The Civil Rights Movement: History, Context, and Legacies

This course will present an in-depth introduction to the Civil Rights Movement. In the first part of the course, we will examine theoretical discussions of racial dynamics, which will prepare us to better understand and assess the nature and the importance of the Civil Rights Movement. We will then discuss the history of slavery and lynching, in order to place the Civil Rights Movement within its historical context. After the first several weeks of the quarter, we will examine the Civil Rights Movement itself, paying particular attention to the social, economic, and political processes that account for the movement’s emergence and transformation, and to issues of gender and sexuality, and the often neglected role of women, within the movement. Towards the end of the course, we will examine a variety of social movements (including the Black power movement, the Chicano rights movement, the Red Power or American Indian Movement and the Women’s liberation movement) that were influenced by the Civil Rights Movement in various ways. In the final week of the quarter, we will examine contemporary racial relations in order to assess the continuing legacies of the Civil Rights Movement.

The outline that follows will provide you with a relatively structured idea of what we will be examining, although specific dates for readings and discussions may change as the quarter progresses.

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to attend every class meeting, and more than a couple of absences will severely impact your final course grade (unless you are ill and provide a doctor’s note). Your final grade will be based upon:

Weekly assignments:

Since this class will be run as a seminar, participation by every student in every class session is essential. You are expected to come to each class meeting having completed all assigned readings, and you are expected to be prepared to contribute to class discussions in meaningful ways. In order to help facilitate these discussions, you will be required to submit 2-4 pages of comments on the readings each week. I will provide you with detailed guidelines about these writing requirements (the guidelines may vary week to week).

Leading Class Discussions:

Since this is a seminar, I will generally avoid lecturing. Instead, students will be responsible for leading class discussion each class meeting. We will set up a schedule early in the quarter, where students will sign up to lead discussions on the topics that they
find most interesting. Depending on class size, you may have the option to work with a classmate and lead a team discussion of the topic(s) that you are responsible for.

Research Paper and Oral Presentation:

You will be required to write one 15 page research paper, on a topic that you will determine in consultation with me. An annotated bibliography and rough outline of the paper will be due during the 6th week of the quarter, while the final paper will be due during finals week.

You will be required to give regular in-class oral progress reports on your research, and you will need to give a formal oral presentation about your completed research during the final week of the quarter.

Grading

Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly papers: 15%  
Leading Class Discussion(s): 15%  
Research Paper: 40% (10% of this grade will be determined by your oral presentation on your research; an additional 10% of the paper grade will be determined by your outline and annotated bibliography)  
Class Participation: 30%

Course Readings:

A course reader containing most required readings can be purchased at Cal Copy, 3251 Holiday Ct. (453-9949, in the shopping center just past the Mobil station off campus -- near St. Germain’s liquor and deli.) Any additional readings will be available on-line through Roger.

Course Outline:
(Note: all readings, unless otherwise indicated, can be found in the course reader from Cal Copy)

WEEK 1: Part One: Theoretical Background

Anthony W. Marx, Making Race and Nation, “Introduction,” pgs 1-25


Part Two: Historical Background, Part One: Slavery

Anthony W. Marx, Making Race and Nation, Chapter 3, “Lessons from Slavery,” pgs 47-64

Catherine Clinton, “‘With a Whip in his Hand’: Rape, Memory, and African-American Women,”


**WEEK 2: Historical Background, Part Two: Lynching and Racial Formation**


**WEEK 3: Precursors and the Early Phases of the Civil Rights Movement**


Felecia G. Jones, "Mobilizing the Masses: The Cleveland Call and Post and the Scottsboro Incident," *Journal of Negro History*, 84 (Winter 1999), 48–60 (Please access article online through Roger)


Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., “The Harlem Bus Boycott of 1941,” in *Civil Rights: A Reader on the Black Struggle*, pgs 298-303

**WEEK 4: The Emergence and Transformation of the Movement**


WEEK 5: The Role of Women in the Movement


WEEK 6: Black Nationalism and The Black Power Movement


WEEK 7: PAN AFRICANISM, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND BLACK POWER


WEEK 8: Other Race and Ethnicity based social movements


Fred Ho, “Fists for Revolution: The Revolutionary History of I Wor Kuen/League of Revolutionary Struggle” in Fred Ho, ed, Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America, pgs 3-14.

Marge Taniwaki, “Yellow Peril to Yellow Power: Asian Activism in the Rocky Mountain Region,” in Fred Ho, ed, Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America, pgs 65-70

I Wor Kuen, “12 Point Platform and Program” in Fred Ho, ed, Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America, pgs 405-406.

WEEK 9: Legacies of the Movement Part One: The Women’s Liberation Movement and the Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement


Ellen Willis, “Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism,” in The 60s Without Apology, edited by Sayres et al., pgs 91-117.


WEEK 10: Legacies of the Movement Part Two: Collective Memory and Contemporary Racial Politics


Owen J Dwyer, “Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement: Place, Memory, and Conflict” *The Professional Geographer*, 2000, v.52 (4), pgs. 660–671. (Please access article online through Roger)