

Spring 2017 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Mondays, noon - 1:00 p.m., Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., and by appointment

HIS 502: Topics in African American History
“Politics of Protest: Black Social Movements in American History”
Course Syllabus

This course explores the history of black social activism in the United States between 1800 and the present day. It examines a variety of black-initiated or -led movements and the men and women whose efforts brought them to fruition, thus transforming black life and altering the nation’s history. The course begins with a study of abolitionism and the role blacks played in radicalizing the struggle against slavery in the antebellum era. Next, it considers the Exodusters and the anti-lynching campaign, two movements that emerged in the wake of the increasing violence that accompanied the end of Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow across the South. The second half of the course focuses on black workers’ participation in the labor movement in the mid-twentieth century, grass roots efforts to protect and promote welfare and anti-poverty programs, and the anti-apartheid movement of the 1970s and 1980s. The course concludes with an examination of contemporary black movements, like Black Lives Matter, placing them in historical perspective. Although each of these movements emerged from unique set of historical circumstances, they formed part of a broader effort undertaken by black Americans to improve their economic, social, and political lives and to strive for the elusive promise of equality.

Course Requirements: The requirements for this course include assigned readings for each class, periodic assignments and quizzes on the assigned readings, one term paper, and one presentation. Assignments submitted in class are due at the beginning of the class period. Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment. No assignments will be accepted one week after the due date. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy.

Assigned Readings: There are seven books assigned for this course. For the list of books, see the class schedule below. All of the books can be purchased at the University Bookstore.

Electronic Devices: The use of laptops, tablets, cellular phones, or any other type of electronic device is prohibited during class.

Attendance and Late Policy: Attendance in class is mandatory. The door will close ten minutes after class starts. Once the door closes, students will no longer be admitted to the class and will be considered absent. Students are allowed one absence, excused or unexcused, without an impact on their grade. For the second and every subsequent absence, students will receive a five-point grade deduction.

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 Policy](#) for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, 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 Dean of Students Office for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

Final Grade Composition

- Participation 20%
- Assignments 30%
- Paper 30%
- Presentation 20%

Participation: Participation in discussion is mandatory. **Students should be prepared to discuss the readings on the day that they are assigned.** Attendance alone is not sufficient for full participation credit.

Assignments: Students will be given brief in-class and take-home writing and research assignments based on the assigned readings. Students will also be periodically quizzed on readings and lectures. There will be no make-up assignments in the case of a missed class.

Paper: Students are required to write a ten- to twelve-page paper based on assigned readings and lectures, due on **May 2**. All sources in the papers should be properly cited according to the guidelines laid out in [The Chicago Manual of Style](#), which is available on-line.

Presentation: Students will give a five- to seven-minute oral presentation on **April 26**.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (January 18): Introduction

Week 2 (January 25): Manisha Sinha, *A Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 1-96, 130-194

Week 3 (February 1): Manisha Sinha, *A Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 195-265, 299-338, 380-460, and 500-585

Week 4 (February 8): Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 1977), pp. 3-134

Week 5 (February 15): Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 1977), pp. 137-261

¹ <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/violation/plagiarism/>

Week 6 (February 22): Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 1-124

Week 7 (March 1): Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 125-234

Week 8 (March 8): Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 1-150

Week 9 (March 15): Spring Break – Class Canceled

Week 10 (March 22): Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 151-252

Week 11 (March 29): Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement Without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009)

Week 12 (April 5): Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 1-187

Week 13 (April 12): Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 188-370

Week 14 (April 19): Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004)

Week 15 (April 26): Class Presentations

Paper Due Tuesday, May 2 at noon