THE OBJECTIVES of this seminar are: (1) to provide an intensive introduction to recent and not-so-recent scholarship in the field of transnational social movements; (2) to encourage evidence-based critical scrutiny of both that scholarship and of the movements themselves; and (3) to advance participants’ research projects related to transnational social movements. The reading list is partial in both senses of the word. There is now a copious literature on transnational social movements. We can’t even begin to “cover” the diversity of the movements, the linkages and frictions between movements, the varieties of politics, or the constant eruption of new movements. There are many cases and many important theorists that are not represented in the reading list, not for lack of interest, but simply for lack of time. The task, then, is to pose some key questions and to deepen our understanding and develop future research agendas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR THE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) **Active and informed participation** in all class discussions of assigned readings and other participants’ research projects. We will appoint rapporteurs to report on the assigned readings. Everybody is expected to serve as a rapporteur at least two times. What you learn in this course (and your grade) will depend significantly on how deeply you engage with the material and with the other people in the course. If you are extremely shy or inhibited (as many of us are or once were), use this seminar as an opportunity to get over it, because it will only hold you back. Anthropologists need to be able to interact with people as part of their fieldwork and in academic and other professional settings. If you are not shy, it is very important that you contribute to creating a supportive environment for those who might be.

(2) **A statement (one page) about a planned research project** for the course, to be submitted via email no later than (and preferably before) **March 12**. Include a preliminary list of sources. The best research and writing have long gestation periods. You probably can’t produce a really good paper at the last minute. It is important that you begin thinking about a term paper topic early in the semester, that you discuss it with the instructor and with your classmates, and that you begin the research and writing well before the end-of-semester crunch.

(3) **An oral presentation** of approximately 30-40 minutes that outlines the approach and/or the main findings of the research for the course paper (presenters may assign a rough draft of their paper or other material in advance of the meeting). This will occur toward the end of the
semester and is an opportunity to share with the rest of the group what you have been doing and
to get feedback and suggestions. I understand that presentations will be of works-in-progress, not
polished texts. This means that the findings may still be tentative and that some aspects of the
planned paper may not be fully fleshed out. That is expected and perfectly okay.

And (4) a written course paper due at the end of the semester (by May 21) and submitted by
email. Writing and publishing excellent, original papers is the key to advancement in academia.
Many (not all) term papers in Graduate Center courses are publishable, even if the authors don’t
always realize that or try to publish them. I always recommend that doctoral students publish
something before they obtain the PhD. How else in this lousy job market can they obtain a full-
time position or a post-doc? (See Lennard Davis’s article). As much as possible, term papers
should be of professional quality in every sense. They should analyze a significant problem, be
well organized, carefully proofread, and — hopefully — of publishable quality and exciting to
read. I prefer lucid prose to academic “thick writing” and data-based arguments to unsupported
assertions (this can be helpful in grant proposals too). Length is less important than content and
clarity. Any system of citation (AAA, APA, Chicago, etc.) is fine, as long as it is used
consistently. I welcome papers that express views or use approaches different than my own. Late
papers will be accepted only under unusual circumstances. Papers must be submitted as Word
(not pdf) email attachments. This will facilitate commenting and editing.

We will read the following BOOKS, as well as articles and other documents listed in the
schedule below. The books are available at a real brick-and-mortar bookstore just 15 minutes
away from the GC on the #6 subway (Shakespeare’s, Lexington Ave. between 68th and 69th Sts.).

Edelman, Marc, and Saturnino M. Borras, Jr. forthcoming 2015. Political Dynamics of
Transnational Agrarian Movements. Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood (manuscript will be available).

Holt-Giménez, Eric. 2006. Campesino a Campesino: Voices from Latin America’s Farmer to

Pellow, David N. 2007. Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental


Worldwide. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Von Bülow, Marisa. 2010. Building Transnational Networks: Civil Society and the Politics of
University Press.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

January 29: Introduction and discussion

February 4: Student-run discussion and a collective action exercise. Key concepts


February 12: NO CLASS. LINCOLN’S BIRTHDAY

Abraham Lincoln, 1857. A reporter once described him as having “Wild Republican hair.”
February 19: Transnational movements of the early twentieth century


February 26: Transnational agrarian movements

Edelman and Borras, Politics of Transnational Agrarian Movements, entire manuscript.

March 5: Resistance to trade liberalization

Von Bülow, Building Transnational Networks, entire book.

March 12: Labor rights and monitoring

ONE-PAGE PAPER STATEMENT DUE

Seidman, Beyond the Boycott, entire book.
March 19: Author-meets-readers session with Eric Holt-Giménez
Holt-Giménez, *Campesino a Campesino*, entire book

March 26: Claiming new rights transnationally
Thoreson, *Transnational LGBT Activism*, entire book

April 2: NGO-ization and network formation

April 9: NO CLASS. CUNY IS ON VACATION.

April 16: Environmental justice
Pellow, *Resisting Global Toxics*, entire book

April 23: Student presentations
April 30: Student presentations
May 7: Student presentations
May 14: Student presentations
May 21: COURSE PAPERS DUE.