

History 332 Spring 2013
Civil Rights Era 1940-1980:
The Culture of a Freedom Movement
Tuesdays 6-8:50 pm

Professor M. Williams
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Office Hours: Tues 3-5 pm

Required Texts:

Shaft, 1971 Directed by Gordon Parks – Available on BB
All readings will be available through Blackboard

Course Description:

“I never worked for an organization but for a cause.” The cause to which Civil Rights organizer Ella Baker devoted her life was that of black freedom. Baker’s comment speaks to the essence of the Black Freedom Struggles’ power, the devotion of black Americans to the fight to gain equality. The traditional narrative of the black freedom struggle begins with the Supreme Court decision in 1954 and culminates in the legal dismantling of segregation with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965, and 1968. The narrative focuses on the national leaders and organizations that gave face and voice to the struggles of black Americans. But the struggles for black freedom and equality were rooted in the long fought struggles of black communities across the nation and extended well passed the legal victories of 1964. The struggle for black freedom and equality was not only a struggle for political freedom but social and economic freedom as well. This course will examine this long struggle for black freedom and equality through the lens of the movement culture that helped to sustain and shape black activism.

This course will examine black culture from the 1940s through the 1980s as it relates to the Black Freedom Struggle. Through a variety of sources including music, literature, photography, protest slogans and other articulations of the meaning of black freedom, we will work to discover how black Americans used cultural production to help foster and sustain black activism through decades of struggle while also working to change mainstream American ideas about the place of blacks in American society. By focusing on the cause of black freedom rather than the organizations and national leaders, students will gain a greater understanding of the internal dynamics of the Black Freedom movement and the ways in which black Americans awakened a nation to the inequalities of segregation.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to trace the major themes and events of the Black Freedom Struggle
Students will be able to use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
Students will be able to construct a historical argument using primary sources.
Students will improve their ability to articulate their ideas both orally and in written form.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required for all class meetings. As the class only meets once a week, attendance at every meeting is vital to success in the course. Students will be allowed one absence without any effect on the final grade. All subsequent absences will lower the student's final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade (B to B-, B- to C+, etc). Five or more absences will result in an automatic F for the course. I would encourage you to use your absence responsibly, only missing for emergency reasons.

Participation: Participation grades are based on the *quality* of your participation in class. Participation involves actively engaging in class discussion, taking notes, listening to your peers, and answering questions. Comments in class should be informed, relevant and constructive. Thus, participation requires having done the assigned readings and thought critically about how they relate to the class discussion and other class materials prior to coming to class. Sleeping, side talking, texting, or any other behavior drawing your attention away from the class discussion will not be tolerated. Electronic devices are **prohibited** in class. Come to class prepared to learn and engage in the history of the Black Freedom Struggle.

Assignments: All assignments are due prior to the beginning of class on the due date. No late work will be accepted. The details of each assignment will be discussed in class. All written assignments should be the student's own original work with the proper citations. See the Academic Integrity Policy for the university policy on plagiarism and the consequences. Also, I reserve the right to quiz the class on any of the class materials at any time.

Academic Integrity Policy: All students should be familiar with the academic integrity policy of the university. All work submitted should be your own original work using proper citations for any quoted or paraphrased material. Refer to the following web address for the full policy and penalties for plagiarism. <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/>

Papers: Over the course of the semester, students will write 2 short papers based on course readings and in class discussion. Paper topics and instructions will be handed out in class 2 weeks prior to the due date. No late work will be accepted. All written assignments should be the student's own original work with the proper citations. See the Academic Integrity Policy for the university policy on plagiarism and the consequences.

Research Oral Presentations & Annotated Bibliography: Each student will give an oral presentation in class on a research topic related to the class. Along with the presentation, students will create an annotated bibliography of the sources cited in your research. Details of the Research Presentation and Annotated Bibliography will be distributed in class on a separate handout. Due dates will vary over the second half of the semester depending on topic.

Grading:

Participation 20%

Assignments: 10%

Response Papers: 20%

Research Oral Presentation: 20%

Annotated Bibliography: 15%

Final Exam: 15%

Weekly Assignments

January 15th Week 1: Intro to the Long Black Freedom Struggle

Activism up to this point. And the Syllabus

January 22nd Week 2: War and the Struggle for Freedom

World War II and African American Activism

Reading:

- Robin D.G. Kelley, "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II," *Race Rebels* p.161-182.
- A. Philip Randolph, "March on Washington Movement Presents Program for the Negro," *What the Negro Wants* p. 133-162.
- Robin D.G. Kelley, "Congested Terrain: Resistance on Public Transportation," *Race Rebels* p.55-76.

Assignment: Complete reading worksheets found on Blackboard for each reading and bring to class ready to discuss.

January 29th Week 3: The Religion of Community Protest

Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Religion

In Class discuss annotated bibliographies

Reading:

- David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* Ch. 5 p. 87-104
- Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the African American Social Gospel," *African American Religious Thought: An anthology*, Eds. Cornel West & Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. p. 696-714
- Martin L. King, Jr. "An Autobiography of Religious Development," 1950 *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950's and 1960s*, p. 34-40
- Martin L. King, Jr. "A Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," 1960 *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950's and 1960s*, p. 40-45

February 5th Week 4: Singing for Freedom

Songs of the Freedom Struggle

Reading:

- Joe Street, "Singing For Freedom," *The Culture War in the Civil Rights Movement*, p. 15 -39.
- Brian Ward, "Respectability, Religion, and Rhythm and Blues on Black-oriented Radio," *Radio and the Struggle for Civil Rights in the South* p. 81- 111.
- Guido van Rijn, "'Climbing the Mountain Top': African American Blues and Gospel Songs from the Civil Rights Years," *Media, Culture and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*. p. 122- 144

Assignment: Research and Analysis of Freedom Song for in class presentation. Hand in one page analysis of a song and how it relates to readings.

February 12th Week 5: Students Take a Seat

Student Movements from Sit-ins to SNCC

Reading:

- William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, Ch. 3 p. 71-101
- Leigh Raiford, "Come Let Us Build a New World Together": SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rights Movement", *American Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Dec., 2007), p. 1129-1157.
- "Statement of Purpose," SNCC Conference, 1960 *Black Protest Thought in the 20th Century*, p. 307-308
- James M. Lawson, "Address to SNCC Conference, 1960. *Black Protest Thought in the 20th Century*, p. 308-315

Assignment: Create Annotated Bibliography for one of the articles to hand in.

February 19th Week 6: Gendered Freedom

The Role of Women as Community leaders, Black Manhood and a guest speaker on Malcolm X

Reading:

- Belinda Robnett, "Women in the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee: Ideology, Organization Structure and Leadership," *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement*, pg. 131-168.
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, Selections from Ch. 8&9 p. 256-259 & 291-298.
- Steve Estes, *I am a Man!: Race, Manhood and the Civil Rights Movement*, Intro & Ch. 4. p. 1-10 & 87-106

Primary Source Reading TBD

1st Paper Due: Thinking Historically- Rallying for a Movement

February 26th Week 7: The Local becomes National

Birmingham Children's Crusade and the Federal Response

Reading:

- Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle and the Awakening of a Nation*, Ch. 19 p. 316-333
- Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement: Looking Back from the Southern Front," *Media, Culture and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*. Ed. Brian Ward (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2001), 16-40.
- Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s*, David Howard Pitney, 74- 90.

Assignment: Find a newspaper or news magazine article from 1963 discussing protest. Create an annotated bibliography of the article to hand in along with a copy of the article. Be prepared to present your article in class.

March 5th Week 8: Freedom North

Northern Movements

Reading:

- Jeanne Theoharis, "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Civil Rights movement Outside the South," *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino. p. 49-73.
- Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Ch. 9&10 p. 286-355

March 12th Week 9: Spring Break!

March 19th Week 10: “Mississippi God Damn”

Freedom Rides and Freedom Summer

Reading:

- Joe Street, “The 1964 Mississippi Summer Project,” *The Culture War in the Civic Rights Movement*, p. 81-102
- John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Ch. 5 p. 90-115
- Ed. Elizabeth Suther Land *Letters from Mississippi*. Selected Letters from Ch. 4 p. 90-97 & ch. 5 p. 118-126
- Nina Simone “Mississippi Goddamn” (Music Recording).

March 26th Week 11: The Violence in Non Violence

Self-Defense vs. Non Violence

Reading:

- Jenny Walker, “A Media-Made Movement?: Black Violence and Nonviolence in the Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement.” *Media, Culture and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*. Ed. Brian Ward (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2001), pg. 41-66.
- Lance Hill, *The Deacons of Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*. Intro p. 1-9 & Ch. 2 p. 30-52
- Robert F. Williams’ Speech from Radio Free Dixie,” 1963. *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*, p. 94-96
- Martin Luther King, from *Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom*, 1966 selection in *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s*, David Howard Pitney, 90-95
- Malcolm X, from *The Afro-American’s Right to Self-Defense*, 1964. Selection in *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s*, David Howard Pitney, 96-98.

April 2nd Week 12: Freedom Politics

MFDP and Lowndes County Politics

Reading:

- John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Ch. 12 p. 272-302
- Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama’s Black Belt*. Ch. 5 p. 143-178
- James Farmer, Address to CORE Convention, 1965 in *Black Protest Thought in the 20th Century*, p. 460-466
- Fannie Lou Hamer, “Testimony before the 1964 DNC Credentials Committee” in *Civil Rights Since 1787: A Reader on the Black Struggle* Eds. Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, p. 521-523

2nd Paper Due- Debating Strategy

April 9th Week 13: Black Panthers

A Party for the People

Reading:

- "SNCC Position Paper on Black Power," 1966 in *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*, p. 119-126
- "Black Panther Party Platform and Program" in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. Philip S. Foner, Ch. 1 p. 1-7
- "Community Activities" in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. Philip S. Foner, Ch. 9 p. 167-182.
- Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*, Ch. 4 p. 93-122
- Angela G. Brown, "Women and the Black Panther Party," in *Civil Rights Since 1787: A Reader on the Black Struggle* Eds. Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, p. 621-623

April 16th Week 14: Making the Inner City

Deindustrialization and Affirmative Action

Reading:

- Eithne Quinn, "'Pimpin' Ain't Easy': Work, Play, and 'Lifestylization' of the Black Pimp Figure in Early 1970s America," – *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle* p. 211-232.
- Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Ch. 14 p. 493-532

Watch: *Shaft* (1971)

Assignment: Complete Film Worksheet

April 23rd Week 15: Remembering Civil Rights

Reading:

- Explore a Civil Rights Museum Website and Complete Worksheet
- Edward P. Morgan, "The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten," *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*, Eds. Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (University of Georgia Press: Athens, 2006), 137- 166.
- Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, "Chapter 3: Civil Rights Memorials: An Uneven Geography," *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory* (The Center for American Places at Columbia College: Chicago, 2008), 71-94.

Assignment: Explore the website of a Civil Rights Museum and complete Worksheet. Come prepared to present your findings

April 30th Final Exam