

History 243 – The Civil Rights Movement

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Fall 2010, 205 Palmer
MWF 3.00 – 3.50
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
11.00-12.00, 1.00-3.00 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, cultural, political and economic climate of the era and consider how black and white Americans navigated the titanic changes that occurred during a period many refer to as "The Second Reconstruction." Specifically, the course will focus on various organizations and the strategies they implemented to affect change; the tension between local and national initiatives; the significance of major events, such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Additionally, the course will analyze the various 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:

- Laurie Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality (PM)*
- Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Till the Midnight Hour (W)*
- Lawson and Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement (Debating)*
- Charles McKinney, *Greater Freedom (GF)*
- Theoharis and Woodard, *Freedom North (FN)*

Two essays – (4-5 pages) – 20% of final grade

Students will submit **two** 4-5 page papers due on **October 8** and **November 19**. A note on the paper: when I say it should be 4-5 pages long I mean it. Papers that do not have at least four full pages of text will not be graded. Although this should go without saying, I'll put it in here anyway: a title page does **not** count as page one of your paper.

One Movie Review – (3 pages) – 10% of final grade

Students will watch one movie produced in the Civil Rights/Black Power era and write a comprehensive review. The movie review is due **December 3**.

Movie Nights

On **Thursday September 23** and **Thursday November 11** we will have a class movie night. The first film will reflect the tensions and values of the period commonly referred to as the "civil rights movement." The second film will reflect the tensions and values of the "black power" period. Please make the necessary arrangements so you can attend these movies.

Class Participation – 20% of final grade

I expect you to attend every class, arrive on time and 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. 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. Also, coming to the office during office hours to discuss material covered in the class also counts towards your class participation grade.

Blog entries – 20% of final grade

In this course, a portion of students' writing assignments will be completed on a blog ("The Civil Rights Movement") that has been set up especially for this course. The URL for the site is www.civilrhodes.blogspot.com. Each student is required to complete **2 independent "posts" (of no less than 400 words)** and **4 "comments" before** the midterm, and **2 independent posts and 4 comments after** the midterm. Contributions to the blog will be graded in the same way that formal writing assignments would be graded, so students should pay attention to the technical aspects of their writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation) as well as the compositional aspects (clarity of thesis, style, organization of argument, relevance, etc.). Students who participate on the blog in excess of the requirements will be rewarded in their final grade.

Final exam – 30% of final grade

The final exam for this class is scheduled for **Saturday, December 11 at 1.00PM.**

Please Note: Assignment Due Dates Are Fixed.

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. Make sure your pages are **numbered**. Make sure your assignments are stapled. The papers that you submit should reflect your best efforts. 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. Each unexcused absence after the third one will cost you 5% of your **final** grade. If you miss three weeks worth of classes, you can be dropped from the class or flunked.* 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. Excuses after the allotted three should be accompanied by a note from the Dean's office. Needless to say, infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your class participation grade.

Paper/test 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:

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Papers that are one day late will be penalized one letter grade. "My computer crashed the morning the paper was due", or "the printer was out of toner" are not valid excuses for a late paper; rather, they are a testament to poor time management on your part. **Papers over one day late will receive an F.** However, please note that you must turn in all of the assigned work in order to pass the class.

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
- The readings for the week should be done by the *beginning of each week*
- ***I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as necessary***

Class Schedule:

August

Overview

W 25 – Review syllabus; Master narrative; writing exercise

F 27 – Life in Segregation

Laying the Groundwork

M 30 – **Barret Library Research Orientation**

W 1 - Seeking Equality Behind the Veil in Memphis

F 3 - Pursuing Freedom in “Moderate” North Carolina

READINGS: *GF*, 1; *PM*, 1

September

World War II: Fighting for Victory Abroad and at Home

M 6 – **Labor Day (No Class)**

W 8 – Movements for Freedom

F 10 – Gender and Labor Rights

READINGS: *PM*, 2-3; *FN*, 1; Randolph, “Speech and Power” (Public folder)

Documents: Document 1, “To Secure These Rights”, *Debating*

Ideologies and Tactics

M 13 – **Jam Session – Exhibit on Jazz in the Cold War, Hooks Museum**

W 15 – The Christian Roots of Revolution

F 17 – Nonviolence as a tactic

READINGS: “The Christian Way in Race Relations” (folder); “The Nonviolent Anvil” (Folder); “A Testament of Hope” (folder)

Voting and Education

M 20 – Mobilizing in North Carolina

W 22 – Education as a Civil Right

F 24 – **Crossroads to Freedom Research Presentation**

READINGS: *GF*, 2; *FN*, 3; “The Birth of the Citizenship Schools” @

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/118753343/PDFSTART>

Thursday, September 23: MOVIE NIGHT: Movie to be announced

A View From the Top: The Federal Government and Civil Rights

M 27 – The Federal Government and Segregation: An Uneasy Alliance

W 29 – Attacking Jim Crow in the Courts

F 1 – **Film: Eyes on the Prize**

READINGS: *Debating*, 1-46

October

The Multiple Fronts of the Civil Rights Battle

M 4 – Rebellious Youth and Transgressive Culture

W 6 – The Music of Movement

F 8 – **Guest Lecturer: Aram Goudsouzian (PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS)**

READINGS: *PM*, 4-5; “Lost Revolutions” (folder)

Brown v. Board: The Plot Thickens

M 11 – Building up to *Brown* in North Carolina

W 13 – The Urban/Rural Matrix in Memphis

F 15 – The Rise of Massive Resistance

READINGS: *GF*, 3; *PM*, 6

Documents: 2&3 from Part one in *Debating*

The View from the Trenches: Building a Student Movement

M 18 – **Fall Break**

W 20 – The Sit-ins and the Rise of SNCC

F 22 – Ella Baker and Participatory Democracy

READINGS: *Debating*, 115-55; *PM*, 7; *GF*, 4

Documents: 1-6, Part 2, *Debating*

The “Emergence” of Black Power

M 25 – Order and Conflict

W 27 – Brother Malcolm

F 29 – The Roots of Discontent

READINGS: *W*, 1-4; *FN*, 4, 6

November

Where Do We Go From Here?

M 1 – 1964: The High Point of the Movement?

W 3 – “We’re Gonna Start Saying Black Power”

F 5 – **Film: Eyes on the Prize**

READINGS: *W*, 5-7; King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (folder); Malcolm, “The Ballot or the Bullet” @ <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1147>

(you can also hear this speech @ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRNciryImqg>)

New Visions of Freedom

M 8 – Class Matters

W 10 – Black Women and the Organizing Tradition

F 12 – Gender and the Limits of Black Power Ideology

READINGS: *GF*, 5; *FN*, 7, 10

Thursday, November 11: MOVIE NIGHT: Movie to be announced

“Open Rebellion”

M 15 – The Black Panther Party, an (Inter)national Phenomenon

W 17 – Organizing Outside the South

F 19 – The Final Pilgrimage of Martin Luther King, Jr. (**PAPER #2 DUE IN CLASS**)

READINGS: *W*, 8-9; *FN*, 4; *PM*, 8; MLK on Black Power @

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1139>

The Poets Speak

M 22 – Making Meaning of the Civil Rights/Black Nationalist Moment

W,F – **Thanksgiving Break**

READINGS: Selected Poems

Legacies

M 29–The Rise and Evolution of Cultural Nationalism

W 1 –History and Memory: How Do We Talk About these Movements?

F 3 – **Discussion: MOVIE REVIEWS DUE IN CLASS**

READINGS: *W*, 8-9; *FN*, 11

December

The Struggle Continues

M 6 –Hitting a Moving Target: School Desegregation and White Flight

W 8 –Reassessing the Movements

READINGS: *MN*, 5; Kruse “White Flight” (folder); Wilson and Dwyer articles (folder)

The Final Exam is scheduled for Saturday, December 11 at 1.00PM