

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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Department of American Multicultural Studies
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This syllabus is for a 3-semester-unit course, taught in a three-hour class once a week for 15 weeks.

Course Description: The civil rights movement is one of the most significant sources of social change in the United States during the 20th Century. This course analyzes the structure and dynamics of the civil rights movement from the viewpoints of history, sociology, and political science. We pay close attention to the roles of organizations, resources, leadership, recruitment, commitment, values, ideology, political culture, gender, and counter-movements.

Required Texts:

C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3rd revised ed. (1955; Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (Penguin Books, 1987).

Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 2nd edition (1982; Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999).

Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1988).

Why study history anyway? "The struggle of humanity against oppression is the struggle of memory against forgetting." -- Milan Kundera

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance, preparation, and participation are essential. Attendance will be verified each class period. Participation in class discussions will count 15% of your grade. Unexcused absences will lower this score.
2. You will write several short (1-2 pages) reaction papers as assigned, to count 20% of your grade.
3. You will present to the class oral reports on assigned topics as part of a collaborative team, and serve with this team as a reaction panel to films and videos, to count 15% of your grade.
4. You will complete a take-home mid-term assignment, to count 25% of your grade.
5. You will write a research paper (at least 10 pages, typed, double-spaced), to count 25% of your grade. The subject might concern the role of a national civil rights organization, a particular campaign of the civil rights movement, or a study of an individual leader in relation to the movement. Books listed as "recommended resources" in the syllabus below are suggested as starting points for selected topics. The framework for this paper should synthesize social movement theory with historical analysis. Details on this assignment will be provided later. Plan to consult with the instructor on your choice of topic.

Course Objectives:

1. You will be able to identify and describe and explain the significance of at least ten important episodes, events, and outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) from 1954 to 1970; including, for example, such movement activities and federal government responses (from the President, Congress, and Supreme Court) as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Little Rock school integration campaign, the Sit-Ins, the Freedom Rides, the Albany movement, the Birmingham campaign, the March on Washington, the Mississippi Summer Project, the Selma campaign, the Civil Rights Act, and the Voting Rights Act;
2. You will be able to describe a typical cycle of social movement activity, from emergence to mobilization through its peak and its decline, with illustrations from the CRM;
3. You will be able to apply a model of strategic analysis to the CRM, including such factors as underlying socioeconomic processes, indigenous organizational strength, expanding political opportunities, and cognitive liberation;
4. You will be able to describe how individuals are recruited, motivated, and retained by social movements (and why they may exit), with illustrations from the CRM;

5. You will be able to explain the importance of organizations, resources, and ideology to social movements, with illustrations from the CRM;
6. You will be able to describe the background of some persistent alternatives facing African-American communities and their impact on the CRM, including integration vs. separatism; nonviolence vs. meeting violence with force in self-defense; mutuality vs. self-sufficiency;
7. You will be able to explain the importance of allies to social movements, with illustrations from the CRM, and apply this concept to your life today.

Course Outline and Readings:

Required reading should be done before class. Recommended resources can be used to develop term paper topics or follow a subject in greater depth.

1st Class: Introduction: From Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement.

Course description, requirements, objectives, texts, outline.

Recommended resource:

Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (Harper & Row, 1988)

2nd Class: Precursors to The Civil Rights Movement: The Labor Movement and the Left in the 1930s.

Videos in class: first part of "A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom;" excerpt on Marion Anderson from "Eleanor Roosevelt."

Required reading:

Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Intros, chs. 1-3

McAdam, *Political Process*, Intro; ch. 5, "The Historical Context of Black Insurgency, 1876-1964"

Recommended resources:

John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the CRM in the South* (Knopf, 1994)

Eliot Wigginton, ed., *Refuse to Stand Silently By: An Oral History of Grass Roots Social Activism in America, 1921-1964* (Doubleday, 1991)

Richard A. Couto, *Lifting the Veil: A Political History of Struggles for Emancipation* (Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1993)

Carol Polsgrove, *Divided Minds: Intellectuals and the CRM* (Norton, 2001)

3rd Class: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*: the NAACP's litigation strategy produces a pivotal victory in the Post-WWII era. The study of collective behavior and social movements.

Videos in class: clip of Billie Holiday singing "Strange Fruit" from "Jazz;" excerpt from "Simple Justice"

Required reading:

Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, ch. 4

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 1

McAdam, *Political Process*, chs. 1-2

Recommended resources:

Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (Random House, 1975)

Juan Williams, *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (Times Books, 1998)

Constance Baker Motley, *Equal Justice Under Law: An Autobiography* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998)

James T. Paterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2001)

Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2000)

4th Class: The Montgomery Bus Boycott: the emergence of a social movement. Models of social movement analysis.

Video in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 1, "Awakenings (1954-56)"

Required reading:

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, chs. 2 and 3

McAdam, *Political Process*, chs. 3-4

Recommended resources:

Harry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (Bantam Books, 1990), chs. 1 and 2

Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (Free Press, 1984)

Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (Simon & Schuster, 1988)

David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: MLK Jr. and the SCLC* (Random House, 1986)

Belinda Robnett, *How Long, How Long: African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1998)

Lynne Olson, *Freedom's Daughters* (Scribner, 2001)

5th Class: Little Rock: the NAACP forces the Federal government's hand on school integration. Social movement cycles.

Video in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 2, "Fighting Back (1957-1962)"

Required reading:

Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, ch. 5

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 4

McAdam, *Political Process*, ch. 6

Bill Moyer, "Eight Stages of Social Movement Success" (handout)

Recommended resources:

Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy* (New Society Publishers, 2001)

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, ch. 3

Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* (Pocket Books, 1995)

6th Class: Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides: students mobilize and expand the movement. Recruitment to social movements.

Videos in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 3, "Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-61);" clip of David Halberstam on the Nashville students

Take-home Mid-term Assignment (part 1) handed out --Due in two weeks

Required reading:

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 5

McAdam, *Political Process*, ch. 7

Recommended resources:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, chs. 4 and 5

David Halberstam, *The Children* (1998)

Joanne Grant, *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* (Wiley, 1998)

John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (Simon & Schuster, 1998)

James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the CRM* (Arbor House, 1985)

Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

7th Class: From Albany and Birmingham to Washington, DC: the movement in ascendance

Video in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 4, "No Easy Walk (1961-1963);" concluding excerpt from "A. Philip Randolph"

Required reading:

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 6

Recommended resources:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, chs. 6, 8, 11

Richard A. Couto, *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Round: The Pursuit of Racial Justice in the Rural South* (Temple Univ. Press, 1991)

Jervis Anderson, *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen, a Biography* (Harper Collins, 1997)

Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama, The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (Simon & Schuster, 2000)

8th Class: Mississippi: the toughest case. Allies.

Video in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 5, "Mississippi: Is This America? (1962-64)"

Take-Home Mid-term paper (part 1) due

Required readings:

Andrea Ayzavian, "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies as Agents of Change," *Fellowship* (January/February 1995), pp. 6-9.

9th Class: Mississippi Summer Project

Video in class: "Freedom on My Mind"

Required reading:

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 7

McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, chs. 1-4

Recommended resources:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, chs. 7, 9, 12

Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1981)

Doug McAdam, "Gender as a Mediator of the Activist Experience: The Case of Freedom Summer," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 97, no. 5 (March 1992), 1211-40

10th Class: The Summer After: the Child Development Group of Mississippi

Take-home Mid-term Assignment (part 2) handed out – Due in one week

Video in class: "America's War on Poverty," program 2, "Given a Chance," on CDGM

Required reading:

McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, ch. 5, 6 and epilogue

Recommended resource:

Polly Greenberg, *The Devil Has Slippery Shoes: A Biased Biography of CDGM* (1969; rpt. Youth Policy Institute, 1990)

11th Class: From Selma to Montgomery: the movement in its heyday

Take-Home Mid-term paper (part 2) due

Video in class: "Eyes on the Prize," program 6, "Bridge to Freedom (1965)"

Required reading:

Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, ch. 8

Recommended resources:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, ch. 13

Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65* (Simon & Schuster, 1998)

Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: the Future of the CRM,"

Commentary, Feb. 1965; rpt. in *Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin*, ed. Devon W. Carbado and Donald Weise (Cleis Press, 2003)

**12th Class: Fragmentation and Conflict within the Movement:
nationalism/separatism vs. integration; the rise of Black Power.**

Video in Class: "Eyes on the Prize II," program 1, "The Time Has Come, (1964-1965)," on Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure), etc.

Required reading:

Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, ch. 6

McAdam, *Political Process*, ch. 8, pp. 181-205

Recommended resources:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, chs. 14, 15, 16

Herbert H. Haines, *Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream, 1954-1970* (Univ., of Tennessee Press, 1988)

13th Class: The Movement Moves North

Video in Class: "Eyes on the Prize II," program 3, "Power (1967-1968)," Carl Stokes campaigns for mayor of Cleveland; Black Panther Party is formed in Oakland; Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy in NYC

Required reading:

McAdam, *Political Process*, ch. 8, pp. 205-229

Recommended resource:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, ch. 17, 21,22,26,27

Student reports.

14th Class: Dr. King's Last Campaign. The movement in decline.

Video in Class: "Eyes on the Prize II," program 4, "The Promised Land (1967-1968);"

Required reading:

McAdam, *Political Process*, ch. 9

Recommended resource:

Hampton and Fayer, *Voices of Freedom*, chs. 19, 20, 24, 25, 27

Student reports.

15th Class: Student Reports

Video in Class: "Eyes on the Prize II," program 8, excerpt of participants' concluding reflections from "Back to the Movement (1979 – mid 1980s)"