

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 1880 and 1960, 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 figures. Understanding this unique event informs us about aspects of American politics that could not otherwise be revealed. At the center of this explanation is the 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, local and state politics, Congress, and the presidency have all been deeply impacted by this revolutionary change.

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*.

Hugh Graham. *Civil Rights and the Presidency (recommended)*

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

Thursday 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 two midterm exams (25% each) and a final exam (40%). 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 are especially interested in a particular topic, or if you are dissatisfied with your performance on one of the first two exams, you may write an extra-credit paper. The paper should be about 8-10 pages long. Please discuss the topic with me before you begin. The paper will be worth 15% of your final grade, and will reduce the weight of one of your exams from 25% to 10%. I will only count the paper if it improves your course grade.

The basic requirement of the extra-credit 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 for the material on the first exam will 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 for the second extra-credit paper 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 course is *not* to do a research project on something beyond the course materials. Rather, the extra-credit paper is an alternative way for you to demonstrate your understanding of the materials that we went over in class and the ideas that were covered on the exam.

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 10% 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 three sections of the course. For instance, you can write the first memo about any reading through February 20, which is the last class of Section I. 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 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. As 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+

92-98 A

90-92 A-

88-90 B+

82-88 B

80-82 B-

78-80 C+

72-78 C

70-72 C-

68-70 D+

62-68 D

60-62 D-

SECTION I FEDERALISM, COURTS, AND SOCIAL PROTEST

- W 1/18 14th amendment, the Colfax Massacre; U.S.v.Cruikshank
Read: <http://www.thedefendersonline.com/2009/04/13/easter-killing-frenzy-the-colfax-massacre/>
- M 1/23 Federalism; and Disfranchisement Constitutions
Read: Fairclough. *Better Day Coming*, Ch. 1 “Failure of Reconstruction”. Ares
Carter *Politics of Rage* pp. 35-41..
- W 1/25 Anti-lynching legislation, the NAACP, and Scottsboro Boys
Read:
McClymer, “*Mississippi Freedom Summer* pp. 15-23.
Scottsboro case:
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/scottsb.htm>
- M 1/30 The Litigation Strategy, the Brown decision, Powell Amendment
Read: Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, Ch. 9, “NAACP”
,Ch. 10 “1946-55” Ares
- W 2/01 White Defiance, and Montgomery 55-56.
[Eyes on the Prize; Awakenings 54-56]
Read: Kluger. “Arrival of the Superchief” “Emmet Till”, Ares.
- M 2/06 Civil Rights Act of 1957
Read: Mann, “Half a Loaf”, (*Walls of Jericho*) Ares
Evans and Novak, “The Johnson System”. Ares
- W 2/08 Little Rock 1957; Wallace vs. Judge Johnson
[Eyes on Prize: Fighting Back pt a]
Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage (1958 election)* pp. 68-96
Carter *Politics of Rage* pp. 96-109.
Tyson, “Robert F. Williams”. pp, 540-562. Ares
- M 2/13 Sit-ins,SNCC, and the 1960 Election
[Video: Eyes on the Prize: Ain’t Scared of Your Jails Pt a]
Read: Halberstam, *The Children* pp. 11-148.
Tyson, “Robert F. Williams” pp. 562-570.
- W 2/15 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
- M 2/20 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>

W 2/22 EXAM 1

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

M 2/27 Mississippi 1962 and the Kennedy Administration
[Eyes on the Prize: Fighting Back pt. b]
Read: McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 47-81.
Dittmer, *Local People* "Greenwood and Jackson" pp. 143-57. Ares
Greenwood Food blockade:
<http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis62.htm#1962food>

W 2/29 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).

M 3/05 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.

W 3/07 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.

M 3/12 to F 3/16 SPRING BREAK

M 3/19 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.
Whalen, *Civil Rights and the Presidency* 67-77.

W 3/21 Senate Filibuster, Final Passage, Freedom Summer
[Eyes on the Prize: Mississippi pt. b]
Read: McClymer, *Mississippi Freedom Summer* 177-224.
Mann: "An Idea Whose Time Has Come" pp. 406-432. Ares

M 3/26 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.

W 3/28 Johnson, and Goldwater 1964
Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage*, pp. 218-225.

| M 4/02 EXAM #2

SECTION III

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

W 4/04 Election Results 1964; looking toward Selma
Read: Carter, *Politics of Rage* 226-250.
Halberstam, *Children*, pp. 483-498.

M 4/09 Selma 1965
[(Eyes on the Prize Selma)]
Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* 250-263
Branch, *At Canaan's Edge* 68-194. Ares
Halberstam, *Children*, 499-517.

W 4/11 Voting Rights Act 1965
Read: Mann, Ch. 23 "We Shall Overcome".
Carter, *Politics of Rage*, Ch. 9

M 4/16 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
Carter *Politics of Rage* Ch. 10

W 4/18 Vietnam and the Election of 1968
Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* Ch. 11.

M 4/23 Renewing the VRA (1970)/ Election of 1972
Read: Carter *Politics of Rage* Chs. 12
Black, "Newest Southern Politics", *Journal of Politics*, Ares

W 4/25 The Changing Congress; Reagan and VRA
Read: Hood, Kidd, and Morris. 2001.
Graham, *Civil Rights and the Presidency* p. 136-149.
"The Key Issue: Constituency Effects and Southern Senators".
Legislative Studies Quarterly 26. Ares

Monday 5/7 10:30 a.m. Final Exam