

## **History of the Civil Rights Movement**

HIST 269A

Winter 2022

T/R 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Leyburn 201

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM and by appointment

Office Number: Newcomb 221

### **Course Description**

This course will examine the trajectory of the Civil Rights Movement by focusing on particular events, strategies, organizations, and political actors. After identifying the conditions that contributed to the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, the course will trace the movement from the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board case to the rise of Black Power during the 1970s. The course will conclude by examining the relationship between the Civil Rights Movement and the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Explain the significance of various events, campaigns, Supreme Court decisions, executive orders, and legislation during the Civil Rights Movement
- Identify key actors in the Civil Rights Movement and evaluate histories of their activism
- Differentiate between the ideologies supported by and strategies employed by various organizations, including the NAACP, SNCC, the SCLC, CORE, and the BPP
- Understand the roles that the legislative, executive, and judicial branches played in the Civil Rights Movement
- Analyze relationships between race, gender, class, and sexuality
- Evaluate the legacies and contemporary implications of the Civil Rights Movement

### **Required Texts**

- Charles E. Cobb, Jr., *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (Duke University Press, 2016)
- Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Viking, 2001)
- Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance-- a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (Penguin Random House, 2011)

Required texts are available at the college bookstore. All other readings will be available through Canvas or as e-books on the library website. To access Canvas, go to <http://canvas.wlu.edu>. Films will occasionally be required. While some will be available on YouTube, you may

occasionally need to watch it through a paid service (i.e. Netflix or rent it on Amazon Prime for \$3.99). If it costs more than \$5, the library can pay for it for you.

## Academic Misconduct

All students are expected to abide by the Honor System. Instances of academic misconduct may result in failing the assignment. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: aiding and abetting academic misconduct; cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; and violating ethical or professional standards. For further information, see <https://my.wlu.edu/executive-committee/the-honor-system/plagiarism/plagiarism-pamphlet>.

## Disability Resources

I am committed to ensuring equitable access to course content for all students. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Contact Lauren Kozak, Title IX Coordinator and Director of Disability Resources, at [kozakl@wlu.edu](mailto:kozakl@wlu.edu) or 540-458-4055 to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the accommodation process. More information can be found at <https://www.wlu.edu/disability-accommodations/undergraduate-accommodations>.

If you have already been approved for accommodations, please meet with me within the first two weeks of the term so we can develop an implementation plan together. It is important to meet as early in the term as possible; this will ensure that your accommodations are implemented early on. If you have accommodations for test-taking, please remember that arrangements must be made at least a week before the date of the test or exam.

## Community Health Expectations

Our collective responsibility as a University community in the face of COVID-19 applies equally to students, faculty, staff, and members of the Lexington and Rockbridge County community. Specifically, our responsibilities with respect to classroom behavior are as follows:

- **Masks (or face shields where approved) *must be worn over your mouth and nose*** in the classroom at all times while our local area is considered a substantial or high transmission area by the CDC. You will be asked to leave the building if you do not comply. Please go here (<https://my.wlu.edu/covid-19-resources>) to find the latest university masking requirements.
- **DO NOT attend class or other in-person course meetings if you are sick.** Anyone with new onset of possible symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home in their residence hall room or apartment and call the Student Health Center for COVID-19 testing and evaluation (540-458-8401).
- **Any student placed in isolation due to COVID-19 illness, or any unvaccinated student placed into quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure, must be cleared by a Student Health Center official or a designated Campus Official before returning to class.** It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with faculty about how they can keep up with their studies and make up missed work.

## **Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is mandatory. Material that we cover in class, including lectures, small-group discussions, and in-class assignments will be essential to developing a comprehensive understanding of African American history. However, due to the unpredictability of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we will need to be flexible. In the event that you will miss class, please email me in advance so that I can plan accordingly. I encourage you to prioritize your health and do not expect you to attend class if you are ill, whether it is from the coronavirus, a chronic illness, or simply the common cold. I do not require a doctor's note and will take you at your word if you are sick. In turn, I trust that you will attend our classes if you are well enough to do so. Tardiness and repeated absences for reasons other than illness or emergencies will affect your daily class participation grade. A student who is absent from more than one-fourth of the course meetings (six classes) may receive a zero for class participation.

## **Instructor Communication**

I look forward to working with you throughout the semester to ensure that you have a fulfilling learning experience. I will hold drop-in office hours twice a week and you are more than welcome to stop by. I encourage students to speak to me during office hours about any questions or concerns regarding the course. You can make an appointment for office hours at <https://calendly.com/nnekadennie>.

Please consult the syllabus, Canvas, and your classmates prior to sending emails about class procedures and requirements. If we have not resolved your issue after exchanging three emails, meet with me during office hours. I will respond to emails within three business days. This includes emails sent after 5 PM on weeknights or any time on weekends. I will not answer last minute questions via email the night before an assignment is due.

## **Evaluation of Students**

Class Participation (15%)  
Current Events Essay (20%)  
Exam (20%)  
Film Analysis (15%)  
Final Paper (30%)

### **Class Participation (15%)**

All students are expected to contribute to discussion consistently. Students will receive a participation grade for each class. A rubric is available on the handout titled "Class Participation Guidelines" on Canvas. Participation can take various forms, like asking questions, agreeing or disagreeing with classmates during whole-group discussions, or offering your opinion in small group discussions. You may also tweet during class for participation points using **#crmw22**. Your tweets must be public for me to see them. Feel free to make a separate Twitter account specifically for class if you want your existing account to remain private.

### Current Events Essay (20%)

Choose an issue that civil rights activists mobilized around, such as education, labor, voter suppression, police brutality, etc. Then, select a current event related to your chosen topic and write a 3-4 page essay discussing its relationship to the Civil Rights Movement. Questions to consider include but are not limited to: What does your event tell us about contemporary racial inequality in the United States? How has activism around your topic evolved over time? What impact has the Civil Rights Movement had on your topic? How did the movement succeed or fall short in addressing racial inequality or discrimination in relation to your event? This paper is due on Canvas by **11:59 PM on Friday, February 4**, but you are welcome to submit it before then as different events occur.

### Exam (20%)

The exam will be an open-book, open-note exam comprised of identifications/short answers and essays. You must work independently and are not permitted to consult others about material on the exam materials. The midterm is due on Canvas by **11:59 PM on Friday, March 11**.

### Film Analysis (15%)

Write a 3-4 page paper discussing the representation of the Civil Rights Movement or race/racism during the Civil Rights era in *The Help* (2011), *The Butler* (2013), *Selma* (2014), *Hidden Figures* (2016), or *Green Book* (2018). Pick one movie. Do the depictions of segregation, civil rights activism, and race relations during this time period seem historically accurate based on what you have learned in this class? If not, what do we gain from these fictional accounts? What do we lose? What are the strengths and weakness of the film's approach to the civil rights era? How do you think this film would influence the audience's understanding of the Civil Rights Movement? You must cite at least three sources from our course readings. This essay is due on Canvas by **11:59 PM on Friday, March 25**.

### Final (30%)

There are multiple options for completing the final. It will be due on **Wednesday, April 13 at 11:59 PM**.

- 1) Write two essays of 3.5-4 pages each, totaling a combined 7-8 pages. Prompts for these essays will be available by the last day of class. Use a minimum of 3 sources in each essay.
- 2) Expand upon your current events essay in a 9-10 page paper. You may include material from your first essay in the expanded version. This essay should explore the topic that you discussed in your earlier paper in greater depth. Elaborate on the history of the themes that you previously identified. You are also welcome to address multiple current events rather than a single one. This paper should use a minimum of 5 sources.

### Extra Credit

Extra credit will be available until the last day of class by writing a maximum of two response papers to campus or community events related to African American history. All of the events that are part of the year-long Africana Studies lecture/event series are eligible for extra credit, as well as other events on a case-by-case basis. In a 250-300 word paper, describe the event and connect it to themes we examine in this course. Extra credit must be submitted no more than a week after your event occurs. Successful completion of an extra credit assignment will raise your film analysis or current events essay by 1/3 of a letter grade.

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	60-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	F	0-59
B	83-86	C-	70-72		

### **Late Policy and Extensions**

Late submissions will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e. A- becomes B+ after one day; A- becomes B after two days). Everyone is permitted to use a maximum of one extension. If requesting an extension, you must do so at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional extension will be available under extenuating circumstances only (i.e. illness or emergency).

I reserve the right to edit this syllabus. In the event of any changes, I will notify you in a timely manner.

## READING SCHEDULE

### Week 1: Welcome and Introduction

January 11

- No readings required

January 13

- *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed*, "Introduction," pg. 1-19
- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 1, "Over My Head I see Freedom in the Air," pg. 27-54

### Week 2: Jim Crow Era Violence

January 18

- *At the Dark End of the Street*, Prologue, pg. xv-xx
- *ADES*, Chapter 1: "They'd Kill Me if I Told," pg. 3-47

January 20

- [Emmett Till clip, \*Eyes on the Prize\* documentary](#) (Please note this video contains disturbing images)
- *Eyes on the Prize Reader*, "Articles on the Emmett Till Case," pg. 37-41
- *EPR*, "Coming of Age in Mississippi," pg. 41-43
- Sheila Weller, "[How Author Timothy Tyson Found the Woman at the Center of the Emmett Till Case](#)"
- Justice Department, "[Federal Officials Close Cold Re-Investigation of Murder of Emmett Till](#)"
- Devlin Barrett, "[Justice Department closes Emmett Till investigation without filing charges](#)"
- Neil Steinberg, "[It doesn't matter if Till whistled](#)"

### Week 3: School Desegregation and Student Activism

January 25

- *Better Day Coming*, Chapter 10: "Two Steps Forward and One Step Back, 1946-1955," pg. 218-225
- Fighting Back 1957-1962: *Eyes on the Prize* documentary (available through library website)
- *ADES*, Chapter 4: "There's Open Season on Negroes Now," pg. 135-148

January 27

- *ADES*, Chapter 4: “There’s Open Season on Negroes Now,” pg. 148-159
- *ADES*, Chapter 5: “It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped,” pg. 160-190

Week 4: Montgomery Bus Boycotts

February 1

- *BDC* Chapter 11: “The Nonviolent Rebellion, 1955-60,” pg. 226-241
- *ADES* Chapter 2: “Negroes Every Day Are Being Molested,” pg. 48-83
- *EPR* Chapter 1: “Awakenings,” pg. 44-47, 48-51, 57-60

February 3

- *ADES* Chapter 3: “Walking in Pride and Dignity,” pg. 83-134

February 6 – CURRENT EVENTS ESSAY DUE

Week 5: The SCLC, SNCC, and the Student Sit-in Movement

February 8

- *BDC* Chapter 11: “The Nonviolent Rebellion, 1955-60,” pg. 241-247
- *Eyes on the Prize Reader*, pg. 110-122
- *Ain’t Scared of Your Jails 1960-1961: Eyes on the Prize* documentary

February 10

- Bayard Rustin interview, “What Was it Like to be Gay in the Civil Rights Movement?”
- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 5, “Which Cheek You Gonna Turn,” pg. 149-169

Week 6: The Freedom Rides and Voter Registration Drives

February 15

- *BDC*, Chapter 12: “The Civil Rights Movement, 1960-63,” pg. 249-266
- *ADES*, Chapter 6: “A Black Woman’s Body Was Never Hers Alone,” pg. 191-211

February 17

- *EPR*, Chapter 3: “Ain’t Scared of Your Jails,” pg. 123-132
- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 3, “Fighting for What We Didn’t Have,” pg. 83-91
- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 5, “Which Cheek You Gonna Turn,” pg. 169-186

## Week 7: Washington Break

NO CLASS February 21-25

## Week 8: The Albany Movement and Project C

March 1

- *BDC*, Chapter 12: “The Civil Rights Movement, 1960-63,” pg. 266-271
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
- *EPR* Chapter 4: “No Easy Walk,” pg. 133-142
- No Easy Walk 1961-1963: Eyes on the Prize documentary

March 3

- *BDC*, Chapter 13: “Birmingham, the Freedom Summer, and Selma,” pg. 272-279
- David A. Graham, “[How Much Has Changed Since the Birmingham Church Bombing?](#)”
- Jelani Cobb, “[Terrorism in Charleston](#)”

## Week 9: The March on Washington and Freedom Summer

March 8

- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 4, “I Wasn’t Being Nonviolent,” pg. 114-148
- *BDC*, Chapter 13: “Birmingham, the Freedom Summer, and Selma,” pg. 279-293

March 10 – Class cancelled

March 11 – EXAM DUE

## Week 10: Selma and Voting Rights

March 15

- Bridge to Freedom 1965: Eyes on the Prize documentary
- Adam Liptak, “[Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part of Voting Rights Act](#)”
- Davin Rosborough and Sophia Lin Lakin, “[Supreme Court’s Voting Rights Act Decision Narrows Another Path to Challenge Discriminatory Voting Laws](#)”

March 17

- *ADES*, Chapter 7: “Sex and Civil Rights,” pg. 212-245



## Week 11: The Rise of Black Power

March 22

- *TNSGYK*, Chapter 6: “Standing Our Ground,” pg. 187-226

March 24

- *BDC* Chapter 14: “The Rise and Fall of Black Power,” pg. 295-321
- *TNSGYK*, Epilogue, pg. 227-237
- Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program

March 25 – FILM ANALYSIS DUE

## Week 12: MLK and Malcolm X

March 29

- Watch *MLK/FBI* documentary
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Other America”

March 31

- Listen to Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech

## Week 13: #BlackLivesMatter Movement and Wrap-Up

April 5

- Readings to be selected by class

April 7

- Readings to be selected by class

April 13 – FINAL DUE