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**HIST 7050– SEMINAR IN TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY
A CENTURY OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA, 1865 TO PRESENT
Fall 2009 – FSC**

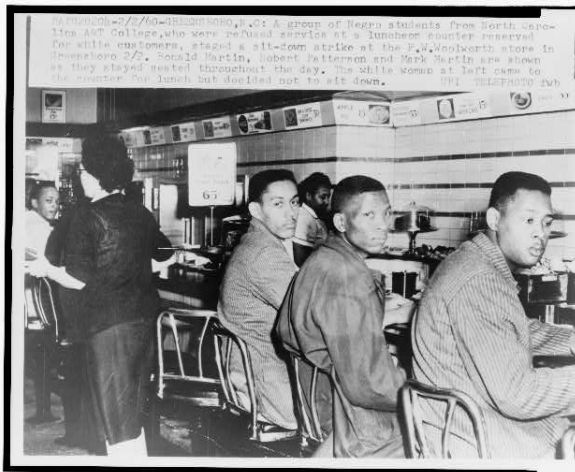
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Currier & Ives Print, 1868



Denver NAACP Headquarters, c. 1945-1955



Greensboro, NC 1960



Martin Luther King, Jr. & Malcolm X

What images do you most associate with the Civil Rights Movement?

Course Description & Goals

This course, like all courses in the Teaching American History program, has a dual objective. In most high school history textbooks, the history of the Civil Rights Movement is presented as a nation-based account of the response of presidential administrations to racial problems in the South, brought to national attention when Rosa Parks sat down and Dr. King stood up. As a

graduate history course, this course will expand, enrich, and complicate this traditional narrative by examining the modern Civil Rights Movement in the larger historical context of the African American freedom struggle, from its roots in abolitionism and Reconstruction through the period of legalized racial discrimination to the dismantling of legal segregation to the ongoing persistence of white privilege. To understand these developments, we will draw on historical scholarship and primary sources but also especially autobiographical and journalistic first-hand accounts. All history makes its impact through the lives of people. This is especially evident in the African American freedom struggle, which is a history that has largely been told through personal narratives, oral traditions, and the arts by the “ordinary” people, mostly black, some white, who brought about massive social change. Our goal will be to understand the many levels at which this struggle took on shape and meaning, from large organizations to the lives of individuals, and the many rights—always much more than the vote—that hung in the balance. Of equal importance is the TAH mission to help teachers adapt the course content to their classrooms. You will develop specific strategies for teaching students about the past, as well as about what it means to “do history”—to research, think, and write like a historian.

The course will be conducted primarily as an oversized seminar; that is, it will utilize a discussion format, with some occasional informal lecturing. Much of our time will be spent in using a combination of assigned readings, learning activities, audio-visual presentations, and Internet explorations as the basis for small- and large-group sessions. We will also, depending on the course, host guest speakers and engage in virtual or actual fieldwork.

Those without previous experience with the program should note that this is *not* a professional development course or an education course. It is a graduate-level history course and will reflect the high demands, expectations, and standards of scholarship associated with such a course. However, it is a graduate-level history course tailored to teachers. Its goal is to help you develop as an *educator historian*. That is, as a teacher and scholar knowledgeable about history, skilled in the craft of historical inquiry and writing, and proficient at teaching this knowledge and skills to others.

Course Objectives

Students will...

- Acquire a basic knowledge of the distinctive African American history narrative and its relationship to the general narrative of American history, and preparation to continue independent study of specific subjects.
- Expand their ability to locate, examine, explain, and utilize information from and about the past using library, archival, and web-based research skills.
- Improve their skills in proposing and evaluating interpretations of texts, artifacts, images, and other sources of historical inquiry.
- Strengthen their skills in the various genres of historical writing.
- Enhance their ability to teach history as a subject and method of inquiry.

Key Questions

1. What forms of oppression gave rise the African American freedom struggle and, ultimately, to the modern civil rights movement?
2. What theories and tactics were utilized to address these forms of oppression?

3. In what ways, and to what extent, did the modern Civil Rights Movement ameliorate these forms of oppression?

Course Texts

- Birnbaum, Jonathan and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights: A Reader on the Black Struggle Since 1787* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
- Halberstam, David, *The Children* (Random House, 1998).
- Kasher, Steven, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-1968* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996).
- Levinson, David, ed., *African American Heritage in the Upper Housatonic Valley* (Berkshire Publication Group, 2006).
- Lipsitz, George, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics* (Temple UP, 1998).
- Lukas, J. Anthony, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (1985).
- Malcolm X (as told to Alex Haley), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1993; 1964).
- Moody, Anne, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (Laureleaf, 1997).
- Reichard, Gary and Ted Dickson, eds., *America On the World Stage: A Global Approach to U.S. History* (OAH/University of Illinois Press, 2008).
- Rampolla, Mary Lynn, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 5th ed. (Bedford/St. Martins, 2007).

CD: *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement* (Smithsonian/Folkways, 1997; 1980).

Recommended OAH *Magazine of History* issues (<http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/>):

- “Black Power” 22.3 (July 2008).
- “Jim Crow” 18.2 (January 2004).
- “Martin Luther King, Jr.” 19.1 (January 2005).
- “Teaching History With Music” 19.4 (July 2005).

Course Requirements

Reading assignments, projects, and in-class audiovisual material and Internet explorations serve as the basis of for whole-class and small-group discussions. Hence, your timely completion of coursework and active participation are not only required but essential to the success of the class and to your success as a learner.

Attendance: You are required to attend all class meetings and expected to arrive on time. Any student who is tardy, absent more than six hours of class time, or who stops attending may fail the course.

Assignments: The main written requirement of the course will be the construction of a teaching module, an integrated, in-depth unit of study focusing on one particular topic. See assignment handout for details.

Academic Honesty: You are responsible for academic honesty. You should familiarize yourself with the college's policy on academic honesty, as well as with proper standards of conduct regarding acknowledging the work of others (see Rampolla's discussion of "Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Avoid It," pp. 88-94). You must resolve questions or confusion about appropriate documenting and referencing techniques before submitting assignments. If you are found guilty of academic dishonesty, even if committed out of ignorance, you may earn an F on the assignment and possibly an F in the course.

Special Needs: Students who need accommodations because of a documented disability, who have emergency medical information they need to share with me, or who need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated should discuss this with me *before the second class meeting*.

Evaluation Criteria

Those students taking the class for Professional Development Points rather than graduate credit are required to attend and participate at all classes, complete all reading assignments and learning activities, and complete one of the major assignments. For those seeking graduate credit for this course, the following criteria will be used for grading purposes. To earn a 4.0, a student must perform at the highest level on all coursework, demonstrating historical imagination and insight, creativity, a deep understanding of the subject matter, and excellent research and writing skills. To earn a 3.5, a student must perform at a high level on all coursework. To earn a 3.0, a student must perform at an acceptable level on all coursework. A grade below 3.0 is considered probationary for graduate work at Fitchburg State College. A grade of 0.0 results in dismissal from the college.

In general, I will evaluate work based on the following criteria (see rubrics for criteria and standards details relating to specific assignments):

1. Work that is well organized, well written, and clear in its arguments.
2. Work that supports claims with evidence and conforms with the proper standards of conduct regarding acknowledging the work of others.
3. Work that completes all components of the assignment.
4. Work that reflects creative, insightful, thought provoking scholarly endeavor.
5. Apparent effort involved as reflected in the overall quality of performance.

Final course grades will be based on the following calculation:

Teaching Module	
• <i>Opening Up the Textbook (OUT)</i>	25%
• <i>Interview</i>	25%
• <i>Unit Plan/Project</i>	25%
Attendance, Participation & Learning Activities	25%

Course grades will be calculated using the FSC graduate grading system:

4.0	A	3.3	B+
3.7	A-	3.0	B
3.5	A-/B+	2.7	B-

2.5	B-/C+	0.0	F
2.3	C+	IN	Incomplete
2.0	C	IP	In-Progress

READING & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

1. Monday, Sept. 14 – “It Didn’t Start in 1954”

Patrick Wolfe, “Race and Citizenship,” in *American on the World Stage* (217-228).

2. Monday, Sept. 21 – Freedom and Slavery

Francois Furstenberg, “Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse,” *Journal of American History* 89 (March 2003): 1295-1330. (HANDOUT)

3. Monday, Sept. 28 – Reconstruction: The Second American Revolution

Civil Rights Since 1787

Birnbaum and Taylor, “Introduction: The Second American Revolution” (101-102)

Foner, “The Second American Revolution” (103-108)

Montgomery, “Black Workers and Republicans in the South,” (141-149)

McCrary, “The Reconstruction Myth” (150-153)

- ❖ Select for class discussion two primary sources from Part II that illuminate the key questions Birnbaum and Taylor identify in the second paragraph of their introduction.

OCTOBER 5 AND 12: PROJECT PREPARATION – NO CLASS MEETINGS

4. Monday, Oct. 19 – Segregation: Separate and Unequal

Civil Rights Since 1787

Birnbaum and Taylor, “Introduction: Separate and Unequal” (161-164)

McMillen, “Jim Crow and the Limits of Freedom, 1890-1940” (190-198)

Kornweibel, “Blacks and the First Red Scare” (199-202)

- ❖ Select for class discussion at least one source from Part III – “The Repression of Free Blacks” and at least two sources from Part III – “The Black and Progressive Response” that illuminate the following questions: What challenges did African Americans face in the post-Reconstruction era? How did they respond? What seem to be the key turning points in the African American freedom struggle in the decades before the modern CRM?

5. Monday, Oct. 26 – The Modern Civil Rights Movement: The Second Reconstruction

Civil Rights Since 1787

Birnbaum and Taylor, “Introduction: The Modern Civil Rights Movement” (327-332)

Sitkoff, “The NAACP and *Brown*” (341-348)

Marable, “The Second Red Scare: The Cold War in Black America” (396-408)

Tyson, Timothy B., “Robert F. Williams, ‘Black Power,’ and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle,” *Journal of American History* 85.2 (September 1998): 540-570. (HANDOUT)

Bring to class Halberstam, *The Children*

- ❖ In their section on the “modern” Civil Rights Movement, the editors of *Civil Rights Since 1787* continue their emphasis on locating the famous people, places, and events of 1954-1968 in a larger context of grassroots and national organizing that expands in the 1930s and

gains momentum in the 1940s—as will our discussion. Among the questions you should consider as you read the assigned selections are: Why *not* earlier—i.e. why don't we study the CRM of the 1940s? Conversely, why *now*—what seem to be the key factors in generating a *movement*? What are its most distinguishing characteristics? How should we understand its relationship to past expressions of the African American freedom struggle? Was nonviolence the primary or exclusive tactic of movement activism?

- ❖ I will be assuming a general familiarity with the famous people, places, and events of 1954-1968. If this is not the case, I recommend you review *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68* (exclusive of the first chapter). This text, which we will look at next class from the perspective of using photographs to study the CRM, features highly readable, brief narratives of these “famous” events along with contemporary news photographs.

6. SATURDAY, Oct. 31 – Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching the CRM

David Levinson, ed., *African American Heritage in the Upper Housatonic Valley* (Berkshire Publication Group, 2006).

Steven Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-1968* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996).

Stephanie Greco Larson, “The Civil Rights Movement and the Mass Media,” in *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006). HANDOUT

Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Civil Rights & Black Protest Music” (524-527) in *Civil Rights Since 1787*

Voices of the Civil Rights Movement (Smithsonian/Folkways, 1997; 1980) CD

- ❖ LOCAL HISTORY Part history, part heritage tourism, *African American Heritage in the Upper Housatonic Valley* is the first major effort to tell the story of African Americans in western Massachusetts and northwest Connecticut. The book is divided into two parts. The first section features articles on particular topics, people, places, events, and organizations. The second section features community guides to African American history and life in the region. Sandwiched in between are two “personal essays” by local residents, Elaine Gunn (a contributing editor) and Mae Brown. Read the Introduction (iv-v), the two personal essays (150-162), and skim articles and guides of interest to you. What does local history add to our understanding of African American history? How does the history of African Americans in the region add our understanding of New England history? The Upper Housatonic Valley was home to two major figures in 20th century African American history, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, a founder of the modern CRM, and James Van Der Zee, preeminent photographer of the Harlem Renaissance. How should we understand the region’s long-delayed and still continuing neglect of such historically significant individuals in its history?
- ❖ MASS MEDIA We will consider the relationship between the modern CRM and mass media through the photographic history by Kasher, and (time permitting), selections from the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*. Read Kasher’s Introduction, “Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare” (8-18) and view the photographs (entire book). Read as well the essay by Larson. What do we learn from the photographs that would be harder to communicate in words? What do we learn from the captions, and from the two essays, that we could not learn from the photographs alone? How might our understanding of these two issues shape our use of mass media in teaching the CRM?

❖ MUSIC Guest Speaker, Dr. Emmett G. Price

7. Monday, Nov. 2 – Mississippi Goddam!

Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (entire)

- ❖ Moody divides her autobiography into four sections, Part I “Childhood,” Part II “High School,” Part III “College”, and Part IV “The Movement.” Select a passage that you find particularly interesting and important from *each* section and write a paragraph response (four paragraphs total, to be handed in—be sure to identify clearly each passage/page number). Come prepared to facilitate discussion of your passages. Questions to consider as you read and prepare your written response: What people, events, and experiences shape Moody’s “coming of age”? As Moody matures, what does she learn about race, society, and herself? What do you think leads Moody to participate in the Movement?

8. Monday, Nov. 9 – Not Just a Southern Things

Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (entire)

- ❖ Despite the range of ways African Americans experienced oppression and envisioned freedom historically, black nationalism and similar demands for other than integration have until recently received minimal attention in civil rights scholarship--a marginalization equally evident in the popular forgetting of Malcolm X (Spike Lee's film excepted) in contrast to the national memorialization of Martin Luther King. The time seems ripe for the return of Malcolm X's autobiography--a one-time best seller--as a significant text of the CRM. What is its significance? How does it expand, enrich, and complicate our understanding of the CRM? If you're unfamiliar with Malcolm X's oratory, you should first read his speech "The Ballot or the Bullet" (589-603) in *Civil Rights Since 1787*. You might also find it useful to read Clayborne Carson's essay, "Malcolm and Martin: A Common Solution" (604-610).

9. Monday, Nov. 16 – Backlash: Boston Against Busing

Lukas, *Common Ground* (chs. 1-6, 9, 14-16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 28-29)

- ❖ Lukas’s work brings us back to questions of local and regional history. What do the events he chronicles add to our understanding of the CRM? How does this chapter in the CRM add to our understanding of New England history? In what ways is this a uniquely Boston story? In what ways is it not? Lukas begins his account by tracing—across time and space—the recent and past history of each of the three families whose stories he tells. What is the shaping role of *place* in their life histories and identity? Conversely, what role does *space* play in this story? How does the busing issue highlight urban problems which the Movement’s focus on civil rights did not or could not address?

NOVEMBER 23 & 30: PROJECT PREPARATION – NO CLASS MEETING

10. Monday, Dec. 7 – The Persistence of White Privilege

Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (Introduction, chs. 1-2, 5, 10-11)

- ❖ Come to class with questions for class discussion. Your questions (at least five, stated in a clear, concise manner and due in writing) should address the most significant issues raised by the reading and provoke substantive discussion. Your goal is to encourage 1) close reading

of the Lipsitz's writing and 2) thoughtful consideration of how it relates to our study of the CRM. Come to class prepared to facilitate discussion of your questions.

11. Monday, Dec. 14 – Best Practices Sharing (4:00p.m. to 8:00 p.m.) Last Class Session

Snow Date: Dec. 21