**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL CHANGE 2012**

**READING GUIDE FOR BIOGRAPHY**

These questions should serve as a guide to your reading, but should not delimit what you take from the book. I recommend you take notes since the small group and large group will address and compare answers to these questions. You will not have to turn anything in for this assignment, unless you miss the class session. ***In that case, you will be required to write a 5-page reflection on the book, using the reading guide as your basis for discussing the text, due by the time of the class session.***

What did you learn about the book’s subject generally – both the individual and the movements in which s/he was involved?

What factors were involved in the subject’s formational years that predisposed her/him to the work of activism?

What were some of the ideological/philosophical shifts of the activist’s politics?

What were the hallmarks of this individual’s leadership? What were the controversies over leadership in her movement/s?

What was the activist’s theory of social change? How did this person think social change happened? What were/are the actual “activities” of her/his activism? Of what is “activism” composed? How is it described?

What kind of sacrifices did the activist have to make in her efforts for social change?

What did you learn about the ways sexism, racism, classism, and/or homophobia function within U.S. society and/or U.S. social movements?

What is nationalism? Integrationism? Internationalism? What are the tensions between them? What are the reasons for these tensions? What is self-determination?

What is the role of land in the activist’s personal history and the politics of the movement/s?

What are the different ways in which law enforcement of various kinds (police, courts, judges, correctional officers, jails, military) is portrayed? What is your reaction to these portrayals?

What does the activist-subject have to say about the relationship between personal and social transformation?

What does the activist say about the role of religion in either personal or social transformation?

What was the role of education, either positively or negatively, for the person or the movements in which they were involved? Did you note any forms of education outside of traditional schooling? How do you see education – as consciousness-raising, liberation, indoctrination?

What was described by the author/subject as effective and ineffective means of social change?

What kinds of tactics were described (protest, education, direct action, campaigns, armed struggle, political advocacy, etc.)? What tactics/means are appealing to you personally? What means do you find yourself rejecting?

What did the auto/biography have to say on the topic of violence (self-defense, armed struggle) and (non)violence in social change movements?

From the perspective of your own social location (your gender identity, your race, your sexual orientation, your socio-economic class, etc.), what lessons can you take from the book? (For example, as a man, did you learn anything about what sexism is, what it looks like, how it operates in society and movements, what it might mean to be an ally to women? What it might mean as a white person to be in solidarity with people of other races, and so on?)

What was most surprising to you as you read the book?

Do any of the theories we discussed in class so far appear to have any relevance to the social change efforts or movements described in this book?

In relation to social change broadly, did you learn or think about anything new or more deeply as a result of reading this book?