

HIS 724 - Selected Topics in 20th Century American History: Reverberations of the Rights Revolution, 1941-1991

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Between the 1940s and the 1980s, a broad "rights revolution" swept the United States, bringing into dynamic interaction popular movements, political parties, policy elites, and the political culture of "rights talk." The attendant conflicts left every corner of American society changed and spurred conservative movements that fed into "America's right turn" in the 1980s. Contending groups struggled in their own interests as they disputed the meanings of "equal rights" that had been contested since the nation's founding. Post-war "insurgent movements" also articulated as-yet unfulfilled agendas and popular freedom dreams that remain controversial in our still divided multiracial and class-ridden society.

Rights struggles and rights talk had a long history before this era. African American and Latino movements for freedom, women's movements for suffrage and economic justice, workers' movements for collective bargaining rights and social welfare, long-running "battles at the boundaries" over civil liberties, all had been ongoing since the early years of the Republic. But arguably World War II was a watershed, and the black freedom movement in many cases became the vanguard for the insurgencies of the late twentieth century. (Social activist and singer Bernice Johnson Reagon called the freedom movement "the burning struggle" with some justification). We will therefore give a good deal of attention to what has recently been called the "Long Civil Rights Movement." And we will attempt to trace the interactions and influences of this movement on concurrent and subsequent movements for rights, as well as on the policies and practices of government, businesses, labor unions, and educational institutions.

In addition to several focused monographs, I have selected scholarly syntheses and essays that open up both the history and historiography of such broad areas as Mexican American history, women's rights, and what has been called the "reactionary populism" of the 1970s, which this class cannot delve into as deeply as black freedom.

As I mentioned in my earlier emails to you, I am especially interested in interactions between ordinary people, national movement leaders, and policy elites. The thrust of much of recent scholarship argues that most of the dynamism and creative redefinition of civil rights came from the "grassroots" -- from local working-class and poor people who were drawn into political movements at strategic moments of opportunity or promise. We will therefore pay special attention to popular rights consciousness as it evolved in the context of changing formal policies and the many "lessons learned in struggle." As I mentioned, we will give attention to Latino and immigrant rights movements, disability rights, prisoners rights, victims' rights, and the rights claims by working-class and middle-class whites who felt their status or privileges under threat from the forces of "identity politics."

Since so many of the local people who made these movements were women, the hierarchies and identities of gender will be central concerns of the course. And since movements were often fractured along lines of class, while demands for economic justice met stern resistance, socioeconomic class will also be a frequent term of analysis as we seek to explain these changes.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

By semester's end you should be able to:

- 1) Identify and evaluate a range of leaders, organizations, events, issues, strategies, achievements, and unfulfilled dreams in the African American "long civil rights movement."
- 2) Identify and analyze movements running in parallel to, or inspired by, the long black freedom movement. Demonstrate an understanding of the terms under which coalitions formed. Make meaningful comparisons between social movements.
- 3) Demonstrate an understanding of the public policies shaped by elites in response to popular movements, as well as the judicial innovations and bureaucratic policies that sorted out group interests seemingly in the absence of widespread political mobilization (especially as in the case of affirmative action).
- 4) In terms of your skills as graduate students, demonstrate that you can situate works of scholarship in more general ongoing historiographical discussions. Balance positive appreciation with critical evaluation.
- 5) Demonstrate concretely your understanding of how race, class, and gender have structured freedom movements and the social, cultural, economic and political institutions that promoted or constrained these movements.
- 6) Balance : a) working knowledge of substantive historical change that will enrich your teaching, and b) in-depth consideration of focused historiographical debates that will enrich your scholarship.

Course Requirements:

Reading:

- Brian J. Daugherty, and Charles C. Bolton, *With All Deliberate Speed : Implementing Brown V. Board of Education* (Fayetteville, 2008)
- Gene Roberts, and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat : The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*. (New York, 2006)
- Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes : Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York, 2009)
- Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights : Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia, 2007).
- Robert Rodgers Korstad, James L. Leloudis, and Billy E. Barnes, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill, 2010)
- David Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors : Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley,, 1995)
- Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement without Marches : African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill, 2009)
- John David Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002)
- Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York, 2005)

A course reader containing all cited required readings of chapters and articles in the literature.

Evaluation:

- Consistent participation, including 2 reports: 40%
- 2 historiographical essays: 30%
- 10 reader/response posts on Blackboard Discussion Board: 30%

Preparation as Reflected in Class Participation. 40%. The class will rise or fall on this. So much of functioning well as a historian is the ability to capture the gist of an argument, to be fair yet critical, and to be able to contribute to ongoing conversations in the field. So much time and work can be saved if you make

this a group process. I ask each of you, as a professional, to stay on-topic, stay high-minded, limit tangential anecdotes, and please refrain from going negative on a piece of scholarship at least until we have a fair appreciation of an author's efforts and contributions. This is a colloquium, a collaborative enterprise. You get one unexcused absence.

The extra reading that you do for your historiographical essays I expect you to share with the group. This is an informal requirement, but a real one. I will try to prompt you, but I also expect you to volunteer insights when you see that they would most appropriately add a dimension to discussion.

Ten Weekly “Thesis-Response” Pieces. 30%. These should be of 400-600 words and posted on Blackboard by at least 2 p.m. each day of class. Please arrive at class having digested and *reflected* upon the material. I won't read or count these if you submit them *after* class.

This assignment asks you to do two things: 1) In the first paragraph *state* through paraphrase the author's major conclusions or thesis. Common sense hints: to identify these arguments, survey *first* the Introductions, Conclusions, Epilogues, historiographical footnotes, and summary sections that you find embedded in chapters. Once you know what arguments the author is making, you will more easily discern details and evidence (or the lack thereof) that are especially relevant to their conclusions. 2) In subsequent paragraphs, please *respond* with your own critical evaluations. Please don't summarize in detail. Does the author's evidence bear out his or her conclusions, or in fact do certain pieces of evidence or narrative point to different conclusions or emphases? NB: Criticism of what an author *should* have looked at frequently obscures how they have interpreted what they *did* look at. Make analytical points, and always illustrate with a concrete example and page citation. Grading scale: A, B, C and N/C (no credit).

Two Coherent Historiographical Essays. 30%. 8 page essays that survey common issues and compare scholarly methods and conclusions across several studies. Each essay will grapple with at least one extra book and a few related scholarly articles. By all means synthesize more formally your insights gained from assigned readings. But *at least* half of each paper must assess and compare supplemental and not assigned readings. As with your weekly readings, you may use book reviews (which are available online or through the Infotrac links on each book's Jackson Library page). Historiographical reviews, such as those assigned for the first class can be helpful. But since these reviews do not reflect primary research, you should not pull them in for *substantive* treatment. Use them to help you structure the big picture and formulate questions about monographs and articles you are evaluating. If you echo a reviewer's point, you must cite it. You certainly should paraphrase and not quote it, and I need to see a greater level of depth in your analysis.

What do I mean by “coherent historiographical essays”? Basically you want to set up a limited number of related issues and pose central questions in the first paragraph. These should be questions that you find compelling, and will be common questions addressed by different authors in different ways. What you want to avoid at all costs is a *seriatim* summary of each reading. If you do so, your essay will hop around, feel clunky, and lack logical development. Common sense hint: If you don't see good transitions between your paragraphs, you know you've got a problem with development and coherence.

Deadlines: I will not impose overly rigid deadlines, but these essays must be submitted in a *timely* fashion in a way that contributes to the class' understanding. As a rule, I would like these papers handed in during the week when they are most relevant. For example, if you are writing about Cold War civil rights, shoot for the week of September 8: Black power: October 20, and so on. Please give me one before mid-October and one before December 7.

Grading Scale: A+: 98-100; A: 93-97; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62; F: 59 and lower.

NB: I have a HUGE and ever growing bibliography of materials which I will post on Blackboard as the weeks roll around. But by all means you should confer with me about the shape and direction of your specialized inquiry.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

[NB: Management reserves the right of substitution in the case of articles! Look for updated versions on blackboard of suggested materials for reports and historiographical essays.]

8/25: Introductions

9/1: Overview of the Rights Revolution and Historiographical Controversies

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005), 1235-1263 (28)

Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, and Clarence Lang, "The "Long Movement" As Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (2007): 265-88. (23)

Payne, Charles. "Debating the Civil Rights Movement: The View from the Trenches." In *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968*, edited by Steven F. Lawson and Charles Payne, 99-136. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. (36)

Lawson, Steven F. "Debating the Civil Rights Movement: The View from the Nation." In *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968*, edited by Steven F. Lawson and Charles Payne, 3-42. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. (39)

Michael Honey, "The Power of Remembering: Black Factory Workers and Union Organizing in the Jim Crow Era," in *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African-American Activism, 1850-1950*, eds. Charles M. Payne and Adam Green (New York, 2003), pp. 302-35. (33)

James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York, 1996), chs. 19, 21 on the Great Society, Rights Revolution and reaction.

Nancy MacLean, "Gender Is Powerful: The Long Reach of Feminism," *OAH Magazine of History* (Oct2006): 19-23. (4)

Rick Perlstein, "Thunder on the Right: The Roots of Conservative Victory in the 1960s," *OAH Magazine of History* 20, no. 5 (Oct2006): 24-27. (4)

Paul K. Longmore, "Why I Burned My Book," in *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Philadelphia, 2003), pp. 230-59. (29)

9/8: Hot War/Cold War: Legacies of the 1940s

John David Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), p. 1-84. (85)

Kevin Gaines, "A World to Win: The International Dimension of the Black Freedom Movement," *OAH Magazine of History* October 2006 (2006): 14-18. (4)

Carol Anderson, "'A Hollow Mockery': African Americans, White Supremacy, and the Development of Human Rights in the United States," in *Bringing Human Rights Home: A History of Human Rights in the United States*, eds. Cynthia Soohoo, et al. (Philadelphia, 2007, 2009), pp. 68-99. (31)

Manfred Berg, "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (June 2007): 75-96. (21)

Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History* 75 3 (December 1988) (1988): 786-811. (25)

Risa Lauren Goluboff, "'We Live's in a Free House Such as It Is': Class and the Creation of Modern Civil Rights," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 151, no. 6: 1977-2018. (40)

Report:

Marable, Manning. *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1990*. 2nd ed. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991, ch. 2, "The Cold War in Black America," pp. 13-32.

Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. (New York, 2008), 247-255 stifling NAACP and Pauli Murray's challenge, 315-399

9/15: School Desegregation – *Brown on the Ground*

Brian J. Daugherty, and Charles C. Bolton, *With All Deliberate Speed : Implementing Brown V. Board of Education* (Fayetteville, 2008)

Matthew D. Lassiter, "De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 25-48.

Jeanne Theoharis, "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Civil Rights Movement Outside the South," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 49-73.

Reports:

James Cobb, "Down on *Brown*: Revisionist Critics and the History That Might Have Been," in *The Brown Decision, Jim Crow, and Southern Identity*, ed. James C. Cobb (Athens, 2005), pp. 31-55.

Michael J. Klarman, "How *Brown* Changed Race Relations: The Backlash Thesis," *Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (1994): 81-118.

9/22: The Media and the Movement: Press Freedoms, Media Frames, and Black Freedom

Gene Roberts, and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*. 1st ed (New York, 2006), p. viii, 518 p., [16] p. of plates.

Charles M. Payne, Ch. 14, "The rough draft of history" in *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, 1995).

Reports:

Jenny Walker, "A Media-Made Movement? Black Violence and Nonviolence in the Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement," in *Media, Culture and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*, ed. Brian Ward (Gainesville, 2001), pp. 41-66.

Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement: Looking Back from the Southern Front," in *Media, Culture and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*, ed. Brian Ward (Gainesville, 2001), pp. 16-40.

9/29: Civil Rights and Economic Justice, and Martin Luther King Jr. and the Movement

Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia, 2007)

Report:

Michael Honey, *Black Workers Remember*, ch. 14, on the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike.

10/6: Mexican-Americans -- from the Politics of Assimilation to the Politics of Immigrant Rights

David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, 1995)

Mary E. Odem, "Latin American Immigration and the New Multiethnic South," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 234-60.

Reports:

George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York, 1993), ch. 11, "Forging a New Politics of Opposition."

10/13: Grass Roots (1): Gender, Race, and Class in Philadelphia and New York

Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement without Marches : African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill, 2009)

Felicia Ann Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights : Politics and Poverty in Modern America, Politics and Culture in Modern America*. (Philadelphia, 2007, ch. 5, 114-136

Reports: TBA

10/20: Grass Roots (2) Civil Rights and Black Power in a Deep South County

Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes : Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York, 2009)

Report:

Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote : The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, 2000), ch 8 breaking barriers, 256-315.

10/27: Grass Roots (3) The War on Poverty in North Carolina

Robert Rodgers Korstad, James L. Leloudis, and Billy E. Barnes, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill, 2010)

Reports:

Ronald Bayor, "The Civil Rights Movement as Urban Reform: Atlanta's Black Neighborhoods and a New 'Progressivism'," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77, no. Summer (1993): 286-309.

Greta deJong, "Staying in Place: Black Migration, the Civil Rights Movement, and the War on Poverty in the Rural South," *Journal of African American History* 90, no. 4 (2005): 387-409.

Thomas F. Jackson, "The State, the Movement, and the Urban Poor: The War on Poverty and Political Mobilization in the 1960s," in *The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History*, ed. Michael B. Katz (Princeton, 1993), pp. 403-39.

11/3: Class, Race, and "Sisterhood" -- New Interpretations of "Feminisms" in Parallel and Coalition

- Nancy MacLean, "The Hidden History of Affirmative Action: Working Women's Struggles in the 1970s and the Gender of Class," *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 1 (Spring99).
- Premilla Nadasen, "'Welfare's a Green Problem': Cross-Race Coalitions in Welfare Rights Organizing," in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 178-95.
- Andrea Estepa, "Taking the White Gloves Off: Women Strike for Peace And "The Movement," 1967-73," in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 84-112.
- Anne Valk, "Fighting for Abortion as A "Health Right" In Washington, D.C.," in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 135-62.
- Maria Bevacqua, "Reconsidering Violence against Women: Coalition Politics in the Antirape Movement," in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 163-77.
- Tamar Carroll, "Unlikely Allies: Forging a Multiracial, Class-Based Women's Movement in 1970s Brooklyn " in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 196-225.
- Marisa Chappell, "Demanding a New Family Wage: Feminist Consensus in the 1970s Full Employment Campaign " in *Feminist Coalitions : Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* ed. Stephanie Gilmore (Urbana 2008), pp. 252-84.

Reports:

- Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism: Union Women in the Postwar Era," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 57-83.
- Deborah Dinner, "The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966–1974," *Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 (Aug2010): 577-628.
- Serena Mayeri, "The Strange Career of Jane Crow: Sex Segregation and the Transformation of Anti-Discrimination Discourse," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 18, no. 187 (2006).

11/10: Strange Ironies in Affirmative Action History

Skrentny, *Minority Rights Revolution*, finish

Thomas J. Sugrue, "Affirmative Action from Below: Civil Rights, the Building Trades, and the Politics of Racial Equality in the Urban North, 1945-1969," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004): 145-73.

Reports: TBA

11/17: The Politics of Crime and the Prisoners' Rights Movement

Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order : Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York, 2005)

Marie Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge ; New York, 2006), 77-91 (victims), 121-133 (feminist anti-rape), 165-183 (prisoners and backlash). 40 pp.

Heather Ann Thompson, "Blinded by a 'Barbaric' South: Prison Horrors, Inmate Abuse, and the Ironic History of American Penal Reform," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespiro (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 74-95. 20 pp.

Reports: TBA

12/1: Whiteness and White Rights – Homeowners and Anti-bussers

Rick Perlstein, "Thunder on the Right: The Roots of Conservative Victory in the 1960s," *OAH Magazine of History* 20, no. 5 (Oct2006): 24-27.

Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* (September 1995): 551-578.

Thomas J. Sugrue, and John D. Skrentny, "The White Ethnic Strategy," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge, Mass, 2008), pp. 171-92.

Marjorie Spruill, "Gender and America's Right Turn," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge Massachusetts, 2008), pp. 71-89. IWY parallel mobilization anti-ERA and anti-feminism.

Kevin Kruse, "Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 286-307. jDeep national roots in religious nationalism of the postwar years, politicization around school prayer in the mid 1960s and tax exempt status of Christian schools.

Joseph Crespino, "Civil Rights and the Religious Right," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge Massachusetts, 2008), pp. 90-105.

Joseph A. McCartin, "Turnabout Years: Public Sector Unionism and the Fiscal Crisis," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge Massachusetts, 2008), pp. 210-26.

Report:

Douglas Smith, "Into the Political Thicket: Reapportionment and the Rise of Suburban Power," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford ; New York, 2010), pp. 263-85.