

History 343 – The Civil Rights Movement

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Fall 2005, 313 Clough Hall
TR 11.00 – 12.15
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
10.00 – 11.30 and by appointment

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Course Description

This course will examine the development of the American Civil Rights Movement from roughly the World War II period through the Black Power era of the late 1960's and early 1970's. In the semester, we will examine the social, political and economic climate of the era and consider how both Blacks and Whites were affected. Specifically, the course will focus on various organizations and the strategies they implemented which resulted in events such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Additionally, the course will analyze the subtle and not-so-subtle reactions to initiatives that allowed African Americans to attain many of the rights and privileges that have become commonplace in today's society.

Course Requirements:

Books:

- William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*
- Lawson and Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*
- Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power*
- Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*
- Howell Raines, *My Soul is Rested*

Reaction Papers - 30% of final grade:

Students will submit **three** 5-to 7-page reaction papers due on designated days. To do these papers, you will select a set of related readings and provide a critical reading/reaction to the intellectual and thematic terrain covered by the text(s) you select. The main point of the papers is to provide, you guessed it, a critical reaction to the readings covered in a particular unit. In these papers, you will discuss and evaluate the major themes that arise in the readings and discussions, and assess them accordingly. While a (very) short synopsis of the readings can make its way into the papers, reaction papers will ultimately be graded based on the *conclusions* you draw about the readings/discussions themselves, and the ways in which they help/do not help you understand particular topics or themes.

In-class participation/research paper presentation - 30% of final grade

As for class participation, I expect you to attend every class meeting, to arrive on time and to come ready, having done the assigned reading and/or written assignment. Since there will be a very high premium on class discussion, it is imperative that everyone comes to class ready to contribute with comments, questions and insights. Remember

though, class participation is not a contest. The people who talk the most do not necessarily “win.” What really counts is your ability and willingness to bring something valuable to the discussion that your colleagues and I can build upon in our efforts to bring some clarity to the issues that we are discussing. If you have an insight on the readings, or if you have a page full of questions, let your voice be heard! Of course, this level of participation will require full reading of assigned work. Also, to ensure the best possible experience for all of us, let’s refrain from using inappropriate language, or any other activity that may make our classroom less than open and engaging. **A substantial portion of this grade will be drawn from the presentation you make on your research paper at the end of the semester.**

Final paper – 20% of final grade

Students will submit a 15 to 25-page research paper that uses *either* primary source documents, oral interviews or both to explore key issues raised (or not raised) throughout the course. I will be happy to assist you in your efforts to identify primary source documents for this paper. **A 1- to 2-page research proposal and 10 item bibliography (websites don’t count) are due on October 27 at the beginning of class. The final paper is due on December 6 at the beginning of class.**

Final Exam – 20% of final grade

The final exam will be a take home essay exam. I’ll give you three essay questions; you will answer two of them.

Please do not hesitate to come by my office to discuss any of these requirements.

Honor Code:

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate your commitment to the Code, each student must write “pledged” and sign his/her name on every assignment. If you have questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

Policies:

Note on written work:

All written work must be composed on a computer, be double-spaced and in 10 or 12 point font. Have your name, the assignment name (and number if necessary), date, course name and email address on each document you turn in. Students who feel that they need assistance with written assignments should feel free to contact me so that we can discuss whatever challenges you may be facing.

Attendance:

Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *All other absences after the third one must be excused.* Valid excuses for missing class include but are not limited to religious observances, college-sanctioned academic or athletic travel, personal illness or injury, family illness or injury or bereavement. Infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your class participation grade.

Paper grades:

As a general rule, grades are not negotiable. However, I will gladly discuss the grade on any assignment 24 hours after the work is turned in.

Late Papers:

All papers are due at the beginning of class. Papers turned in after that time will be considered one day late. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized by one letter grade for each day late.

Learning Differences:

I am strongly committed to accommodating students with disabilities, and ask your cooperation in making sure that I'm aware of any such accommodation you might need. For more information, please contact Student Disability Services to alert them of any needs you may have.

Additional Information:

- Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, games, and any other object that can beep, buzz, ring or vibrate. These devices are extremely disruptive when they go off in the middle of class.
- *I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as necessary*

Class Schedule:

August 25: Introduction

Go over syllabus; discussion

Early Years: Building on the Past

August 30: World War II: Precursor to a Movement?

Bates article (folder); *Light*, chap. 1

September 1: World War II, Part II

Randolph, *March on Washington Movement* (folder), *Soul*, 27-31

The 1950's: The Movement Made Manifest

September 6: Montgomery and Beyond

Light, 2; *Soul*, 37-61; *Debating*, 99-113

September 8: Race Traitors and Rebels: White Allies and Opponents

Tyson, *Dynamite* article (folder); *Soul*, 297-323; *Debating*, 54-59

Additional: Fosl on Anne Braden, a dedicated white anti-racist activist in the 1950's (folder)

September 13: *Brown* and the Dilemma of Integration

Adam Fairclough and Charles Payne articles, *Journal of American History* Vol. 91, No. 1, June 2004 (JSTOR accessible)

September 15: The Politics of Moderation?

Civilities, skim chapter 1, read chap. 2; *Debating*, 3-20

September 20: Civil Rights Unionism

Korstad, "Those Who Were not Afraid" (folder)

The 1960's: A Black Revolution?

September 22: Sit-ins and Freedom Rides

Civilities, 3; *Soul*, 75-108, 109-130; Fleming "White Lunch Counters and Black Consciousness" (folder)

Reaction Paper #1 Due

September 27: SNCC: The Movement's Shock Troops

Reading to be announced

September 29: Organizing vs. Mobilizing

Civilities, 4-6

October 4: Organizing vs. Mobilizing

Light, 3-4, skim 5; *Soul*, 260-267, 249-254

October 6: Mobilizing vs. Organizing

Debating, 20-32, 113-128; *Soul* 154-161, 179-183

October 11: Deep Work

Light, 6-8

October 13: Women in the Movement

Light, 9

Reaction Paper #2 Due

October 14-18: Fall Break!

October 20: Nonviolence? Really?

King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (folder); Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots" @ <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/malcolmxgrassroots.htm> (audio is available at this site; you can listen to it if you'd like); Strain, *Pure Fire* (folder)

October 25: Freedom Summer
Light, 10-11

Research Proposal and Bibliography Due

October 27: Movie
“Freedom on my Mind”

November 1: The Movement Peaks: Internal Divisions and the Limits of Nonviolence
Civilities, 7-8; *Light*, 13

November 3: The “Emergence” of Black Nationalism
Power, Intro-2

November 8: The Rise of the Black Panther Party
Power, 3-4

November 10: Black Power and the Black Freedom Struggle: A Movement in Decline?
Power, 5-6; King on Vietnam (folder)

Reaction Paper #3 Due

November 15: Tennessee and the Black Freedom Struggle
Fleming, “We Shall Overcome” (folder); Halberstam chapter (folder)

November 17: Movie
At the River I Stand

November 22-27: Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Presentations

December 1: Presentations

December 6: Presentations

Research Paper Due