

Fall 2006 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

HIS 511A: The Black '70s Course Syllabus

This class will investigate the decade following the peak of the civil rights movement, a period that has largely been overshadowed by the tumult and fame of the preceding years. The 1970s were a time of dramatic change for black Americans as they sought to capitalize on the hard-fought victories of the previous two decades. Popular depictions of black culture in the 1970s revolve around black power, dashikis, and afros. We will move beyond the clichés and stereotypes connected with this period to investigate the ways in which blacks translated the legislative victories of the civil rights era into reality. Students will write a research paper exploring an aspect of the cultural, political, and economic transformations of the 1970s.

Course Requirements: The main expectation of the course is that students will complete a seminar paper, with an approximate length of 15-17 pages for undergraduates, and 20-25 pages for graduate students. Each paper should be an original, primary source research paper that combines the elements of clear writing, clear organization, knowledge of the subject matter, and the ability to analyze and interpret the past. These research papers will be written in stages, with considerable opportunity for feedback from the professor and from other students about the topic, organization, research design, and first draft.

Students will submit several preliminary writing assignments, including a proposal, bibliography, and outline. Because critiquing others' work often illuminates one's own, students will comment each other's writing assignments.

The class will be entirely discussion in format, based upon a program of readings completed in common.

Attendance and Late Policy: A basic requirement of this class is regular attendance; no absences will be excused except under very unusual circumstances. A single unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the student's final grade by a full letter grade; two unexcused absences will result in failure.

All students are expected to fulfill their class responsibilities in a professional manner. Such professionalism includes:

- Typing all assignments in a careful and legible manner;
- Taking care to present all written material (including emails) in the best possible manner.
- Following deadlines as specified in the syllabus. (Late papers will be penalized.)

Final Grade Composition:

- Class Participation 20%
- Research Paper (2 drafts) 60%
- Other Written Assignments 20%

No incompletes will be given for this course.

The book for this course is available at the university bookstore and Adam's University Bookstore.

Assigned Book:

- Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (1993)

Plagiarism Policy: The University defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise.”¹ (See the University's [Academic Integrity Policies](#) for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, internet sites, etc.) used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a zero and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (August 16): Introduction – Myths of the '70s

Reading:

- Angela Davis, “Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia,” in *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure*, pp. 23-31

Week 2 (August 23): The Rise of Black Power

Readings:

- Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, pp. 1-206; Amiri Baraka, “There is No Revolution without the People” and “The Gary Declaration” on [blackboard](#)

Assignment:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.

Week 3 (August 30): Chocolate Cities and Local Politics

Readings:

- Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*, pp. 207-464; Michele Wallace, “We Would Have to Fight the World” on [blackboard](#)

¹ <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/>

Assignment:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.

Week 4 (September 6): Economics of the Black Community

Readings:

- William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*, pp. TBA on blackboard; The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, “Our Thing Is DRUM!” on [blackboard](#)

Assignment:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.

Week 5 (September 13): Popular Culture – Music and the Theater

Reading:

- Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations*, pp. 388-416 on blackboard

Assignments:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.
- Prepare a list of three possible topics for your final paper. For each topic, write one paragraph stating your interest in the topic and the questions you might explore.

Week 6 (September 20): Popular Culture – Film and Television

Reading:

- Alvin Poussaint, “Blaxploitation Movies: Cheap Thrills That Degrade Blacks,” in *Psychology Today*, Feb. 1974 on blackboard

Week 7 (September 27): Proposal

Assignments:

- Five- to seven-page proposal due at the beginning of class.
- Prepare a five- to ten-minute presentation of your proposal for the class.

Week 8 (October 4): Individual Meetings (No Class)

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

Week 9 (October 11): Individual Meetings (No Class)

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

Week 10 (October 18): Narrative Outline

Assignments:

- Prepare a narrative outline of your final paper. Include a bibliography of both primary and secondary sources that you will be using in your paper.
- Submit your outline to your fellow classmates by the Sunday before class. Primary and secondary readers will be assigned to critique the outlines.

Week 11 (October 25): Individual Meetings (No Class)

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

Week 12 (November 1): Individual Meetings (No Class)

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

Week 13 (November 8): Rough Draft Group 1

Reading and Assignment:

- Group 1 must submit their rough drafts to the entire class by 5 p.m. on November 4. Members of Group 2 will be assigned as primary and secondary critics of the rough drafts of Group 1. Even though Group 1 will not be assigned as critics on the papers of those in their group, they are still responsible for reading each rough draft.
- Revision plans, due on the following Monday, Group 1.

Week 14 (November 15): Rough Draft Group 2

Reading and Assignment:

- Same drill as Week 13 with Group 1 and Group 2 reversed. Group 2 must submit their rough drafts to the entire class by 5 p.m. on November 11. Members of Group 1 will be assigned as primary and secondary critics of the rough drafts of Group 2. Even though Group 2 will not be assigned as critics on the papers of those in their group, they are still responsible for reading each rough draft.
- Revision plans, due on the following Monday, Group 2.

Week 15 (November 22): Thanksgiving Break (No Class)

Week 16 (November 29): Final Draft

Assignments:

- Final Draft Due for Groups 1 and 2.