

Module number 24 – 26 (BW) 27 – 29 (BM) 33 (EB)	Module title Specialised Elective Module: From Social Movements to Digital Activism		
Code SMS	Semester Depends on course pro- gramme	Number of WSH 4	Module offered Changing Catalogue. Details can be found online.
Module coordinator Prof. Dr. habil. Chiara von Hollen-Pierobon	Tuition type Seminar-style tuition		Module duration 1 Semester
Lecturer Prof. Dr. habil. Chiara von Hollen-Pierobon	Compulsory/Elective Elective		Module language English
Learning outcomes The qualification goals mentioned below are subdivided into three dimensions. Each dimension corresponds to a target competence level. The following competence levels have been defined: • Competence level 1 (awareness): cursory awareness of simple structures, only previously learned knowledge is tested • Competence level 2 (comprehension): basic understanding of multiple structures up to deeper understanding of the relations between structures, learned knowledge is analysed, combined and applied • Competence level 3 (deep understanding and application): deeper understanding of the relations between structures up to independent transfer and extension of knowledge to new structures, learned knowledge is critically questioned and/or evaluated, interrelations between structures and their consequences are reflected and explained The competence level of the respective qualification goal is represented by the corresponding number (1, 2 or 3) in the competence descriptions below. On completing the module the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes on the basis of scientific methods: • Understand the foundational concepts of social movements, collective action, contentious politics, and digital activism. (1) • Explain the main theoretical approaches to the study of social movements, including political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and framing processes. (2) • Describe the historical development of political mobilization in the Soviet and post-Soviet space. (2) • Analyse historical and contemporary cases of political mobilization by applying theories of social movements and collective action. (3) • Explain the role of digital technologies, online communication, and social media in shaping political participation, protest, and activism in contexts of war and conflict. (2) • Design and conduct an original research project on digital activism or political mobilization, including the formulation of a research question, the selection of appropriate methods and sources, and the analysis of empirical material. (3)			

- Critically evaluate empirical evidence and relate research findings to theoretical debates on social movements and digital activism. (3)
- Communicate research findings effectively in written and oral form using appropriate academic standards. (2)
- Collaborate effectively in small research teams and contribute constructively to peer learning throughout the research process. (2)

Content

This seminar examines social movements as key drivers of political and social change, with a particular focus on the Soviet and post-Soviet space. It explores how citizens have mobilized under authoritarian and hybrid political systems, how protest repertoires have evolved over time, and how digital technologies have transformed collective action in contemporary conflicts. The first part of the course introduces major theoretical approaches to the study of social movements, including political opportunity structures, resource mobilization and framing processes. These perspectives provide the analytical foundation for understanding why social movements emerge, how they organize, and under which conditions they succeed or fail. Building on these theoretical foundations, the seminar examines historical and contemporary forms of mobilization across the Soviet and post-Soviet region. Students will analyse dissident movements in the Soviet Union, the democratic transformations of 1989–1991, the Singing Revolution, the Colour Revolutions, the Euromaidan protests and others. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between political institutions, cultural practices, national identity, and collective action.

The second part of the course takes the form of a research workshop focusing on digital activism in and around the war in Ukraine. Students will work individually or in small groups to develop an original research project. They will formulate a research question, identify appropriate sources and methods, analyse empirical material, and assess the policy implications of their findings. Workshop sessions are designed to provide structured feedback on research design, data collection, analysis, and presentation.

Designed as a research-based learning seminar, the course combines conceptual learning with hands-on research. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings, participate actively in seminar discussions, and engage critically with both academic literature and empirical evidence. By the end of the course, they will have developed a solid understanding of social movement theory, acquired in-depth knowledge of political mobilization in the Soviet and post-Soviet space, and gained practical experience in designing, conducting, and presenting original research on digital activism in the context of war and conflict.

Literature

Required reading

Adlington, R. (2008). Expressive revolutions: '1968' and music in the Netherlands. In: Kutschke, B. and Norton, B. (eds.) *1968 in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 12-28.

Borio, G. (2008). Music as a plea for political action: the presence of musicians in Italian protest movements around 1968" In: In: Kutschke, B. and Norton, B. (eds.) *1968 in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 29-45.

della Porta, D. (2014) "Democratization from Below: Civil Society versus Social Movements", In: Beichelt, T., Hahn-Fuhr, I., Schimmelfennig, F., Worschech, S. (eds) *Civil Society and Democracy Promotion. Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century Series*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 137-149

della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2020). *Social Movements: An Introduction* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Eyerman, R., & Jamison, A. (1991). Social movements as cognitive praxis. In *Social movements: A cognitive approach*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Fedyuk, O. (2019). The digital power of Ukrainians abroad: Social media activism and political participation. In O. Oleinikova & J. Bayeh (Eds.), *Democracy, diaspora, territory: Europe and cross-border politics* (pp. 145–162). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429298707-9>

- Flesher Fominaya, C. (2014). *Social Movements in a Globalized World* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Futrell, R., Simi, P. and Gottshalk, S. (2006). "Understanding Music In Movements: The White Power Music Scene", *The Sociological Quarterly*, 47, pp. 275–304.
- Jackson, P. (2014) 'Welcome Europe!' The Eurovision Song Contest as a Continuum for Cosmopolitanism'. In: Yilmaz, A., Trandafoiu, R. and Mousoutzanis, A (eds.) *Media and Cosmopolitanism*. Bern: Peter Lang. pp.71-92.
- Johnston, H., & Klandermans, B. (Eds.). (1995). *Social Movements and Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Krasynska, S. (2015). Digital civil society: Euromaidan, the Ukrainian diaspora, and social media. In David R. Marples & Frederick V. Mills (Eds.), *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a civil revolution* (pp. 33–48). Ibidem Press.
- Kurmanov, B., & Knox, C. (2024). Digital activism and authoritarian legitimization in post-Soviet Central Asia. *The Information Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2024.2374714>
- Lonkila, M., Shpakovskaya, L., & Torchinsky, P. (2020). Digital activism in Russia: The evolution and forms of online participation in an authoritarian state. In D. Gritsenko, M. Wijermars, & M. Kopotev (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of digital Russia studies* (pp. 135–153). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42855-6_8
- Mogos, P. and Berkers, P. (2018). "Navigating the Margins between Consent and Dissent. Mechanisms of Creative Control and Rock Music in Late Socialist Romania." *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 32 (1), 56–77 [10.1177/0888325417736807]
- Möller, V. and Mischler, A. (2020). „The Soundtrack of the Extreme: Nasheeds and Right-Wing Extremist Music as a ‚Gateway Drug‘ into the Radical Scene?". *International Annals of Criminology*. 58, 291-334.
- Robb, D. (2016). „Censorship, Dissent and the Metaphorical Language of GDR Rock“. In: Mazierska, E. (ed.) *Popular Music in Eastern Europe. Pop Music, Culture and Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59273-6_6
- Rosenthal, R. (2001). "Serving the Movement: The Role(s) of music", in *Popular Music and Society*, 25: 3-4, pp. 11-24
- Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. (2015). *Contentious Politics* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- Tudoroiu, T. (2007). "Rose, Orange, and Tulip: The failed post-Soviet revolutions", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40, 315-342.

Teaching and learning methods

The seminar is structured as an interactive and research-based learning environment. Each week, students (individually or in small groups, depending on the number of participants) will give short presentations on the assigned readings. These presentations provide the basis for class discussions and ensure a collective engagement with the literature. Beyond this, students are expected to actively participate in debates, mapping exercises, and case-based applications of theoretical frameworks. Film screenings and subsequent discussions serve to contextualize both historical and contemporary protest movements and to link theory with practice. A strong emphasis is placed on independent research. Students will work individually or in small groups to conduct an original case study of a selected social movement, applying the theories and concepts introduced in the seminar. They will present preliminary findings during dedicated workshop sessions and receive structured feedback from both the instructor and their peers throughout the research process.

By combining reading presentations, class discussions, research, and case analysis, the seminar supports both individual and collective learning, while strengthening analytical, communication, and teamwork skills.

Type of examination/Requirements for the award of credit points

A portfolio consisting of:
Text presentation: 15%

	Workshop Presentation: 30% Final written essay (2500 words): 55% Compulsory attendance (min. 80 %)	
Other information	Max. number of participants: 25 Registration necessary. Details can be found in ELO. Lecture Times: Will be released in the schedule.	
ECTS-Credits 5	Workload 150 hours Contact/attendance time: 60 h Additional work: 90 h	Weighting of the grade in the overall grade 5