

After World War II, the civil rights movement had none of the advantages that successful interest groups in American politics generally try to have on their side. The most powerful members of Congress were sworn opponents of civil rights legislation. Neither party was willing to take any electoral risk in order to advance the cause of civil rights for African-American citizens. Presidential candidates largely ignored them. The bureaucratic agency that could have been in a position to help them, Federal Bureau of Investigation, was headed by a racist who was committed to discrediting the civil rights movement by finding links with the Communist Party. And perhaps most importantly, the institution of federalism required the federal government to defer to the states in the matter of civil rights. State governments in the South had long ago disfranchised most African-American voters, and consolidated the supremacy of white citizens by means of public policy, police oppression, and terror. The powerlessness of African American citizens was manifest in the thousands of lynchings that occurred between 1870 and 1965, many of which were accomplished openly, in daylight, with the complicity of local law enforcement.

In spite of the overwhelming obstacles, the civil rights movement succeeded in passing two significant pieces of legislation that changed the American political system itself. While the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did not mean the end of racism or discrimination in American society, these laws did substantially change the rules of the game and create a different political framework for African-American participation in American politics. The primary purpose of this course is to understand how those laws were passed over the objection of previously undefeatable political forces. Understanding this unique event informs us about aspects of American politics that could not otherwise be revealed. At the center of this explanation is a social protest movement, staffed by students and others, that made transformative change a possibility.

A second goal of this course is to understand the effects of the Voting Rights Act, in particular, on the institutions of American politics. The national party system, federal politics, Congress, and the presidency have all been deeply impacted by this revolutionary change.

### **Learning Strategies**

Psychologists tell us that we only absorb a small amount of the material delivered in lecture format. Since some students are aural and some visual learners, it helps to make some of the key lecture notes available through 'Blackboard'. Learning is enhanced by students interrupting the instructor with questions and comments. It is also enhanced when students share their thoughts on the material through in-class buzz groups or out-of-class study groups. Writing "memos" for class (see below) give you yet another perspective on the material. Videos provide a different and helpful format for reinforcing key elements of course material, and we are lucky to have some great videos available for

this class. I will also hold at least three review sessions before each of the two exams, as a way of integrating course material from over the semester.

### **Course Resources**

The books available in the bookstore (in paperback, mostly used) are:

Halberstam. *The Children*.  
McClymer. *Mississippi Freedom Summer*.  
Carter. *The Politics of Rage*.  
Belknap. *Federal Law and Southern Order*.

We will read selections only from some of the longer texts.

There will also be a number of readings available on the library's electronic reserve. Just go to <http://ares.wustl.edu/ares>.

Ideally, you will read the materials for each class before class. This will enable you to get more out of the lecture, and will enable you to come to class with questions and comments.

While this course is not a history course, it will be necessary to learn a lot about the historical events between 1950 and 1972 in order to gain insight into the politics of the civil rights movement. One way to do this efficiently is through some of the excellent videos on the history of the civil rights movement. These, together with a close reading of the texts, should give you a good sense of the historical development of the movement.

I would like to encourage you to make comments and ask questions frequently. Questions and comments always help the class refocus on the material and help in learning and retention. The more the material can be developed through a multilateral discussion, rather than a unidirectional lecture, the better. My office is Siegle 287. My office hours are

Wednesday 2:00 – 3:00.

Please feel free to make an appointment outside of office hours. My office phone is 5-5874. I prefer to be addressed as “Gary”.

### **Grading**

Your grade will be based on participation, one midterm exam, and a final exam, plus an optional paper. If you choose to write a paper, it will be weighted at 20%, the midterm will be worth 30% and the final 35% of your course grade.

If you choose *not* to write a paper, the midterm will be worth 40% and the final exam 45%.

In either case, participation will be 15% of the final grade.

The exams will cover the historical events in the texts and the videos, and your understanding of the institutions of American politics. For example, there might be a question about the Senate cloture rule at the time of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although this may seem like a technical detail, it is virtually impossible to understand the passage of the Civil Rights Act without understanding the cloture rule. Part of your challenge will be to sort out those critical details of the history of the movement from a large mass of less important details.

If you choose to write a paper, the paper should typically be about 8-10 pages long. Please discuss the topic with me before you begin. I will only count the paper if it improves your course grade.

The basic requirement of the paper will be to use course concepts as you organize your thoughts on some aspect of the civil rights movement. For example, an appropriate topic would be the formation of SNCC, the politics of southern resistance to civil rights, or congressional passage of one of the earlier civil rights acts. An appropriate topic from later in the course would be the Kennedy Administration's position on civil rights, Robert Moses and the philosophy of community organization in Mississippi, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or the role of the FBI.

Notice that the primary purpose of the paper is *not* to do a research project on something far beyond the course materials. Rather, the paper is an alternative way for you to demonstrate your understanding of the materials from class and the readings.

The materials you use should be listed in a bibliography, and you should use some footnoting technique (for example, listing author and date in the text, in parentheses) to indicate which sources you are relying on for quotations, or particular facts or opinions. Conceptual or historical errors will count strongly against the grade. A paper that demonstrates facility with course concepts and understanding into the subject matter will in all probability get at least a B- grade. The requirements for an A grade are substantially more difficult. The paper must show deeper understanding of the subject than was available just by sitting in the course and doing the reading, and/or demonstrate some original insight into the subject.

The final 15% of your grade will be based on participation. To get full credit for participation, you should write a one-page "response" in each of the two sections of the course. For instance, you can write the first memo about any reading through October 8, which is the last class before Exam #1. The purpose of the memo is to give you an opportunity to engage the reading, and practice writing up your thoughts or response to a particular reading that you find significant. When you choose to write your memo, please turn it in to me in hard copy or by email, no later than one hour before the class that we will be discussing the reading. I will read your memo by class time and, in all probability, I will call on you at an appropriate time in class to share your insight or opinion about that particular reading. Three memos will be required during the semester, but they will not be

graded, in order to encourage risk-taking in writing your memo. That is, every serious effort will get full credit toward your participation grade.

## GRADING

I do not believe in grading on a curve. At a selective university like Washington University, the students are not distributed along a normal curve—they are extremely capable. The material, while challenging, should be accessible to virtually everyone making a sufficient effort. Grading on the curve can discourage the cooperative effort that makes achievement of those goals possible. Consequently, I believe in setting challenging standards of achievement, and then encouraging the kind of cooperative effort that will get as high a proportion of the class as possible to meet those achievement standards.

The standards are:

98+ A+	88-90 B+	78-80 C+	68-70 D+
92-98 A	82-88 B	72-78 C	62-68 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-

## SECTION I FEDERALISM, COURTS, AND SOCIAL PROTEST

- TU 8/27 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, the Colfax Massacre; U.S.v.Cruikshank  
Read: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-colfax/>  
Carter *Politics of Rage* pp. 35-41.
- TH 8/29 Wilmington; Disfranchisement Constitutions; anti-lynching bill  
Read: Fairclough. "Failure of Reconstruction". Ares  
Belknap, pp. 1-20
- TU 9/3 Scottsboro Boys; Litigation Strategy; selective incorporation; New Deal  
Read: Scottsboro case:  
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/scottsb.htm>  
Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, NAACP's Challenge, 197-211. Ares
- TH 9/5 1948 Election; *Brown*, White Defiance  
[Eyes on the Prize; AwakeningsA 54-56; Emmet Till]  
Read: McClymer, "*Mississippi Freedom Summer*" pp. 15-23.  
[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Harry\\_Truman\\_civil\\_rights.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Harry_Truman_civil_rights.htm)  
Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, NAACP's Challenge 218-225 Ares  
Emmet Till, Ares  
Belknap, Ch. 27-39;
- TU 9/10 Montgomery (55—56); Killer Amendments  
[Eyes on the Prize; AwakeningsB 54-56; Montgomery]  
Read: Evans and Novak, "The Johnson System". Ares  
"Half a Loaf", Mann, (*Walls of Jericho*) pp.189-214 Ares
- TH 9/12 CRA of 1957  
Read: "Half a Loaf", Mann, (*Walls of Jericho*) pp.215-224 Ares  
Belknap Ch. 2 pp. 39-44.
- TU 9/17 Little Rock, the Election of 1958, and Wallace vs. Judge Johnson  
[Eyes on Prize: Fighting Back pt a]  
Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage (1958)* pp. 90-104  
Belknap, 44-52.
- TH 9/19 Non-violent strategies and Sit-ins  
[Video: Eyes on the Prize: Ain't Scared of Your Jails Pt a]  
Read: Halberstam, *Children* pp. 11-24,60-81, 90-121, 126-148.
- TU 9/24 SNCC and the 1960 Election  
Halberstam *The Children* pp. 227-234.  
Tyson, "Robert F. Williams" pp. 562-570

SECTION II  
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND THE 1964 CRA

- TH 9/26 Freedom Riders and the Kennedy Admin. 1961  
[Eyes on Prize: Ain't Scared of Your Jails pt. b]  
Read: Halberstam. *The Children* pp. 237-348  
Belknap Ch. 4 pp. 70-89.
- TU 10/1 Mississippi Voter Registration  
Read: Halberstam pp. 400-409.  
McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* pp. 24-47.  
Voter Education Project:  
<http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis61.htm#1961vep>
- TH 10/3 Mississippi 1962, Ole Miss, and the Kennedy Administration  
[Eyes on the Prize: Fighting Back pt. b]  
Read: McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 47-81.
- TU 10/8 Greenwood campaign, and review  
Read: *Local People* "Greenwood and Jackson" Dittmer/ pp. 143-57. Ares  
Greenwood Food blockade:  
<http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis62.htm#1962food>  
Belknap Ch.4 pp. 89-105.
- TH 10/10 MID TERM EXAM
- TU 10/15 Birmingham 1963  
Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk pt. b  
Read: Halberstam: pp. 431-443.  
Birmingham:  
<http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis63.htm#1963bham>  
Carter *Politics of Rage* ch. 4, "Threads Ran Through"(110-132).
- TH 10/17 The Schoolhouse Door; JFK; Evers Murder 1963  
[Eyes on the Prize: Miss. pt a]  
Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* ch. 5 "Defend Our Rights". (133-155).  
Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* ch. 22. Ares  
Belknap ch. 5.
- FR 10/18 ENJOY FALL BREAK!
- TU 10/22 March on Washington; Birmingham bombings; mock election  
Read: Halberstam, *Children* pp. 444-455, 477-483.  
Carter, *Politics of Rage*, ch 6 "All of Us Are Victims" (156-194).  
McClymer, *Freedom Summer*, 84-101.

- TH 10/24 House Passage of The Civil Rights Act 1964;  
 Presidential Primaries 1964; Freedom Summer  
 Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage* 195-218.  
 McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 102-175.
- TU 10/29 Senate Filibuster, Final Passage, Freedom Summer  
 [Eyes on the Prize: Mississippi pt. b]  
 Read: McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 177-224.  
 “Ch. 20: An Idea Whose Time Has Come” Mann, pp. 406-432. Ares  
 Belknap Ch. 6. Freedom Summer

### SECTION III

#### THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

- TH 10/31 Republican and Democratic Conventions 1964  
 [Eyes on the Prize: Mississippi pt. c]  
 Read: Branch, Ch. 29, “Cow Palace Revolt”. Ares  
 McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 224-235
- TU 11/05 Johnson, and Goldwater 1964/Selma protest  
 Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage*, pp. 218-250.  
 Branch, *At Canaan’s Edge* PART 1. Ares.  
 Halberstam, *Children*, pp. 483-498.
- TH 11/07 Selma 1965  
 [(Eyes on the Prize: Selma)]  
 Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* 250-263  
 Branch, *At Canaan’s Edge* Part 3. Ares  
 Halberstam, *Children*, 499-517.
- TU 11/12 Voting Rights Act 1965; Undoing Cruikshank  
 Read: Mann, Ch. 23 “We Shall Overcome” ares  
 Carter, *Politics of Rage*, Ch. 9  
 Belknap Ch. 7 “Price and Guest”. (Supreme court)
- TH 11/14 Federalism  
 Belknap. Ch. 8 “South on Trial” (juries)
- TU 11/19 Black Power; King in Chicago; Election 1966  
 Read: McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* pp. 235-243.  
 Halberstam, *Children* 521-532.  
 Fairclough. “Rise and Fall of Black Power”. Ares

TH 11/21 CRA 1968 and 3-Way Election of 1968  
Read: Belknap/ Ch. 9. "A Federal Law"  
Carter *Politics of Rage* Ch. 11.

TU 11/26 Why Nixon was Afraid of Wallace  
Read: Carter Ch. 12; 1969-70

TH 11/28 THANKSGIVING

TU 12/3 Election of 1972: Changing Parties and Changing Electorate  
Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* Chs. 13  
Black, "Newest Southern Politics", *Journal of Politics*, Ares

TH 12/5 The Changing Congress;  
Read: Hood, Kidd, and Morris. 2001.  
"The Key Issue: Constituency Effects and Southern Senators".  
*Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26. Ares  
Belknap Ch. 10

[http://www2.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/Shelby\\_Cnty\\_v\\_Holder\\_No\\_1\\_296\\_2013\\_BL\\_167707\\_US\\_June\\_25\\_2013\\_Court](http://www2.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/Shelby_Cnty_v_Holder_No_1_296_2013_BL_167707_US_June_25_2013_Court) opinions by Roberts and Ginsburg

FR 12/6 Last Day of classes

M-W 12/9-12/11 Reading Period

wed 12/18 3:30-5:30 p.m. Final Exam