



**Online Academic Summer School 2021**  
SOAS University of London  
**The Politics of Protest, Development and Social Change**  
**COURSE HANDBOOK**

**Mode of Attendance:** Full-time, Online

**Duration:** 2 weeks

**SOAS Accredited:** This course is worth 15 UK credits

**Programme Description**

This course provides a critical introduction to the history, nature and impact of global protest. It analyses how social movements, NGOs and other civil society organisations have interacted and influenced each other and how they have globalised. It interrogates the notion of development as economic growth, assesses the critiques against NGOs as alternatives to state-led development models and considers the concept and use of humanitarian intervention in diverse geographical contexts. The course also discusses the role of labour and labour organising alongside social movements and explores the extent to which movements are posing a challenge to neoliberal development. Finally, it examines both the theoretical basis for social movement and NGO strategies for social change as well as their practical implications, and draws on a number of case studies, including the explosion of the climate justice movement, and advances ideas about what kind of development and social change is possible under late capitalism.

A theoretical consideration of social movements and their relationships to neoliberalism is an important theme for students of Development Studies. The case studies will complement the theory, providing students a comprehensive overview of the conditions of protest in the current global context and the potential for social change. Discussion of the various case studies will equip students with the capacity to analyse questions of strategy in relation to political context and current events. Students will also have the opportunity to analyse relevant films that examine case studies. Students will conduct research by participating in a protest or demonstration in London during the course – where this is possible and safe – and then undertake a short practical exercise, either a photo essay or short video of the protest, which they will present to their classmates in the final tutorials. This exercise highlights the importance of experience and participation, strategy and intervention, in addition to observation and analysis of protest movements.

**Programme Schedule**

Topic 1: Contemporary protest, states and the question of democracy

Topic 2: Neoliberal development and the resurgence of NGOs

Topic 3: Imperialism, humanitarianism and anti-imperialism

Topic 4: Labour organising and the future of work

Topic 5: Migration, borders and refugees

Topic 6: Climate crisis and the global climate justice movement

Topic 7: What kind of social change?

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students should have:

- A critical understanding of the key theoretical debates on social movements and NGOs, including an understanding of the various roles these forces play in processes of development and social change.
- An understanding of the nature and history of social protest since the 1960s.
- An understanding of the relationships between NGOs and a range of other development actors, including the state, and knowledge of how these relationships have evolved.
- A capacity to identify, understand and critique a range of theoretical approaches for understanding contemporary social movements, and apply these approaches to practical case studies.

## Assessment

Each course will be assessed by four online assessments or 'e-tivities'\*. The first is a formative icebreaker that will not be formally assessed. The second is worth 10% and asks students to critique one of the readings and respond to the posts of other students. The third assessment is an essay plan worth 20% and the remaining 70% is formed of a 2,500 word essay. The e-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to students as a means of monitoring their progress and encouraging areas in which they can improve. On successful completion of the assessments, students will receive a transcript confirming the credit awarded. Students that do not require credit are strongly encouraged to take part in the e-tivities, but are not required to complete the assessments.

\* An 'e-tivity' is a framework for online, active and interactive learning following a format that states clearly to the students the following: 1) the **purpose** of the assignment; 2) the **task** at hand; 3) the contribution or **response** type; and 4) the **outcome** (this is based on Salmon, G. (2002) *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning*. London: Routledge).

## Course Convenor

Dr Feyzi Ismail: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff102142.php>

Feyzi has degrees in Philosophy and Social Policy, and completed her PhD in Development Studies at SOAS, where she conducted research on the relationship between NGOs and the left parties in Nepal. She has taught at UCL in Geography and at Goldsmiths in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies. Her research interests include social movements and popular protest, alternatives to neoliberalism and imperialism, labour and migration, and politics and development in Nepal and South Asia. She is on the executive committee of the Britain-Nepal Academic Council and the editorial board of the journal *Capital & Class*.

## Introductory Readings and Sources

<https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/04/britains-long-fight-over-the-right-to-protest>  
<https://theconversation.com/protest-has-helped-define-the-first-two-decades-of-the-21st-century-heres-whats-next-128745>  
<https://monthlyreview.org/2019/05/01/absolute-capitalism/>  
<https://newint.org/features/2014/12/01/ngos-keynote>

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/mediterranean-journeys-in-hope/warfare-on-logistics-of-migrant-movem/>

<https://www.thedigradio.com/podcast/global-vaccine-apartheid-with-achal-prabhala/>

<https://soundcloud.com/poltheoryother/107-climate-activism-and-the-fetishisation-of-nonviolence-w-andreas-malm>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/apr/02/fossil-fuel-companies-billions-tax-breaks-workers?r=news>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/15/cap-on-trident-nuclear-warhead-stockpile-to-rise-by-more-than-40>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8fBclrHITg>

Follow the course here:

<https://twitter.com/SOASProtest>