

The Long Civil Rights Movement



HIST 211
Prof. Gregory Kaliss
Spring 2017
Wednesday, 1:30-4:15
Denny ???

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Welcome! Taking as its cue the presidential address and subsequent article by historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, this course will explore the U.S. Civil Rights Movement from an expanded perspective, chronologically and ideologically. Instead of limiting our study to the “classical phase” of the movement between 1954 and the early 1970s, we will begin in the 1930s and end with contemporary activism such as the Black Lives Matter movement. By exploring a wide range of texts, films, music, and historical approaches, we will better understand the long struggle for black equality, the wide range of individuals and groups involved, and the movement’s interconnectedness with

numerous other campaigns for social justice. We will also pay particular attention to issues of sustainability, both in terms of environmental justice and in regards to issues of long-term economic stability and safety for the African American community. Although sustainability may not seem at first directly-related to civil rights, there are numerous connections between sustainability efforts and the work done by civil rights activists. Two definitions will be especially important to our work:

- 1) Dickinson College uses the following definition for sustainability: “Sustainability is the capacity to improve the human condition equitably in this and future generations while conserving environmental systems necessary to support healthy and vibrant societies.”
- 2) The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) defines sustainable development as “the process of building equitable, productive and participatory structures to increase the economic empowerment of communities and their surrounding regions.”

Key questions will also guide us in our analysis. What were the roots of race-based inequality in the United States? What groups came together to fight for black equality, and how did these groups shift and change over time? What issues proved most difficult to address through political and social activism? How did gender impact the quest for civil rights? Why have some movement leaders and actors been remembered, while others have not? How has contemporary political debate and discourse shaped the memory of the civil rights movement? How did cultural forms including sports, films, music, literature, and television influence the quest for equality? What other movements did the civil rights movement influence? How did the quest for environmental justice evolve from issues related to racial equality? First-person accounts, scholarly articles and books, songs, and films will provide us new insights into these questions and others. From the labor-racial coalition of the 1930s to the black church-led efforts of the 1950s to Black Power and Black feminism in the 1960s and 1970s to the Black Lives Matter movement of today, we will explore how a wide range of Americans have fought for racial equality and justice.

Through this course, you will:

- learn some of the major methodologies characteristic of the historical discipline
- apply the concept of sustainability to the history of civil rights in the U.S.
- analyze a wide range of historical sources
- engage with some of the key historical events and developments of the quest for civil rights
- expand your knowledge about the complex and diverse United States
- become conversant with gender, racial, ethnic, and class markers of identity, their changing shape over time, and their impacts on people’s standing in society regarding power and privilege

- recognize the multiple identities that shape our interactions with one another
- develop skills to engage in respectful and civil dialogue with others who have different perspectives
- improve your critical thinking skills by carefully reading a variety of texts, participating in lively discussions, and engaging in a variety of writing exercises
- enhance your writing and research skills by writing a research paper that employs primary and secondary sources

I look forward to sharing in this experience with you.

ASSIGNMENTS:

All students are expected to come to class having completed all reading assignments. Because invigorated discussion is vital to a successful course for all of us, class participation will be worth 25% of a student's grade. In addition, students will complete ten short (400-450 words) response papers over the course of the semester in order to improve writing skills and better prepare for class discussion. There will be twelve paper topics—students will **select the ten** papers they choose to write. These response papers will be worth 20% of a student's grade. In addition, students will complete a short (3-4 page) analytical essay related to the materials from Unit 1. This essay, which synthesizes course material and does not require outside research, is worth 20% of a student's grade. The midterm will cover materials from the first half of class and the final exam will cover materials from the second half of class. Students will also complete a 7-8 page research paper, worth 30% of the final grade, based on both primary and secondary sources, and will briefly present their work to the class (5%). For more information on these assignments, see page 8.

COURSE MATERIALS:

There are two required books for this course:

- 1) Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*, reprint ed. (Vintage: 2011)
- 2) Diane D. Glave and Mark Stoll, *"To Love the Wind and the Rain": African Americans and Environmental History* (University of Pittsburgh, 2006)

Please note that certain reading assignments and course documents (including this syllabus) are available online at our course Moodle site. Other assignments will be available through the electronic databases of scholarly journals that you have access to as a student.

We will also be watching clips from a number of films over the course of the semester. Details on each film are below.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Each class meeting listed below contains topics for “Lecture” and/or “Discussion.” During the lecture portion of class, the professor will do the majority of the talking, introducing students to new terms, concepts, and individuals. However, students will still have the opportunity to interact, interpreting images, songs, and texts, and asking questions throughout. During the discussion portion of class, students will do the majority of the talking. The professor will simply serve to keep the discussion on-track and offer helpful suggestions along the way. As a reminder, students are expected to have done **all** the reading for each class, and to actively participate during both the lecture and discussion portions of class.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Unit 1: Understanding the Long Struggle for Black Equality, 1930-1954

Wednesday, January 25

Lecture: Course nuts and bolts

Discussion: Getting to know one another
The Long Civil Rights Movement

Readings: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History*, 91, no. 4 (March 2005), 1233-1263

Wednesday, February 1

Lecture: The long(er) history of the struggle for equality

Discussion: 1930s—coalitions of activists in the New Deal and the Harlem Renaissance

Reading: Patricia Sullivan: *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*, chapter 3 (on Moodle)
Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, chapter 3: “Harlem during the 1930s: The making of a Black Radical Activist and Intellectual” (on Moodle)

RESPONSE PAPER 1 DUE

Wednesday, February 8

Lecture: 1940s—Fighting for a safe, sustainable world in the post-war years

Discussion: 1940s voices of discontent: soldiers and women

Readings: Kimberley L. Phillips, “Chapter 1: Where are the Negro Soldiers: The Double V Campaign and the Segregated Military,” in *War! What Is It Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military From World War II to Iraq* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012).
Danielle McGuire, *Dark End of the Street*, xv-xx, 3-39

RESPONSE PAPER 2 DUE

Unit 2: The Classical Phase of the Movement, 1954-1964

Wednesday, February 15

Lecture: The NAACP and the push for legal equality

Discussion: Women's central role in the movement

In-class film: *Eyes on the Prize, Episode 1: "Awakenings"*

Reading: McGuire, *Dark End of the Street*, Chapters 2 and 3

RESPONSE PAPER 3 DUE

Wednesday, February 22

Lecture: The history of the black church and social activism

Discussion: Music and the movement

Readings: Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 1-12 (on Moodle)

Bernice Johnson Reagon, *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement, Liner Notes* (on Moodle)

Craig Werner, *A Change is Gonna Come: Music, Race & The Soul of America*, 3-48

In-class film: *Eyes on the Prize, Episode 2: "Fighting Back"*

RESPONSE PAPER 4 DUE

Wednesday, March 1

Lecture: Testing the limits of federal intervention

Discussion: Greensboro, SNCC, Freedom Summer, and young activists

Readings: Cleveland Sellers, *The River of No Return*, Chapter 3: SNCC

Clayborn Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, 9-55

John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*: Chapter 11: "That Summer," 242-271

In-class film: *Eyes on the Prize, Episode 5: "Mississippi: Is This America?"*

RESPONSE PAPER 5 DUE

Wednesday, March 8

Topic: End of the "classic phase"—unresolved issues

Readings: Christopher Sellers, "Chapter 8: Nature and Blackness in Suburban

Passage," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain*

James Baldwin, "My Dungeon Shook," December 1962, from *The Fire Next Time*

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," April 16, 1963

John F. Kennedy, Civil Rights Speech, June 11, 1963

Lyndon Johnson, "The American Promise," March 15, 1965

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Address at Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March," March 25, 1965

In-class film: *Selma* (Ava DuVernay, dir., 2014)

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE

Wednesday, March 15

NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Unit 3: Black Power's Many Impacts, 1966-1992

Wednesday, March 22

Lecture: The long history and ideologies of black nationalism

Discussion: Black Power and black culture

Readings: William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon, Chapter 6: "Black Power and American Culture*

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"

Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want," and SNCC, "Position Paper on Black Power," from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, ed. Manning Marable

Brian Ward, "Chapter 10: 'Get up, get into it, get involved,'" in *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations*

In-class film: *Malcolm X* (Spike Lee, dir., 1992)

RESPONSE PAPER 6 DUE

Wednesday, March 29

Lecture: Black Power and other activist movements—reimagining society

Discussion: Black Power and black feminism

Readings: "SNCC Position Paper: Women in the Movement," (1964) from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, ed. Manning Marable

Mary Ann Weathers, "An Argument for Black Women's Liberation" (1969)

Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977)

McGuire, *Dark End of the Street*, Chapter 8

bell hooks, "Shaping Feminist Theory," 1984, from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, ed. Manning Marable

In-class film: *Free Angela and All Political Prisoners* (Shola Lynch, dir., 2012)

RESPONSE PAPER 7 DUE

Wednesday, April 5

Lecture: Black Power, black athletes, black capitalism

Discussion: Rethinking the American economy

Readings: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here?," Aug. 16, 1967, address to SCLC

Fred Hampton, "The People Have to Have the Power" Angela Davis, "I Am a Revolutionary Black Woman," and "'Our Thing is DRUM!' The League of Revolutionary Black Workers," from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, ed. Manning Marable

Enrico Beltramini, "Operation Breadbasket in Chicago: Between Civil Rights and Black Capitalism," in *The Economic Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Michael Ezra

Enrico Beltramini, "Operation Breadbasket in Chicago: Between Civil Rights and Black Capitalism," in *The Economic Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Michael Ezra

Ibram H. Rogers, "Acquiring 'A Piece of the Action': The Rise and Fall of the Black Capitalism Movement," in *ibid.*

Christopher B. Strain, “Soul City, North Carolina and the Business of Black Power,” in *ibid.*

In-class film: *Black Power Salute* (Tigerlily Films, 2008)

RESPONSE PAPER 8 DUE

Unit 4—A Movement of Movements, 1978-2016

Wednesday, April 12

Lecture: Environmental injustices

Discussion: The environmental justice movement

Readings: Chapters 9, 10, and 11 in *To Love the Wind and the Rain*

In-class film: *A Fierce Green Fire* (Mark Kitchell, dir., 2012)

The Water Front (Liz Miller, dir., 2007)

RESPONSE PAPER 9 DUE

Wednesday, April 19

Lecture: Urban renewal, urban blight: an unsustainable future

Discussion: Voices from the margins—gangsta rap, Rodney King, and urban woes

Readings: Cornel West, “Introduction,” *Race Matters*

Excerpts from Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop / Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, 7-19, 67-85, 167-87

Marcus Reeves, “Chapter 4: Stumbling Through Black Power Revisited,” in *Somebody Scream: Rap Music’s Rise to Prominence in the Aftermath of Black Power*

In-class film: *Straight Outta Compton* (F. Gary Gray, dir., 2015)

RESPONSE PAPER 10 DUE

THESIS AND FULL OUTLINE DUE FOR RESEARCH PAPER

Wednesday, April 26

Lecture: Not even past: still-racial America

Discussion: New movements, old and new issues: climate change, #blacklivesmatter, and economic sustainability

Readings: excerpts, Michele Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

TBD

RESPONSE PAPER 11 DUE

Wednesday, May 3

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS DUE

RESEARCH PAPER DUE DAY OF FINAL EXAM

ASSIGNMENTS:

Response Papers:

You are responsible for writing **ten** response papers over the course of the semester. These response papers are based on the reading assignments and will be **due at the beginning of class** on the days listed above. For each response paper topic, I have posted a handout with key ideas and questions for you to consider in the corresponding week on Moodle. Answer the “Discussion Question” for each topic in a 400-450 word response paper. **Note:** there are 11 response paper topics, but you need only write **ten papers**. The topic you skip is entirely up to you. These papers are intended as an opportunity for students to work on their critical thinking and writing skills. Papers should engage the question at hand, incorporate direct evidence from the assigned readings, and demonstrate mastery of course materials and skills. I will provide a supplemental handout with suggestions for writing effective short papers.

Midterm Essay:

Your first essay will be an analytical essay meant to synthesize the materials in units 1 and 2. Essays should be from 900-1200 words (3-4 pages) and must use specific evidence from the class to support their claims. No outside research is required.

Research Paper/Presentation:

As the research paper assignment approaches, I will provide a thorough outline of the paper topic and suggested approaches. On the last day of class, you will offer a 8-10 minute presentation outlining your primary findings and indicating the broader historical questions you have explored through your research. The final essay will be 2100-2400 words (7-8 pages) and must include **both primary and secondary sources** from outside the course to prove its arguments. Essays should be double-spaced and typed in a legible font (11-point or larger, please). Your essay will be **due the date and time of the scheduled final exam.**

EVALUATION:

Your grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Response Papers: 20%

Midterm Essay (3/8): 20%

Research Presentation (5/3): 5%

Research Paper (TBD): 30%

Participation: 25%

Your writing assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Focus on the issue: does the essay deal with the topic?

Use of Evidence: does it support its position by providing a range of specific examples to prove its point? Is the evidence analyzed in a compelling way? It is incorporated

smoothly into the flow of the paper?

Organization: does the essay's structure serve to tie together the paper's sections and paragraphs? Is it always clear where the essay is going? Does the paper meet the length requirements of the assignment?

Clarity: are words employed precisely? Is the essay's language active and to the point?

Originality: does the argument show creative thought? Does the essay suggest new ways to think about the topic at hand?

Citation: does the essay accurately cite all of the ideas, materials, and evidence it includes from outside sources? Are all citations consistent with Chicago style?

A: Excellent performance on all six criteria

B: Above average on five or excellent on some but flawed on others

C: Average across the board or above average in part but with significant flaws

D: Below average across the board

F: Fails entirely to address paper's requirements

POLICIES:

Attendance: This course seeks to foster an environment in which learning is encouraged by active listening and participation. As such, you are expected to attend all classes faithfully and punctually. Because your participation in the class is vital to a successful semester for everyone, any unexcused absence beyond three will be penalized at the rate **of one-third of a letter grade off of your final class average** for each absence.

Unexcused lateness will also negatively impact your grade. If you must be late, please notify me in advance. If you have a compelling reason for an absence (serious illness, family emergency), please see me as soon as possible to discuss your situation.

Class discussion: A significant portion of this course will focus on in-class discussion of reading materials and music selections. These discussions aim to assist in the process of learning, serving, in effect, as course workshops where we can: exchange ideas and questions about the various topics under study; sharpen our critical tools; and work toward new understandings and hypotheses. For these discussions to function successfully, *every* member of the class must come fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings and films, and to show initiative in our discussions. We may disagree in our interpretations of some material in this class, but it will be our goal to maintain an atmosphere amenable to disagreement by respecting others' opinions. Behavior or language that is disrespectful of individuals or groups, regardless of whether or not they are represented in the classroom, will not be tolerated. However, provocative ideas and humor are more than welcome—they are encouraged. Professional, informed, and respectful debate, and *active listening*, are key foundations to this class.

Communication: Throughout the semester I will be sending email to your Dickinson account. It is your responsibility to check your messages regularly and to make sure that your account has sufficient space to receive incoming messages. I am available during my office hours and by appointment to clarify any questions or concerns that you have about course and to discuss your writing with you. Students tend to report that individual

consultations are helpful, so please make use of this opportunity. Changes to the course calendar in Moodle will be announced in class.

Late papers: All papers are due at the start of class on the due date. This policy is an important one because it: insures that all students have equal time to complete their assignments; allows me to plan ahead for my grading; and anticipates the many professional deadlines you will face in whatever career you pursue. **Late papers will be penalized at the rate of five points per day late.** Papers turned in more than two class periods after the due date will be given an automatic failing grade.

Disabilities: Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. Contact ext. 1080; their website is <http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/disability-services/>).

Academic Misconduct: Students should consult the Dickinson student's handbook for a precise definition of academic misconduct, which can include anything from outright cheating to "accidental" plagiarism and everything in between. As a general rule, **all** work that you do this semester must be solely the product of your own ideas and efforts. Regarding plagiarism, simply identifying an outside source does not constitute an excuse to use material from that source at will in your own work. Each quotation, or borrowed idea, **must be cited.** You can expect me to monitor students' work closely for possible infractions, and to prosecute violations to the full extent of the Academic Code of Conduct (all the way to expulsion). If you are unclear about what practices constitute plagiarism, I will be glad to discuss the topic with you.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION AND OFFICE HOURS:

Please feel free to talk to me about any matter relating to the course that interests or concerns you—or simply to chat. My office hours for the semester are as follows:

004 Denny Hall
Tuesday: 10:30-12:00
Thursday: 1:00-2:30
and by appointment:
kalisssg@dickinson.edu
717.254.8169