

U.S. Civil Rights Seminar Hist 575

Spring 2008

Instructor: Franklin Forts

Office: 202A Arter Hall

Office Hours: M, 2 – 4 / T&Th, 12:30 – 1:30 / W, 10 – 12/ By appt.

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Course Description: This class is an exploration of the African American freedom movement in the United States in the post-1945 era. Through a focus on the efforts of African Americans and their allies to overcome persistent white supremacy and achieve racial justice in the United States, students explore the legal, historical, economic, and social origins of the civil rights movement, as well as its impact on American culture, politics, and international relations. We will probe the origins of the freedom struggle, chronicle the movements' crucial events, examine its major organizations and leaders, explore particular themes within the movement and focus on changes within individual communities.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will improve their analytical skills through the interpretation of primary source documents.
- Students will engage in class discussions in order to improve their analytical skills and to discern the historical development of the American Civil Rights Movement and the fundamental changes it brought to the American political and social landscape
- Students will develop skills of leading class discussions and learn to share, and present ideas discovered in their research.
- Students will continue to develop their writing skills as they communicate and share their research findings with the instructor and their fellow students.

Course Requirements (percentage of final grade)

Book Review #1 10%

Book Review #2 & class presentation 10% (5% ea.)

Class Facilitation 20%

Preliminary Proposal and Bibliography 5%

Oral Presentation of research conclusions 5%

Final Paper 35%

Class participation 15%

Required Texts

- *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954 – 1992*. Harvard Sitfokk. Hill & Wang
- *Brown v. Board of Education: a brief History*. Waldo Martin. Bedford/St. Martin, 1998.
- *Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A brief History with Documents*. David Howard-Pitney. Bedford/St. Martin, 2004.
- *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. Peniel E. Joseph. Holt and Company, 2006.
- *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941 - 1965*. Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods. Indiana University Press, 1993.
- *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. Kevin Kruse. Princeton University Press, 2005.
- *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Mary Lynn Rampolla. Bedford/St. Martin

Book Reviews: Students will write two book reviews during the course of the semester. One book review shall be selected from the assigned books for this class, while the other book review shall be selected by the student and must be related to his or her research project. This second book review will be shared with your classmates on April 22 during class. Each review will be approximately 3 pages in length, double spaced with one inch margins. Each will be worth 10% of the final grade and each must be shared with the members of the class as well as with the instructor. More information on these reviews will follow under a separate instructional handout.

Seminar Paper: Each student will be expected to complete a semester long research paper (18 to 20 pages) on a topic of his or her choice that is related somehow to the American Civil Rights Movement. This paper must utilize both primary and secondary source material. A preliminary proposal, consisting of a statement of purpose and a bibliography, is to be submitted in class on Feb 26. The purpose of seminar classes are to prepare you for work on your senior project. I encourage you to seek a paper topic that is closely related to any ideas you have regarding a senior project.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Your regular attendance and participation are both necessary in order that we may reach our class goals and to insure a constructive learning environment. If you are late to class it is your responsibility to inform the instructor of your presence. **You are allowed 2 unexcused absences after those 10 points per unexcused absence will be taken away from your seminar paper final grade.**

Participation: A significant portion of your grade is determined by your contribution to class discussions. You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **A** for class participation is awarded when students regularly initiate discussion. This means coming to class thoroughly familiar with the assigned readings and prepared to raise questions, open discussion, and actively engage other students in discussion. Students who are self-starters and do not rely on the instructors' questions to set the agenda for our discussions will earn an A for participation.
- **B** for class participation is awarded to students who participate regularly and productively in class discussion, who are prepared, and who are willing to engage.
- **C** for class participation is awarded to those who participate on a regular but less frequent basis than the B student. "C" discussants will be prepared for class, but their contributions will indicate that less thought has been given to the assigned material.
- **F** for class participation is given to those who contribute infrequently to discussion and, or whose absences are frequent.

Class Facilitation: Students will be responsible, in pairs, for facilitating our class discussions of the assigned books. Students will facilitate those books for which they write reviews or are of interest to them. Your duties as class facilitators will be to draft (in consultation with the instructor) a list of questions for discussion and to distribute these questions in advance. You will also lead the discussion (in partnership with the instructor) on your assigned day. **YOU MUST MEET WITH THE INSTRUCTOR AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR DISCUSSION TO FINALIZE YOUR LIST OF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.** These questions will be emailed to your classmates at least **THREE DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF DISCUSSION.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Allegheny College operates under an Honor Code, to which all students are subject. See The Compass: Student Handbook, 2007-2008, <http://allegheny.edu/campus/policies/handbook.pdf>. You should educate yourself as to how these policies apply to you. In particular, Article III, paragraph 3 specifically forbids plagiarism, "defined as using the ideas or words of another without citing the sources from which the ideas or words are taken." A clear statement of what constitutes plagiarism is provided at: <http://webpub.allegheny.edu/dept/writingcenter/links/plagiarism.htm>.

DISABILITY CONCERNS: If you have a documented disability, please let the professor know as soon as possible so that he may make the appropriate accommodations. If you have provided documentation of a disability of any kind to the Learning Commons, and will need academic accommodations please arrange these with the Learning Commons and your instructor.

Classroom rules: No eating food or reading newspapers during lectures. Turn off all cell phones. Students violating these rules will be asked to leave.

N.B.: This syllabus is subject to change.

Class Schedule Spring 08

Jan	17	Introductions
	22	Civil Rights Beginnings and Meanings
	24	Discussion: <i>The Struggle for Black Equality</i> , Pt I pgs, 3 - 117
	29	Discussion: <i>The Struggle for Black Equality</i> , PtII pgs, 118 - 236
	31	Video: Rise and Fall of Jim Crow
Feb.	5	Introduction to Library resources: meet in Pelletier Library
	7	Discussion: <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , Pt I, pgs 1-198
	12	Discussion: <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , Pt II, pgs 199-237
	14	Video: Eyes on the Prize
	19	Research Week (No Class Meeting)
	21	Research Week (No Class Meeting)
	26	Preliminary Proposal & bibliography due and presented to class
	28	Discussion: <i>Martin & Malcolm</i> , Pt I, pgs 1-101
Mar	4	Discussion: <i>Martin & Malcolm</i> , Pt II, pgs 102-180
	6	Video: Negroes with Guns: the story of Robert F. Williams
	11	Discussion: <i>Women in the C.R.M.</i> , Pt I, chps 1, 3, 5, 6, 7
	13	Discussion: <i>Women in the C.R.M.</i> , Pt II, chps 9, 12, 13, 15, 17
	18	Spring Break
	20	Spring Break
	25	Video/Open
	27	Discussion: <i>History of Black Power</i> , Pt I, pgs I-131
Apr.	1	Discussion: <i>History of Black Power</i> , Pt II, pgs 132-304

- 3 Video/Open
- 8 Library Work, Meet in Pelletier Library
- 10 Discussion: White Flight, Pt I, pgs 3-160
- 15 Discussion: White Flight, Pt II, pgs 161-266
- 17 Video/Open
- 22 Final Book report due & class presentations
- 24 No Class
- 29 Last Day of Classes **Final Papers Due / Paper Presentations**