

HTS 3803-C  
Civil Rights Goes to the Movies  
Spring Semester 2013

Dr. Eleanor Alexander

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Class Meets: Tuesday & Thursday

Time: 1:35 p. m. to 2:55 p. m.

Classroom: Old Engineering Building, Room 104

Office: Old Engineering Building, Room 123

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 a. m. to 12:00 p. m.; also by appointment

### **COURSE STATEMENT**

What is history? It is a body of facts that have been accepted by historians as valid and significant. History is seeing the past through the eyes of today. The main task of the historian is not to record facts, but to interpret and evaluate them. History is the selection, arrangement, and interpretation of facts for the purpose of telling “how it really was.”

Like written history, contemporary Hollywood feature films are an interpretation of their society. They too may be considered historical evidence, for they share some properties with written history. Like traditional historical materials such as diaries and newspapers, contemporary films reflect the society that produced them. Twentieth-century films are a record of that time period. Both the filmmaker and historian share a common methodology. They study appropriate sources, then select and arrange facts to tell their story. But neither a single movie, nor a single article or book can be considered the absolute authority on a topic, for both present biased interpretations. Therefore, film evidence, as well as books and articles must be evaluated in conjunction with other information on the subject, if a more balanced and truthful interpretation of history is sought.

Many argue that film evidence is invalid because filmmakers are not historians. Their primary goal is to entertain and make money, rather than presenting the truth about the past. However, it is the historian’s task to separate fantasy from fact. A major goal of this course is determining what is valid in contemporary films on the Civil Rights Movement.

Therefore, this course examines Hollywood feature films and television movies as historical evidence. Students view films on aspects of

the Civil Rights Movement and write essays comparing that film evidence to information in more traditional sources. This includes articles from history, political science, and sociology journals; and book chapters. The course is based around six broad questions:

1. Is film a legitimate historical source?
2. To what extent is film evidence legitimate?
3. What determines the legitimacy of film evidence?
4. What determines the illegitimacy of film evidence?
5. Is film evidence ever better than traditional historical sources?
6. Can Hollywood films be used to teach history?

### **COURSE GOALS**

1. To give students practical experience in critical analysis by evaluating full length feature films as historical evidence
2. To motivate students in the interrogation of traditional scholarly sources by exposing them to relevant written material on past events
3. To use film as a means of motivating students to learn more about the Civil Rights Movement
4. To improve students' research and writing skills through the assignment of critical essays on selected subjects that use film and traditional sources as evidence

### **RECOMMENDED FOR WRITING COMPETENCY**

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer*. Boston: St. Martins, 2010.

OR

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010.

OR

On line sources

### **COURSE FORMAT**

I begin each topic with a brief introduction to the subject. Students view films during class time. The movie is shown only once. It is the student's responsibility to view those missed because of class absences. I do not lend films. You may view/borrow all from the Georgia Tech Library. At least one of this semester's films may be down loaded. Check to see if there are others. Former students found reading a film's summary before viewing it helpful.

Discussion of the film[s] and assigned readings conclude each unit.

## CLASS ROOM COURTESY

I run a tight ship. Class begins at **ON TIME at 1:35 p. m.** Lateness is penalized as an absence. Students are allowed three absences and/or late entries without penalty. **On the fourth, students lose ten points on their final grade. IF YOUR SCHEDULE DOES NOT ALLOW YOU TO GET TO THIS CLASS ON TIME, I SUGGEST THAT YOU DROP IT.** Excused absences are not penalized. These include religious holidays, job interviews, illness, death in family, etc. However, students must provide documentation relevant to the absence.

Students **may not** hold private conversations during lectures, discussions, or film viewing. Drinking non alcoholic beverages is permitted; but not eating. Please turn off cell phones and **BE COURTEOUS ENOUGH NOT TO WORK ON MATERIAL FOR OTHER COURSES IN MY CLASS.** Students caught doing assignments for other classes, ordering/dating on-line, generating and/or answering e-mails, lose five points on their final grade. The same applies to students caught texting, using ear phones etc. You are in this class to increase your knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, to critically evaluate related material, and to improve your analytical writing skills. This class period **IS NOT** the time for other professors' assignments and/or internet quests, unless the material is related to our topic, and is shared in class discussion.

## HONOR CODE

Students at Georgia Tech adopted the honor system. Therefore, cheating in any form is prohibited. When this is detected, a **“ZERO”** grade is given for the assignment.

## GRADING

The final grade is an average of scores accrued during the semester.  
A+=95 A=90 A--=89 B+=85 B=80 B--=79 C+=75 C=70 C--=69  
D+=65 D=60 D--=59 F=50

## ASSIGNMENTS

Students will write nine (9) double spaced essays, minimum length—five (5) pages. You may write more. Please note, four and one-half pages or four and three-quarters pages **is not a five page essay!** Papers of less than the required minimum length get low scores.

The essays evaluate the films as historical sources based on information in the unit's articles. Submit on paper, not electronically. **No late essays are accepted; not even those brought to class by late comers.** I start class on time. That is when I collect essays. If you are not in class

when I begin collecting them, your paper is late and will not be accepted. **Slip papers under my office door if you will not be in class on the due date. These papers must arrive before the class begins; that is, before I leave my office for our classroom. Afterwards, they are considered late and will not be graded. A classmate may submit your essay; but I can return a graded paper only to its author.**

**AVERAGE UNIT READINGS ARE 125 PAGES.**

### **ESSAY FORMAT**

Since this is a history class, expect not only to view history, but also to read and write about it. Each essay must have a title relevant to the subject of the films & assigned readings. Essays include a **BRIEF ONE PARAGRAPH SUMMARY of the film's plot. BRIEF MEANS NOT MORE THAN FIVE TYPED LINES. Your summary may be shorter; but if it is more than five typed double spaced lines, you lose essay points.** Give the film's essence, not a blow-by-blow account. Number pages and don't forget to include your name on the front page. No cover sheet is necessary. **Include and document at least one quote from every reading accompanying the unit.** Consider some of the following when writing essays:

1. What is true or false about Hollywood's version of history according to the unit's assigned readings?
2. What is missing in Hollywood's account of history that would contribute to the film's historical accuracy?
3. Is the film presentation biased? If so, provide proof from the readings.
4. You may comment on the unit's articles. Do the authors agree/contradict each other, or themselves? Explain. Is the author's thesis believable? Does s/he cite supporting valid evidence? Is her/his article biased?
5. Did the article[s] provide necessary background information? If so, cite/discuss it.
6. You may disagree with an author. Support your position with fact, not opinion.

**REQUIRED ARTICLES** are listed in the syllabus under each unit. **They will be posted on line ON-LINE. You will receive an access code and instructions on accessing this material. On rare occasions some articles may be distributed in class. If absent that day, acquiring the material is your responsibility.**

Each essay must end with a bibliography of readings for the unit and any additional sources you quoted. A bibliography is arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name. It is not numbered. Copy the bibliography for each unit just as it is written in this syllabus.

**PLEASE NOTE: I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SUBSTITUTE FILMS AND/OR ARTICLES, AND TO DELETE ARTICLES FROM UNIT READING LISTS. STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY E-MAIL A MINIMUM OF ONE WEEK BEFORE THE ESSAY IS DUE.**

Essays lose points for misspelled words, improper citation of quoted material, improper bibliographic form, grammatical errors, unclear thoughts, and typos. Plagiarized film reviews are not read and are easily recognized. Also, someone else in the class will have found and used the same material.

Essays are usually due every two weeks. See assignment schedule below.

#### **DUE DATES FOR ESSAYS**

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|--|-------------|
| 1. UNIT I: Before the Civil Rights Movement<br><i>The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson</i><br><i>The Jackie Robinson Story</i> | January 24  |
| 2. UNIT II: The <i>Brown</i> Decision<br><i>Separate But Equal</i>   | February 7  |
| 3. UNIT III: School Desegregation: The Little Rock Nine<br><i>The Ernest Green Story</i>                                       | February 14 |
| 4. UNIT IV: School Desegregation: New Orleans<br><i>Ruby Bridges</i>   | February 28 |
| 5. Unit V: Montgomery Bus Boycott<br><i>Boycott</i><br><i>The Long Walk Home</i>   | March 14    |
| 6. UNIT VI: Murder in Mississippi<br><i>Murder in Mississippi</i><br><i>Mississippi Burning</i>                                | March 28    |
| 7. UNIT VII: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:<br>The Early Years<br><i>King, Part I</i>  | April 11    |
| 8. UNIT VIII: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.<br><i>King, Parts II &amp; III.</i>  | April 25    |

9. UNIT IX: Armed Resistance  
*Deacons For Defense*

Final Exam  
Day

**SUGGESTION:** Read a summary of the film[s] before viewing, and take notes when watching the movie[s].

**FILMS & UNIT READINGS**

**Unit I: Before the Civil Rights Movement—1944 & 1947**

**FILM:** *The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson* (1990) 95 minutes

**READINGS**

- Hill, Robert. "Introduction." *The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States During World War II*, 1-4.
- Pauley, Thomas. "Black Images and White Culture During the Decade Before the Civil Rights Movement." *American Studies* (Summer 1990) 31:2, 101-119.
- Tygiel, Jules. "The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson." *American Heritage* (August/September 1984), 34-40.
- Vernon, John. "Jim Crow Meet Lieutenant Robinson: A 1944 Court-Martial." *Prologue* (Spring 2008) 40:1, 39-43. Reprint, 1-10.
- Wellman, David. "Prejudiced People Are Not the Only Racists in America." *Portraits of White Racism*, 1-40.

**FILM:** *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950) 77 minutes

**READINGS**

- Alpert, Rebecca. "Jackie Robinson, Jewish Icon." *Shofar: An International Journal of Jewish Studies* (Winter 2008) 26:2, 42-58.
- Barney, Robert and David Barney. "Get Those Niggers Off the Field." *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History & Culture* (Fall 2007) 16:1, 1-9.
- "Baseball's Noble Experiment." *American History* (March/April 1997) 32: 1, 32-44.
- DeLorne, Joshua. "The Interest Conversion Principle and the Integration of Baseball." *Journal of Black Studies* (November 2010) 41:2, 367-384.

Kelly, John. "Integrating America: Jackie Robinson, Critical Events and Baseball Black and White." *International Journal of the History of Sports* (November 2005) 22:6, 1011-1035.

Lamb, Chris. "I Never Want to Take Another Trip Like This One: Jackie Robinson's Journey to Integrate Baseball." *Journal of Sport History* (Summer 2008) 40:1, 177-191.

## **Unit II: The *Brown* Decision—1954**

**FILM:** *Separate But Equal* (1991) 200 minutes

### **READINGS**

DeLaine Gona, Ophelia. "When the School Busses Came: A Daughter's Recollection of Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine's Role in *Briggs v. Elliot*." *Teachers College Record* (March 2005) 107: 3, 346-354.

Delon, Floyd. "The Legacy of Thurgood Marshall". *Journal of Negro Education* (Summer 1994) 63:3. ProQuest, 1-5.

Dickens, Milton and Ruth Swartz. "Oral Argument Before the Supreme Court: Marshall v. Davis in School Segregation Cases." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (February 1971) 32-43.

Kluger, Richard. "The Quest For Simple Justice." *Southern Exposure* (1979) 7:2, 6-17.

Marshall, Thurgood and Roy Wilkins. "Interpretation of Supreme Court Decision and the NAACP Program." *Crisis* (1979) 86:3, 205-209.

Motley, Constance. "The Legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*." *Teachers College Record* (1995) 96:4, 637-643.

Scott, Daryl. "Justifying Equality: Damage Imagery, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the American Creed." *Contempt And Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996*, 119-136.

Speer, Hugh. "The Case of the Century: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*." *This Constitution: A Bicentennial Chronicle*. (1987) Issue 14, 24-36.

Vasilopoulos, Christopher. "Prevailing Upon the American Dream: Thurgood Marshall and *Brown v. Board of Education*." *Journal of Negro Education* (Summer 1994) 63: 3. ProQuest, 1-5.

### **Unit III: School Desegregation: The Little Rock Nine--1957**

**FILM:** *The Ernest Green Story* (1993) 101 minutes

#### **READINGS**

Bates, Daisy. "The Long Shadow of Little Rock." *Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, 97-107.

Brady, Tom P. "Segregation or Amalgamation . . ." *Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, 83-94.

Burke, Robert. "Dwight D. Eisenhower and Civil Rights: Reflections on a Portrait in Caution." *Kansas History* (September 1990) 13:3, 178-189.

Calloway-Thomas, Carolyn and Thurmon Garner. "Daisy Bates and the Little Rock School Crisis." *Journal of Black Studies* (May 1996) 26:5, 616-627.

Fraser, Cary. "Crossing the Color Line in Little Rock: The Eisenhower Administration and the Dilemma of Race For U. S. Foreign Policy." *Diplomatic History* (Spring 2000) 24: 2. EBSCO Reprint, 1-29.

Godfrey, Phoebe. "Bayonets, Brainwashing, and Bathrooms: The Discourse of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Desegregation of Little Rock's Central High." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (Spring 2003) 62: 1, 42-67. ProQuest Reprint, 1-10.

Jacoway, Elizabeth, "Not Anger But Sorrow: Minnijean Brown Trickery Remembers The Little Rock Crisis." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (Summer 2007) 64:1, 1-26.

Joiner, Lottie. "Nine Lives." *Crisis* (September/October 2007) 114: 5, 30-35.

Johnson III, Ben F. "After 1957: Resisting Integration in Little Rock." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (Summer 2007) 66: 2, 258-283.

Lawson, Steven and Charles Payne. "Declaration of Constitutional Principles: The Southern Manifesto (March 12, 1956)." *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968*, 65-69.



Riley, Russell. "Race Returns to Center Stage: The Eisenhower Years." *The Presidency and The Politics of Racial Inequality*, 175-200.

Wallace, David. "Orval Faubus: The Central Figure At Little Rock Central High School." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (December 1980) 39: 4, 314-329.

#### **Unit IV: School Desegregation: New Orleans—1960**

**FILM:** *Ruby Bridges* (1998) 90 minutes

#### **READINGS**

Anderson, Bentley. "Prelates, Protest, and Public Opinion: Catholic Opposition to Desegregation, 1947-1955." *Journal of Church and State* (Summer 2004) 46: 3, 617-644.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Pamphleteering Against Prejudice: The Catholic Press Attacks Jim Crow in Twentieth Century America." *American Catholic Studies* (Summer 2009) 120: 2, 1-26.

Coles, Robert. "New Orleans 1960: 'As Bad As They Make It, The Stronger I'll Get.'" *Southern Exposure* (1979) 7: 2, 57-60.

Landphair, Juliette. "Sewage, Sidewalks, and Schools: The New Orleans Ninth Ward and Public School Desegregation." *Louisiana History* (January 1999) 40: 1, 35-62.

Muller, Mary Lee. "New Orleans Public School Desegregation." *Louisiana History* (January 1976) 17: 1, 69-88.

Wieder, Alan. "New Orleans School Crisis of 1960: The Blacks Who Integrated." *Vitae Scholasticae* (1984) 4:2, 381-393.

\_\_\_\_\_. "One Who Stayed: Margaret Conner and the New Orleans School Crisis." *Louisiana History* (1985) 26: 2, 194-201.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New Orleans School Crisis: The Whites Who Stayed." *Vitae Scholasticae* (1986) 5: 2, 169-189.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New Orleans School Crisis of 1960: Causes and Consequences." *Phylon* (1987) 48:2, 122-131.

## **Unit V: Montgomery Bus Boycott—1956**

**FILMS:** *Boycott* (2001) 118 minutes

*The Long Walk Home* (1990) 118 minutes

### **READINGS**

Abernathy, Ralph. “The Montgomery Bus Boycott.” *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, 131-165.

Burks, Mary Fair. “Trailblazers: Women in the Montgomery Bus Boycott.” *Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, 78-84.

Dent, Richard. “The Father His Children Forgot.” *American History Illustrated* (December 1985) 20: 8, 10-17.

Gardner, Tom and Cynthia Brown. “Interviews With Rosa Parks, E. D. Nixon, Johnny Carr, and Virginia Durr.” *Southern Exposure* (1981) 9: 1, 12-21.

Glennon, Robert. “The Role of Law in the Civil Rights Movement: The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-1956.” *Law and History Review* (1991) 9: 1, 59-118.

Hendrikson, Paul. “The Ladies Before Rosa: Let Us Praise Unfamous Women.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* (2005) 8:2, 287-297.

Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. “Negro Boycott of Segregated Streetcars in Florida, 1901-1905.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* (September 1970) 525-533.

Wade-Lewis, Margret. “I Remember Rosa Parks: The Impact of Segregation.” *Black Scholar* (Winter 2006) 35: 4, 2-12.

## **Unit VI: Murder In Mississippi—1964**

**FILMS:** *Murder In Mississippi* (1990) 97 minutes

*Mississippi Burning* (1988) 127 minutes

### **READINGS**

Chalmers, David. “The Security State in America: Inside J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI” *Reviews in American History* (March 1990) 18: 1, 118-123.

Cunnigen, Donald. “The Civil Rights Movement and Southern White Liberal Role Conflict.” *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* (1992) 3: 4, 321-340.

- Gotham, Kevin. "Domestic Security For the American State: The FBI, Covert Repression, and Democratic Legitimacy." *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* (Winter 1994) 22: 2, 203-222.
- Joiner, Lottie. "A Matter of Justice." *Crisis* (July/August 2004) 111: 4, 36-41.
- Richardson, Laura. "Organizing Resistance." *Journalism History* (Spring 2009) 35: 1, 23-33.
- Umoja, Akinyele. "1964: The Beginning of the End of Nonviolence in the Mississippi Freedom Movement." *Radical History Review* (Winter 2003) Issue 85, 201-227.
- Walton, Laura. "In Their Own Backyard: Local Press Coverage of the Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Murders." *American Journalism* (Summer 2006) 23: 3, 29-51.
- Watson, Bruce. "The Summer of Our Discontent." *American Heritage* (Summer 2010) 60: 2, 43-51.
- Weinberg, Jack. "Students and Civil Rights in the 1960s." *History of Education Quarterly* (Spring 1990) 30: 2, 213-224.

## **Unit VII: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Early Years**

**FILM:** *King*, Part I (1978) 185 minutes

### **READINGS**

- Branch, Taylor. "First Trombone." *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*, 108-112, 123-125, 127-142.
- \* Farris, Christine. *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up With Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- King, Coretta Scott. *My Life With Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 66-71, 72-77, 206-211.
- King Jr., Martin Luther. "The Use of Nonviolence." Gilbert Osofsky, ed. *The Burden of Race*, 522-526.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Return to the South." *Stride Towards Freedom*, 15-24.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Montgomery Before the Protest." *Stride Towards Freedom*, 25-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Violence of Desperate Men." *Stride Towards Freedom*, 132-151.

## Unit VIII: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**FILMS:** *King*, Parts II & III (1998) 150 minutes

### READINGS

- Abernathy, Ralph. "Chicago." *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, 362-399.
- Boykoff, Jules. "Surveillance, Spatial Compassion and Scale: The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr." *Antipode* (September 2007) 39: 4, 729-756.
- Burns, Stewart. "From the Mountaintop: The Changing Political Vision of Martin Luther King, Jr." *History Teacher* (November 1993) 27:1, 7-18.
- Cook, Samuel. "Is Martin Luther King, Jr. Irrelevant?" *New South* (1971) 26:2, 2-14.
- Fairclough, Adam. "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Viet Nam." *Phylon* (1984) 45-1, 19-39.
- Friedman, Barbara and John Richardson. "A National Disgrace." *Journalism History* (Winter 2008) 33:4, 224-232.
- Garrow, David. "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Cross of Leadership." *Peace & Change* (April 1, 1987) 12:1/2, 1-13.
- King, Coretta Scott. *My Life With Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 329-339.
- \* King, Dexter. *Growing Up King*.
- Patron, John. "A Transforming Response: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Letter From a Birmingham Jail.'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* (Spring 2004) 7:1, 53-65.
- Powers, Richard. "The FBI Marches on the Dreamer." *American History* (August 2003) 38:3, 42-50.
- Russell, Riley. "Emancipation, Act II: Pressures and Conversions, 1961-1965." *The Presidency and the Policy of Racial Inequality*, 201-234.
- Smith, Kenneth. "The Radicalization of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Last Three Years." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Winter 1989) 270-288.

## Unit IX: Armed Resistance--1965

**FILM:** *Deacons For Defense* (2003) 95 minutes

### READINGS

Strain, Christian. "We Walked Like Men: Deacons for Defense and Justice." *Louisiana History* (1977) 38: 1, 43-62.

Umoja, Akinyele. "The Ballot or the Bullet: A Comparative Analysis of Armed Resistance in the Civil Rights Movement." *Journal of Black Studies* (1999) 24: 4, 558-578.

Wendt, Simon. "Urge People to Carry Guns: Armed Self Defense in the Louisiana Civil rights Movement and the Radicalization of the Congress of Racial Equality." *Louisiana History* (2004) 45: 3, 261-286.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Armed Resistance and the Radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement." *The Black Power Movement*. Joseph Peniel, editor, 145-166.

\_\_\_\_\_. "They Finally Found Out That We Are Men: Violence, Non-Violence and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era." *Gender and History* (2007) 19: 3, 543-564.

Wood, Spencer and Samuel Ricardo. "He Was Non-Violent, But My Boys Weren't: The Hegemonic Myth of Non-Violence in the Construction of Black Identity." *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies* (December 2010) 41: 3, 155-169.

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