social problems and dynamics of resistance in a critically imbricated way and not as one-dimensional struggles upheld by one-dimensional subjects (simply men, simply women, etc.)
- To think and raise questions about the current climate crisis across a range of social problems and dynamics of resistance.

Structure of the Paper

The paper starts with a one-hour Introduction (week 1), delivered by the course organiser and the lecturers. Following this, SOC3 has two sections. Each section has two modules, and each module consists of three two-hour lectures, for a total of 12 lectures over 24 hours as follows:

Section One: Global Social Problems

1. Global Body Projects (Dr Mónica Moreno Figueroa)
   a) Lecture 1: Bodies, Beauty Pageants and National Projects
   b) Lecture 2: Beauty Work and Cosmetic Surgeries in Neoliberal Times
   c) Lecture 3: Sex Tourism, Bodies and The Tensions of Development

2. Environmental and Social Justice (Prof Jennifer Gabrys)
   a) Lecture 4: Sociology of Environmental Crisis
   b) Lecture 5: Environmental Justice and Social Justice
   c) Lecture 6: Environmental Participation and Community Knowledge

Section Two: Dynamics of Resistance to Social Problems

1. Social Movements and Contentious Politics (Dr Benjamin Abrams)
a) Lecture 7: Introduction to Social Movements: The Organizational and Cultural Perspectives
b) Lecture 8: Climate Change: Extinction Rebellion and Environmental Contention
c) Lecture 9: System Change: The Sociology of Revolution

2. Control and Resistance in Digital Societies (Dr Ella McPherson)
a) Lecture 10: Critical Approaches to the Information Society
b) Lecture 11: Social Media and Social Movements
c) Lecture 12: Representation and Resistance: The Problematics of Big Data and the Politics of the Selfie

Supervisions
Supervision will be organised centrally by the Teaching Associate for Soc3, Rachell Sanchez (rs871@cam.ac.uk), in relation to student’s interests.

The course is taught by means of 12 two-hour lectures and eight supervision sessions. Students should plan to have three substantive supervisions in Michaelmas and three in Lent, and then two revision supervisions in Easter term.

In Michaelmas and Lent, students should choose one of the two parts of that term’s module and have all three supervisions on the three topics of that part. As a result, they will cover two of the four parts over the year in their supervision. One of the revision supervisions should be on their Michaelmas topics, and the other should be on the Lent topics.

Lecturers will give some supervisions on their modules, but due to the size of the student cohort, cannot give all of them. The teaching team therefore also consists of a selected group of supervisors whose expertise matches the supervision topics. Students will have one supervisor per part (topics and revision supervision), so two supervisors for the duration of the paper. This supervisor allocation policy aims to balance supervisor expertise and consistency of supervision for students.

Students will be expected to produce a minimum of four essays over the six substantive supervisions, according to Department of Sociology policy. Students may write essays for the other two supervisions, but they also have the option to prepare for this supervision in other ways. Students taking the latter option should consult their supervisor in advance, who will assign an alternative preparation assignment, such as a short presentation, a case study or a book review.

In general, individual supervisors can decide to use some supervision sessions to read and discuss an article, ask students to present on a topic, or find other ways to address the topic in ways that are stimulating and provide a learning experience for students.

Lectures are central to this paper, and students are strongly advised to attend all of them. The reading lists below are meant to provide guidance for students and supervisors. In their supervision essays, students should answer the specified supervision question provided for each topic.

Students will receive instructions about how to sign up for supervisions at the start of the academic year, with the expectation to have this settled by the first week of Michaelmas.

Mode of Assessment
This paper will be examined by one three-hour examination paper, divided into two sections according to the two sections of the paper. You will be required to answer three questions, including at least one from each section.
# Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michaelmas</th>
<th>Lent</th>
<th>Easter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr M Moreno Figueroa and all lecturers <strong>Introduction</strong> Wed. 1pm, week 1 (16 Oct)</td>
<td>Dr Ben Abrams <strong>Social Movements and Protest in the Global Age</strong> W. 2-4, weeks 1-3, beginning 22 Jan</td>
<td>All lecturers <strong>Revision Session</strong> M. 11, week 1 (27 April) <strong>Mill Lane Lecture Room 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr M Moreno Figueroa <strong>Body Projects around the Globe</strong> Wed, 2-4, weeks 1-3 pm, beginning 16 Oct</td>
<td>Dr Ella McPherson <strong>Control and Resistance in Digital Societies</strong> W. 2-4, weeks 4-6, beginning 12 Feb</td>
<td><strong>Mill Lane Lecture Room 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof J Gabrys <strong>Environmental and Social Justice</strong> Wed. 2-4, weeks 4-6, beginning 6 Nov</td>
<td><strong>Mill Lane Lecture Room 4</strong></td>
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*Mill Lane Lecture Room 4*
SECTION ONE: GLOBAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Section One, Module One: Global Body Projects
Dr Monica Moreno Figueroa

Module Overview
This module interrogates the body as a site of production of inequalities. Through the critical exploration of instances of cosmetic surgery, beauty pageants and sex tourism, the module will consider the ways intersectionality, as a methodological strategy, can help us develop our sociological imagination. Inequality, embodiment, sexism, racism, class distinctions and nation building will be key concepts.

Lectures 1: Bodies, Beauty Pageants and National Projects

Lecture overview
After a brief introduction to the whole module, in this lecture we will explore the issue of nationalism through an empirical analysis of beauty pageants. We will look at their national and transnational role. We continue with an exploration of some of the ways in which the nation is deployed emotionally through the political and social use of 'love' and 'beauty'. This will then help us understand how beauty pageants are a performance of particular national ideologies and political economies that also deploy notions of racialised femininities, citizenship and shifting liberal identities. We will then reflect on the notion of beauty, what it is and what it does. We will also experiment thinking together about the issue of the climate crisis and beauty pageants and more broadly the entertainment, fashion and cosmetic industries.

Essential Readings:
King-O’Riain, R. C. (2008) 'Making the Perfect Queen: The Cultural Production of Identities in Beauty Pageants', Sociology Compass, 2 (1); 74-83.

Choose at least two of these:
Balogun, O. M. (2012)'Cultural and Cosmopolitan: Idealized Femininity and Embodied Nationalism in Nigerian Beauty Pageants', Gender & Society, 26 (3); 357-381.
Rowe, R. (2009). Glorifying the Jamaican Girl: The Ten Types-One People Beauty Contest, Racialized
Femininities, and Jamaican Nationalism. Radical History Review, (103), 96.

Additional Readings:

Supervision question:
How are beauty contests "sites of contestation for conflicts over race, class and social power" (Ochoa 2014)? Situate your argument with examples that take into account ideas of nation.

Thinking and Talking Question:
How do the entertainment, fashion and cosmetic industries contribute to the climate crisis? (some links with newspaper articles and web material below to think through this question)

**Fashion and climate crisis**
https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/fashion-for-global-climate-action
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-017-0058-9

**Cosmetics and climate crisis**
Lecture 2: Beauty Work and Cosmetic Surgeries in Neoliberal Times

Lecture overview
In this lecture we explore the issue of cosmetic surgeries in relation to the concerns with issues of beauty and normality. We explore the racialisation of the cosmetic procedures as well as the arguments for the decolonisation of beauty studies. We will link the concern for surveillance and control over our bodies as a logic of neoliberalism, the entrenchment of post-feminism alongside the urge for renewed forms of aesthetic work. We will also experiment thinking together about the issue of the climate crisis and cosmetic surgery and beauty work and more broadly the connections between the material body and its 'covers' (hair, skin) to land and vegetation. When we talk about them as clean or dirty, ugly or beautiful, ideas about shaping nature and shaping the body align.

Essential Readings:

Choose at least two of the following:
Garnham, B. (2014)'A Cutting Critique: Transforming 'Older' through Cosmetic Surgery', Ageing and
Supervision question:
Resistance to and compliance with racialised beauty work co-exist. Discuss this tension in relation to intersectionality.

Thinking and Talking Question:
To what extent does cosmetic surgery and beauty work relate to the belief that crude nature can and should be improved through human technology, chemicals, and tools (Taussig 2012: 53)?
Lecture 3: Sex Tourism, Bodies and The Tensions of Development

Lecture overview
In this lecture we will discuss the dilemmas of sex tourism from a transnational perspective. We start by a historical analysis that allow us to consider how colonialism and the racist and sexist logics that developed thereafter have had major consequences to how bodies are understood and occupy space. We look at the idea of 'pornotropics' to then explore, using examples of Latin America and the Caribbean, how the representations of the colonized have impacted the experience and practice of sex tourism. We then explore the political economy of the shifting distinction between sex and romance tourism. We will also experiment thinking together about the issue of the climate crisis and sex tourism, and more broadly about the issue of sustainability, travel and tourism and how these are gendered and racialised enquiries crossed by neoliberal logics of inequality.

Essential Readings:
Carrier-Moisan, M.-E. (2015) 'Putting Femininity to Work': Negotiating Hypersexuality and Respectability in Sex Tourism, Brazil, Sexualities, 18(4); 499-518.

Additional Readings:
Bishop, R. (2008) 'The Tele-Technics of Agency, the Net, the Urban and Sex Tourism', Social Identities, 14(3); 349-361.
Kempadoo, Kamala (2004) 'For Love or Money? Fantasies and Realities in Sex Tourism' in Sexing
the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor (New York: Routledge), 115-140.
Piscitelli, A. (2007) 'Shifting Boundaries: Sex and Money in the North-East of Brazil’ in Sexualities, 10(4); 489-500.
Williams, E. L. (2014) 'Sex Work and Exclusion in the Tourist Districts of Salvador, Brazil', Gender, Place & Culture, 21 (4); 453-470.

Supervision question:
According to Rivers Moore, sex tourism can be understood as a strategy for ‘getting ahead’. What are the contradictions and complexities that this argument pose? Discuss in relation to at least two other authors.

Thinking and Talking Question:
How would questions of sustainability complicate sex tourism?

Section One, Module Two: Environmental and Social Justice
Prof Jennifer Gabrys

Lecture 4: Sociology of Environmental Crisis

Lecture Overview
Environmental crises—whether in the form of climate breakdown, biodiversity collapse or pollution—are now events of considerable concern worldwide. The narration and experience of these crises occurs in different ways across social groups. At the same time, the resources for addressing environmental crises are unevenly distributed. This lecture will investigate the sociology of environmental crises. We will explore how sociological approaches address environmental breakdown as a problem of social and environmental justice. We will also examine texts that deal with the designation of the Anthropocene, and consider how or whether this concept is helpful for addressing climate breakdown.

Essential Readings


### Additional Readings


### Supervision Question

How do different characterizations of environmental crises inform possibilities for addressing these problems through social practices?

### Lecture 5: Environmental Justice and Social Justice

#### Lecture Overview

Environment is a topic that is often studied in the sciences, but its relevance within sociological study is just as significant and essential. This lecture will look specifically at how sociological approaches attend to important questions of environmental justice and social justice. We will explore how pollution, climate breakdown, and land use changes emerge as critical events that inform possibilities for collective and social life. We will also look at examples of grassroots projects that attempt to realize environmental and social justice for communities, and consider how justice emerges as social discourse and social practice.

#### Essential Readings


**Additional Readings**


**Supervision Question**

How does attention to environmental justice and social justice inform or change the way in which environmental problems are addressed?

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**Lecture 6: Environmental Participation and Community Knowledge**

**Lecture Overview**

Environmental problems are increasingly now documented and addressed not just by scientific ‘experts’ but also by diverse communities undertaking different environmental participation practices. This lecture will investigate the multiple forms of participation that are now becoming more established, from citizen science and citizen sensing to community knowledge and decolonized research methods. We will consider how or whether these different practices of environmental participation offer potential strategies for addressing environmental crises through more democratic and equitable forms of social organization.

**Essential Readings**


**Additional Readings**
Supervision Question
How do citizen engagement and community participation generate different approaches to environmental problems?

SECTION TWO: DYNAMICS OF RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Section Two, Module One. Social Movements and Contentious Politics
Dr Benjamin Abrams

Module Overview
This module teaches students about:
- Why social movements occur, and what determines their impact;
- The broader study of ‘Contentious Politics’ and its usefulness for social and political analysis;
- The uses and challenges of environmental activism;
- The relationship between revolutions and social movements;

We will explore these topics using the following core cases:
- Occupy Wall Street;
- The Movement for Black Lives / Black Lives Matter;
- Extinction Rebellion / The School Strike for Climate;
- The Egyptian Revolution.

In addition to material on the reading list, students are encouraged to engage in original research, discovering and discussing empirical cases of their own. Alongside books and documentaries, the following sources of information may be useful.

- Scholarly Research: [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com)
- Global News Coverage: [The BBC Web Repository](https://www.bbc.com), [Google News](https://news.google.com)
Lecture 7: Theorizing Social Movements: The Organizational and Cultural Perspectives

Lecture Overview
This lecture has two parts. The first introduces students to ‘the organizational perspective’ on social movements, which first emerged in the late 20th century, and was developed considerably during the US Civil Rights Movement. In particular, it introduces two theoretical perspectives: ‘Resource Mobilization Theory’ and ‘Political Process Theory’. The second part introduces students to ‘the cultural perspective’ on social movements, which has gathered traction since the turn of the millennium. In particular we will discuss theoretical perspectives oriented around: framing, emotions and social identity.

Essential Readings

Additional Readings
**The Organizational Perspective**
McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. (2001) *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Introduction, Chapter 1, Conclusion]

**The Cultural Perspective**

Empirical Cases:
Occupy Wall Street

The Movement for Black Lives

Supervision Question
What steps can activists take to create an effective social movement?

Lecture 8: Climate Change: Extinction Rebellion and Environmental Contention

Lecture Overview
This lecture turns the course’s focus towards climate change activism. The first half of this lecture discusses the Extinction Rebellion movement in depth, and considers how it might be distinguished from past environmental movements and other contemporary social movements. The second half of the lecture explores the differential dynamics and problems which environmental movements encounter, using a variety of examples from a global context.

Essential Readings
Foran, J. Gray, S. and Grosse, C. 2017. “‘Not yet the end of the world’: Political cultures of opposition and creation in the global youth climate justice movement” Interface 9(2) 353-379
Rootes, C. (Ed) 2003. Environmental Protest in Western Europe. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1, 10 and at least two others of your choosing)

Additional Readings
Foran, J. and Widick, R. 2013. “Breaking Barriers to Climate Justice.” Contexts. 12(2)
Foran, J. 2016. “A Few thoughts on Studying The Most Radical Social Movement of the Twenty-First Century” Resilience.org. Available at: https://www.resilience.org/stories/2016-03-
Supervision Question
What (if any) sacrifices do effective environmental movements have to make in order to achieve change?

Lecture 9: System Change: The Sociology of Revolution

Lecture Overview
This lecture introduces students to the idea of ‘revolutionary movements’: movements which seek to overthrow the socio-political status-quo. We start with the empirical case of the Egyptian Revolution, going on to explore the political sociology of such ‘revolutionary movements’ and the broader idea of ‘contentious politics.’

Essential Readings
Abrams, B. (Forthcoming, 2019) “A Fifth Generation of Revolutionary Theory is Yet to Come” in The Journal of Historical Sociology

Additional Readings

Revolutionary Movements

The Egyptian Revolution


**Supervision Question**

Can we study revolutions in the same way as social movements?

**Section Two, Module Two: Control and Resistance in Digital Societies**

Dr Ella McPherson

**Module Overview**

This module examines how global social problems and related modes of resistance play out in digital societies. We underpin this examination by first looking at talk about technology, namely how technologies are often discursively equated with progress, and how and why these discourses travel and have impact across the globe. We will learn how to take an intersectional critical political economy approach to look beneath these discourses to the dynamics of inequality inherent to technologies’ production, use and disposal. Next, we look at the role of social media in recent social movements, thinking in particular about the power and counter-power of networks and in networks. Finally, we will examine resistance through representation, focusing on the contested practice of taking selfies and on the problematics that big data poses for representation. Throughout, we will be attuned to continuity versus change in digital societies, as well as implications for equality, pluralism, accountability and the environment. We will also keep a critical eye on the methods used to research phenomena in digital societies, and specifically the relationship between these methods and the claims made.

**Lecture 10: Critical Approaches to the Information Society**

**Lecture Overview**

This lecture introduces students to the discourse of the information society, in which technology is understood as driving progress. We will critically assess this claim, using examples like the mining of minerals for mobile phones, the content moderation of social media posts, the gender imbalance on Wikipedia and the disposal of e-waste. We will investigate two approaches for studying technology critically: the political economy approach and the intersectional approach.

**Essential Readings**


**Additional Readings**


Supervision Question
How can we critically understand the concept of the information society?

Thinking and Talking Question:
What is the connection between information society discourses and world’s rising levels of e-waste?

Lecture 11: Social Media and Social Movements

Lecture Overview
This lecture both builds on the previous lecture’s concept of discourse and introduces the metaphor of the network to interrogate the use of social media by social movements. We will first examine how this relatively recent adoption of social media follows a long tradition of social movements’ use of media for symbolic counter-power, including the anti-globalisation Zapatista movement, a very early adopter of online mobilization tactics. We will go on to look at several more contemporary examples, including the ‘Twitter Revolution’ in Iran, the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the United States, #YaMeCansé in Mexico, and Extinction Rebellion in the UK. In each case, we will focus on how technology intersects with the power relations within and around these movements, including those related to race, gender and sexuality as well as to corporate and state power.

Essential Readings


Additional Readings


Supervision Question
Do social media revolutions exist?

Thinking and Talking Question:
What are the tensions arising from environmental movements’ uses of social media?

Lecture 12: Representation and Resistance: The Problematics of Big Data and the Politics of the Selfie

Lecture Overview
This lecture will introduce the concept of representation and examine how the power relations around representation have (or have not) changed in the digital age. We will use the examples of selfies and of big data as case studies, examining the differences in the claims to representation made by these types of information, as well as in the ways these types of information are represented. We
will finish the lecture by circling back to the political economy approach to reflect on the environmental consequences of the ‘cloud,’ in which such digital representations tend to be stored.

**Essential Readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Supervision Question**

What is the relationship between representation and power in the digital age?

**Thinking and Talking Question**

What shapes the representation of the climate crisis in the digital age?