From the Arab Spring protests in the Middle East to the Occupy movement in the United States, the Gezi Park demonstrations in Turkey, and the urban revolts in Brazil, it appears that politically-conscious millennials are playing an instrumental role in trying to effect social change in recent years. The primary question that will be explored in this course is: Can young people make a political difference in the world? Answering this question will require that we make an inquiry into the meaning of “youth,” a category that has no universal definition and whose boundaries are fought over everywhere. We will consider whether the experiences often associated with youthhood—ranging from the putatively biological phase of “storm and stress” to their enrollment in the modern educational system—have any bearing on their political participation. In addition to exploring the complex reasons behind young people’s decisions to become activists, we will also examine various methods of mobilization, such as the use of social media, and cross-generational collaborations with “adult” activists. Our discussions will be based on various sociopolitical campaigns and groupings of the past century in which youths have played a critical role, such as the anti-war and the feminist movements of the 1960s, the religious revitalization of the 1970s, the

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