

HIS 511A, Spring 2010 - Seminar in Historical Research and Writing
"Reverberations of the Rights Revolution, 1941-1981" (WI, SI)

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Between the battles for equal rights fought during World War II and the rise of conservatism in the 1980s, a broad "rights revolution" crested in the United States, bringing popular movements, political parties, and policy elites into dynamic interaction. These conflicts left every corner of American society changed and influenced movements that fed into "America's right turn" in the 1980s. The issues they raised remain controversial in our still divided multiracial society.

My principal interest is in what Franklin Roosevelt called the "indivisibility" of rights, or the connections people made between them in theory and practice. Rights to free speech and protest, for example, have always grounded movements for trade union rights and minority civil rights. Additionally, many groups have sought full voting rights both as a marker of equal citizenship and as an instrument for broader social and economic inclusion. As a couple of our authors note, History is rarely a simple story of "good guys and bad guys" (Burns and Burns, 470). Often we find "a diversity of good guys with conflicting rights claims." Taxpayers might assert rights to limited government against constituencies interested in expanding welfare guarantees. Passionate advocates of a woman's "right to choose" continually clash with equally passionate advocates of fetal "rights to life."

We begin the semester with a discussion of watershed developments in politics, constitutional thought and popular rights talk from the Progressive Era through World War I and the New Deal. African American movements for freedom, women's movements for suffrage and economic justice, workers' movements for trade union collective bargaining rights and social welfare, and the long-standing "battles at the boundaries" over civil liberties (speech, religion, assembly, protest) -- all these gained momentum and recognizable form before World War II (indeed they had been ongoing since the early years of the Republic). But arguably they made the most dramatic breakthroughs and came into the most dynamic interaction in the postwar period. After examining civil liberties during the era of McCarthy, we will turn our sustained attention to the 1960s and 1970s, when intersecting movements for racial justice and gender justice drew inspiration from and in turn reinforced dramatic reforms -- in judicial, legislative, and executive policymaking. This "rights revolution" activated widespread resistance among other groups -- elites and non-elites who felt left out or unsettled by the attendant conflict. Often they also picked up the language of rights to defend traditional privileges, "values," and notions of public order. We will conclude

our formal discussions with an appreciation of the linkages forged between domestic and international human rights issues in the 1970s and 1980s.

Some researchable student projects: popular movements for "fair employment" during World War II; integration of the military during the Korean War; the Montgomery Bus Boycott; the impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* on black movements and white resistance; the wave of student led sit-ins and freedom rides that broke over the nation 1960-1962; the causes and consequences of the "Negro Revolt" of 1963; media and movements; the extent and limits of desegregation in Greensboro; the impact of the mid-1960s civil rights debate and coalition on immigration reform, the war on poverty, and the women's movement; women's equality in the workplace and liberation in sexual relations; labor and civil rights; prisoners rights movements, "victims rights" movements, and the language of rights in movements opposed to liberalism.

Since the goal is to write a coherent paper with a developed point of view, each student will proceed through a series of assignments: short response pieces to selected readings; an annotated bibliography of secondary sources in a focused field of interest; a proposal with a sharp set of questions that can be answered with *readily available secondary and primary sources*; a first draft to be peer-reviewed; and a final draft. I will divide the class into working subgroups to provide support, dialogue, information, and feedback. Undergraduates will write a 18-20 page paper; graduates will write a 20-22 page paper.

Learning Goals:

Appreciate the "rights revolution" of the late 20th century in historical context of long-running struggles for individual and group rights and inclusion in citizenship.

Compile, evaluate, and extract usable information from historical primary and secondary scholarly sources, in standard historical bibliographic form.

Analyze thoughts and decisions of historical actors through close analysis of primary sources and placement in meaningful historical context.

Research, write, and report on an important historical question using the above sources and techniques.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation:

This class has a strong collaborative dimension, though we do not meet every week. Attendance is mandatory (unexcused absences will hurt your grade – excuses are limited to medical or family emergency, NOT work obligations or extra-curricular conflicts). Required active participation consists of in-class discussions and peer review of each other's project descriptions and first drafts. The best critiques mix searching challenges (questions, counter-arguments) with appreciation (who wants to hear only what is lacking in their efforts?)

Required reading:

Both of the following will be available Thursday afternoon *only* at **Copy King, 611 W. Lee St., Greensboro, ph. 333-9900 (CALL THEM FIRST)** (these are worth owning, the first is out of print, the second in print -- both are readily available).

James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns, *A People's Charter: The Pursuit of Rights in America* (New York: Knopf, 1991, 1993), selections. Written for the bicentennial of the Constitution -- a political scientist of leadership and constitutional change joins a social movement historian to examine equal rights and the boundaries of citizenship from the bottom up and from the top down. It offers a clear framework of thinking about rights, as well as many public figures, decisions, and movements that might spark your curiosity.

James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations, the United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), selections.

Articles and excerpted PDF files available through Blackboard or Journal Finder or EBSCO. I reserve the right to substitute readings if better studies come to my attention.

Optional Reading -- "How To" Research:

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. *The craft of research* Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1995, excerpts on Blackboard.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Fifth Edition (Bedford St. Martins, 2007) , excerpts on Blackboard.

Reading, Preparation and Class Citizenship: 20%.

Discussion participation, questioning, critiquing and supporting each other's research strategies, plus 1-2 page peer reviews of first drafts of other students' papers.

Research process: 20%.

By mid semester, you will have a grade for the following: an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources in the focused field of interest; a formal proposal with a sharp set of questions or working hypothesis that can be answered with an identifiable base of secondary and primary sources; your outline of the paper, its strengths and holes needing to be filled.

First draft to be peer-reviewed. 10%

Final draft: 50%.

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

Academic Honor Code: I remind you that the URL for the University's Academic integrity policy is <http://saf.dept.uncg.edu/studiscp/Honor.html>. If you have not read it, please do so thoroughly. See Rampolla, *Guide to Research*, chapter 6, on Blackboard for more information on plagiarism.

Course policy on sustainability:

Campus-wide policies are being adopted that require students, staff and faculty to act in ecologically conscious ways while at UNCG. Recycle plastic bottles or bring water in reusable bottles; turn off lights and projectors; recycle office paper, newspapers, and cardboard; print papers on two-sided paper; use scratch paper for quizzes. There are no points for this, just the grade the biosphere gives us at the end of the third millennium! Here are links to sustainability information at UNCG, including a recycling guide.
<http://sustain.uncg.edu/> ; <http://www.uncg.edu/student.groups/uncgreen/index.htm>
<http://www.uncg.edu/rcy/index.htm>

Course policy on use of electronic devices in class and general etiquette:

Turn cell phones off unless you are a caretaker or emergency responder. No text messaging will be permitted. Laptops should be used for activities exclusively related to class. The energy of the class visibly declines when people are distracted. Give the class your full attention. Audible private conversations really can distract your classmates and your professors.

Thematic coherence and guidance:

In the past when, I have spread out the topics and allowed maximal freedom to students, there has been a significant downside for some. Students picked up important questions about which they were passionate but could not find adequate sources. I was unable to guide them as I wanted with historiography. And they just didn't find suitable primary sources. Therefore, I am pulling in the boundaries on topics a bit, so the entire class can get on a similar page and I can ensure that you have ready access to important sources. The historiography will help you formulate questions that matter to historians and citizens. Abundant primary source collections exist to afford you quick access to the issues and actors that will fill your pages.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DEADLINES

1/12: Introduction

Discussion of Sources and Best Practices for Locating Primary and Secondary Materials.

As soon as possible and definitely by mid- February you will have settled upon a focused research problem and be busy as bees compiling a bibliography of relevant primary and secondary materials. Remember, just because there is an interesting secondary literature does not guarantee Jackson library or a local repository or the Internet contains primary materials rich enough to satisfy the requirements of an original research paper.

1/19: Civil Rights, Workers' Rights, and Civil Liberties, 1900-1960

Burns and Burns, *A People's Charter*, 163-170 (woman suffrage coalition), 180-194, (workers and collective action in the progressive Era), 204-213(WWI, civil liberties, IWW, and red scare), 223-236 (14th amendment rights and incorporation of Bill of Rights), 236-267 (New Deal), 268-302 (WWII to McCarthyism), 305-338 (civil rights).

James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 376-406.

Assignment: 500 words on the Blackboard discussion board. Describe two insights that especially caught your attention. Formulate several research questions that would be necessary to help you explain more fully what you find so fascinating.

Over the next couple weeks: Browse the History Subject Guides on the Library website. Familiarize yourself with the available newspapers, microform collections, magazine indexes, catalog searches, and scholarly article searches.

1/26: The Rights Revolution and American Liberalism in the 1960s

Burns and Burns, *A People's Charter*, 339-369, 378-392.

James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 442-485, 525-592, 637-677.

Assignment: 500 words on the Blackboard discussion board. Describe two insights that especially caught your attention. Formulate several research questions that would be necessary to help you explain more fully what you find so fascinating.

2/2: Human Rights

Burns and Burns, *A People's Charter*, 416-444

TBA – Extra readings after I take the pulse of student interests.

2/7: Monday: Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources Is Due Absolutely to Me and Your Peer Reviewers NOON

2/9: Topics and Readings TBA

Class Discussion of Student Topics -- Subgroups

2/16: No class -- Conferences and Research

2/21: Formal Paper Proposal with Working Hypothesis and List of Primary and Secondary Sources
Rubric available soon.

2/23: Peer Review and Discussions – One page commentary on one proposal in your team

3/2: No class – Conferences and Research

Spring Break

3/16: No Class – Research and Conferences during Class Period

3/23: No Class – Research and Conferences during Class Period

3/28: Outline of Your Project is Due, With Thesis Paragraph and Topic Sentences to Me and Your Peer Reviewers, NOON

3/30: Discussions of Outlines and Research Challenges

4/6: No Class

4/11: First Drafts Due to Me and Your Peer Reviewer– no exceptions NOON

4/13: Discussion of First Drafts and Revisions
One page peer review

4/20: LAST CLASS – Discussions of Findings

5/4: Final Revision Due at 6:30 P.M. in My Office (paper copy) – And Submit electronically through SAFE ASSIGN