

History 4720: The Civil Rights Movement

Spring 2009

T, Th 10:30-11:45 a.m.

NFS 201

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**Office hours: Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m.
and by appointment**



Course Description:

This course traces black Americans' struggle for equality since emancipation, with emphasis on the post-World War II period. We will focus on the individuals and social trends that laid the groundwork for change by the mid twentieth century. Drawing on primary sources as well as secondary readings and videos, we will then examine the action-packed decade between the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A unit on the Black Power movement will help us put the fragmentation of the civil rights movement into historical perspective. Finally, a substantial portion of the course will address the post-civil rights era, encouraging students to relate historical issues and events to their own 21st-century lives.

Course Objectives:

1. To familiarize students with key names, events, laws, and issues in African-American history from World War II to the present.
2. To expose students, in reading and research assignments, to a wide range of historical sources such as speeches, autobiographical accounts, legal documents, oral histories, photographs, and film.
3. To teach students how to analyze these sources in the context of African-American history.
4. To improve students' written and oral communication skills.

Required Books: (available at Student Stores)

Raymond D'Angelo, *The American Civil Rights Movement: Readings & Interpretations*

James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy*

Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*

Requirements and Grading:

Virtually all of each student's grade will be based on written assignments, including **two 5-page papers based on assigned readings (20% each) and an 8-page essay based on a civil rights-era autobiography and other additional readings on top of what is listed in the course schedule below (30%).**

Students will also be required to **maintain a portfolio and write periodic journal entries (30%)**. All in-class work, including occasional quizzes (which will factor into the portfolio grade), as well as handouts should go into this portfolio, which must be kept separate from your lecture notes. The portfolio will be my main resource for assessing attendance and participation. **If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out about and complete any work you missed. Note that it will not always be possible to make up work, especially quizzes. Attendance and participation at every class meeting are required. Students should also be prepared, which means completing assigned readings by the date on which they appear on the syllabus.**

Disability Resource Center: Any student who requires accommodations for the course should contact the Disability Resource Center, located in University Inn, Room 101 (7-2444). The Center can also provide a copy of this syllabus in a variety of alternative formats.

Policy on plagiarism:

Students should read the University's rules concerning academic honesty, which can be found online at <http://www.usu.edu/policies/PDF/Acad-Integrity.pdf>. Any cheating, falsification, or presentation of another's work as your own will result in a failing grade in the course and might lead to even more serious consequences, such as suspension or expulsion. If you have *any questions* about whether something constitutes plagiarism, ASK ME. If you are contemplating plagiarism out of desperation, particularly over a deadline, TALK TO ME. I would much rather grant you an extension or help you with your work than fail you for cheating. However, be aware that I have failed students for plagiarism almost every semester that I have taught at USU.

Policy on incompletes:

University policy states that students can receive an "I" for the course only in the case of a verifiable serious illness or family emergency and only when a small amount of the coursework remains to be done. An incomplete cannot be used to avoid a poor grade.

Course Schedule:

Jan. 6	Course introduction
Jan. 8	From Emancipation to Segregation Reading: D'Angelo, pp. 1-11; web assignments due
Jan. 13	The Ethics of Living Jim Crow Reading: Ritterhouse, <i>Growing Up Jim Crow</i> , ch. 1 (on reserve); <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> decision at http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=52
Jan. 15	Video: "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice" Assignment: Students should write a journal entry discussing Wells's activism in the context of what we have discussed thus far in the course
Jan. 20	Obama Inauguration Reading: TBA
Jan. 22	W.E.B. DuBois, the NAACP, and the New Negro Reading: D'Angelo, pp. 12-19, 113-119, 158-175

- Jan. 27 The Depression—and a New Deal?
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 41-53, 175-194 and begin reading Patterson
- Jan. 29 The Impact of World War II
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 53-77 and A. Philip Randolph reading (on reserve)
Assignment: Students should write a journal entry.
- Feb. 3 The *Brown* Decision and “Massive Resistance”
Reading: Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, pp. xiii-117
- Feb. 5 **Video:** “Fighting Back (1957-62),” Episode 2 of *Eyes on the Prize*
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 254-55, 269-77
Paper #1 due
- Feb. 10 The Montgomery Bus Boycott
Reading: D’Angelo, 256-269
- Feb. 12 The Role of Martin Luther King, Jr.
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 195-206 and Appiah article on reserve
Assignment: Students should write a journal entry.
- Feb. 17 No class (Attend Monday classes)
- Feb. 19 Sit-ins and the Formation of SNCC
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 279-302, 207-220
- Feb. 24 1961-1962
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 302-319; begin reading Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake*
- Feb. 26 **Video:** “No Easy Walk,” Episode 4 of *Eyes on the Prize*
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 320-331 and Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake*
Assignment: Students should write a journal entry
- March 3 1964
Reading: Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake*
- March 5 1965
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 341-358 and Less, *For Freedom’s Sake*

Spring Break

- March 17 Discuss Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake*
- March 19 Malcolm X
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 360-366, 383-427
Paper #2 due
- March 24 From “Freedom Now” to “Black Power”
Reading: D’Angelo, pp. 367-383, 427-60
- March 26 MLK in Chicago and Memphis
Reading: TBA
Assignment: Students should write a journal entry

- March 31 The New Left and the Women's Movement
Reading: Evans, *Personal Politics* (chapters on reserve)
- April 2 Jennifer Bateman presentation
- April 7 Public schools since *Brown v. Board*
Reading: Patterson, *Brown v. Board*, pp. 118-223
- April 9 The Affirmative Action Debate
Reading: D'Angelo, pp. 462-470, 486-499 and TBA
- April 14 Brandon Rains presentation
- April 16 The Long Civil Rights Movement
Reading: D'Angelo, pp. 533-546, 573-582 and Hall, "Long Civil Rights Movement" (article on reserve)
Assignment: Students should write a journal entry.
- April 21 TBA
Final papers due
- April 23 Course wrap-up