

HTS 4005: HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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Tu/Th 1:35-2:55

Old CE Bldg, Rm 104

Course Overview:

Racial inequality has permeated American society since the colonial period. People of African descent, in particular, have faced various obstacles and injustices through the course of American history: slavery, segregation in public accommodations, discrimination in employment, pejorative caricatures in the media, exclusion from politics, threats of physical violence and death, among many more.

Yet, African Americans have been able to overcome such inequality in particular moments in U.S. history. Through the power of collective action, African Americans challenged the system of racial inequality they faced in the mid-twentieth century. In doing so, they changed the social and political landscape, and they forced the U.S. to live up to its promise of “liberty and justice for all.” For many, the achievements of the civil rights movement culminated with the election of President Barack Obama. Nevertheless, many observers believe that more remains to be accomplished.

This seminar will explore the civil rights movement in the United States, focusing on three historical phases: (1) the factors and events leading up to the emergence of the movement (roughly, 1930s to 1950s), (2) the movement itself (~1953-1968), and (3) the effects of the movement (1970 to present). The primary emphasis of the course will be on the movement and its effects, but we will also explore issues of gender, organization, and politics among others.

Therefore, three broad questions will frame the course: Why was racial segregation so stable prior to the civil rights movement? Why did the movement emerge when it did, and how was it successful? How effective was the movement at increasing racial equality – in the long- and short-term periods after the movement’s decline? To answer these questions fully, however, we will draw on history, sociology, political science, and other disciplines. We will begin the semester by exploring explanations of social movement dynamics and processes – how movements emerge, why they fail, and how they succeed. Then, we will apply this knowledge to the civil rights movement.

Requirements:

Grades will be based on several criteria: class participation, a seminar presentation, and a research project. In fulfilling these requirements, students are expected to adhere to the **Georgia Tech Honor Code** (see www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Honor/). Honor code violations will be addressed appropriately and could result in an “F” on the assignment or in the course. I am happy to accommodate you if you need any special considerations due to a disability, but please let me know *as soon as possible*. You should contact the **ADAPTS Office** (see www.adapts.gatech.edu/index2.htm).

Participation (35%)

Student participation is essential for this class. Since each class session will center on discussion, make sure you *do the reading before class and come prepared to discuss*. **Do not**

assume that these are automatic points. You must earn them by contributing in class. If you have a question or comment or need something clarified, raise the issue in class. Discussion questions will be distributed prior to class meetings. These questions will focus on the central themes, concepts, and points of the readings; they should help guide you in drawing out the insights of the material. You should come to class with answers to the discussion questions.

The participation grade will not be based simply on the frequency of comments, but also upon the quality of your comments. For example, bringing up a point from the reading that was unclear or critiquing an argument in the reading is more involved (and of more quality) than merely reciting descriptive information in the text.

Attendance for seminars is mandatory. Absences will be excused only under emergency circumstances. Missing more than two classes will put your grade in jeopardy.

Short Presentation (15%)

Each student will introduce the readings for one week and present discussion questions for the rest of the class. At the beginning of class, students will present their introduction, which should be about 10 minutes, highlighting the major arguments and ideas of the readings. Introductions should also briefly address how the readings for that day relate to previous course readings.

Research project (50%)

This course requires students to do a research project that culminates in a research paper. These papers need to focus on an aspect of social change in the U.S. South. This might be industrialization, urbanization, or the civil rights movement. **This project must be based on primary research**, which might include oral history, interviews, archival materials, government statistics, or the like. Papers also need to draw on and incorporate concepts from the course.

The project involves six assignments: a meeting with me, an individual meeting with Bruce Henson in the Library, a bibliographic exercise, a short summary, a research presentation, and a final paper. This project is meant to demonstrate to students that writing and research are processes that do not end with the first draft (or begin the night before it is due). By breaking this project into several parts, I hope to facilitate students' completion of the final paper.

First, during the third week of classes (**September 4-7**), students will meet individually with me to discuss ideas for the research paper. You should come to the meeting with at least one idea. Therefore, you should begin thinking about topics now. I have attached a list of possible ideas that students might consider analyzing. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and you may choose to study a movement not on this list. Students will share their research idea in class on **September 20**.

Second, students will meet individually with Bruce Henson in the library between **September 10 and 14**. At this meeting, you should be prepared to explain your research topic to Bruce, and he will help you find both secondary and primary sources for your project. You will need to contact Bruce on your own; his e-mail address is <bruce.henson@library.gatech.edu>. You need to have this meeting between your meeting with me and our class on September 18.

Third, a bibliographic assignment is due by **September 20**. For this exercise, you need to find 4 academic sources (e.g., journal articles, books) and 3 primary sources (e.g., newspaper articles, Congressional hearings) to use in your research paper. (Websites do *not* qualify as academic sources.) The primary sources should come from the era in which the social change occurred. For example, if you analyze school integration in Atlanta, the primary sources might be articles from the *Atlanta Journal*, the *Atlanta Daily World*, or local SCLC documents during the 1960s. Further, you need to provide a 2-3 page summary of your sources and provide the citations in bibliographic form.

Fourth, you will need to turn in a paper summary or outline on **November 1**. This paper should be about 5-7 pages (typed, double-spaced). In it, you will want to describe your research idea, give some background on the topic, and state what data you are collecting. You should include a brief bibliography with this paper.

Fifth, students will present their research to the class between **November 6 and 29**. These presentations will follow the standard at academic conferences: about 15 minutes. We will discuss this further as the semester progress.

Finally, you need to turn in a final paper. This paper should be approximately 20 pages long. This paper should have at least 10 academic sources. The final paper is due by noon on **December 10**.

Summary of grade breakdown:	Participation.....	35%
	Short presentation.....	15%
	Research Project.....	50%
	Total.....	100%

Readings:

Several books are available at the **Engineer’s Bookstore at 748 Marietta Street:**

Andrews, Kenneth T. 2004. Freedom Is a Constant Struggle.
Bloom, Jack. 1987. Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement.
McAdam, Doug. 1990. Freedom Summer.
Morris, Aldon. 1984. The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement.
Robnett, Belinda. 1997. How Long? How Long?
Woodward, C. Vann. 2005 [1955]. The Strange Career of Jim Crow.

In addition to these books, some course readings are on the course T-Square site (in the “resources” section).

Weekly Schedule:

Unmarked readings come from the required books. An asterisk (*) indicates that a reading is on the library’s electronic reserve.

Introduction: Understanding the Civil Rights Movement

Aug. 21 *How do we understand the Civil Rights Movement?*

Aug. 23 *Why do social movements emerge?*

*Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 1977. Poor People's Movements. Chapter 1 ("The Structuring of Social Protest"), 1-40.

Part I: The System of Racial Segregation

Aug. 28 *Racial Segregation, Part I: Why did it emerge?*

Woodward. Strange Career of Jim Crow. Chapters 1 & 2.

Aug. 30 *Racial Segregation, Part II: Why was it stable?*

Woodward. Strange Career of Jim Crow. Chapters 3 – 5.

Part II: The Civil Right Movement Arises, Succeeds, and Declines

Sept. 4 & 6 *What facilitated the rise of the movement?*

Morris. The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement.

*****Schedule an individual meeting with Dr. Winders between September 4 and 7 to discuss ideas for your seminar research project.*****

Sept. 11 & 13 *How did economics and social class shape the movement?*

Bloom. Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement.

*****Schedule an individual meeting with Bruce Henson at the Tech library between September 10 and 14 to discuss your research project.*****

Sept. 18 & 20

Work Week: Focus on Research Project

Due: Bibliography Assignment (Thursday, Sept. 20, at 1:30pm)

Sept. 25 & 27 *How did women shape the movement?*

Robnett. How Long?

Oct. 2 & 4

Discussions of Research Projects and Data Sources

Oct. 9 & 11 *How did young people shape the movement?*

McAdam. Freedom Summer.

Oct. 16

No Class: Fall Break

Oct. 18

No Class: Work Day (Focus on Research Project)

Part III: The Legacy and Effects of the Civil Rights Movement

Oct. 23 & 25 *How did the movement shape society?*

Andrews. Freedom Is a Constant Struggle.

Oct. 30 & Nov. 1

Prepare for Presentations

Due: Paper Summary

Part IV: Student Research on the Civil Rights Movement

Nov. 6 & 8

Student Presentations

Nov. 13 & 15

Student Presentations

Nov. 20

No Class: Focus on Research Project

Nov. 22

No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday

Nov. 27 & 29

Student Presentations

Dec. 4 & 6

No Class: Revise Research Paper

Dec. 10

Due: Final Papers (Monday at *noon*)

Supplemental Materials

Eyes on the Prize (documentary series)

Civil Rights Digital Library (<http://crdl.usg.edu/>)

Emory University Library (<http://marbl.library.emory.edu/>)

Additional Books and Articles:

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 1977. Poor People's. Chapter 4 ("The Civil Rights Movement").

McAdam, Doug. 1982. Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970.

Moody, Ann. 1992. Coming of Age in Mississippi.

Luders, Joseph. 2006. "The Economics of Movement Success: Business Responses to Civil Rights Mobilization." American Journal of Sociology. 111(4):963-998.

Barnett, Bernice McNair. 1993. "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class." Gender and Society. 7(2):162-182.

Isaac, Larry and Lars Christiansen. 2002. "How the Civil Rights Movement Revitalized Labor Militancy." American Sociological Review. 67(5):722-746.

Isaac, Larry. 2008. "Movement of Movements: Culture Moves in the Long Civil Rights Struggle." Social Forces. 87(1):33-63.

Winders, Bill. 2006. "'Sowing the Seeds of Their Own Destruction'": Southern Planters, State Policy, and the Market, 1933 to 1975." Journal of Agrarian Change. 6(2):143-166.

Winders, Bill. 1999. "The Roller Coaster of Class Conflict: Class Segments, Mass Mobilization, and Voter Turnout in the U.S., 1840-1996." Social Forces. 77(3):833-862.