

The Long Civil Rights Movement in 20th-Century America
AFAM 151/HIST 140
Tuesday, 1:10 – 4:00pm, CAAS Lounge

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3:00 – 5:00pm & by appointment

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Course Description

This course traces the development of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement over the course of the 20th Century. By exploring some of the major sites of protest, opposition, and resistance in African American history, we will begin to complicate traditional understandings of black liberation struggles. Who “counts” as a civil rights activist? What were their priorities? How did they imagine black freedom and equal citizenship? How did these events impact public life? What are the legacies of the movement? While it is impossible to cover the entire scope of the Civil Rights Movement in the 20th Century U.S., we will analyze a broad range of primary and secondary source materials. As a general goal, students should focus on the diversity of the African American freedom struggle, in an effort to expand the traditional narrative and scope that often defines the battle for equality.

The Long Civil Rights Movement in 20th-Century America is also a **Learning & Living seminar**. Students enrolled in this course live together in the same residence hall. Because students are living in close proximity to one another, intellectual discussions and collaborative learning extend beyond the classroom. This arrangement facilitates group assignments and projects, and allows for the growth of a strong community of students through daily interaction. Additionally, since this is a **First Year Initiative course**, emphasis will be placed on developing and improving skills in critical analysis, discussion, and writing.

Course Expectations

Course Website: There is a Moodle for this course. Make sure you have access to the site since copies of the course documents and readings are posted there, along with links to relevant websites and writing documents. New content will be added regularly. Remember to check Moodle and your email daily.

Class Attendance & Participation: Because this is a small seminar, class attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will have a detrimental impact on your final grade in the course. Likewise, your presence in the course is critical as it helps to establish a dialogue and rapport with your classmates. Thoughtful class participation will improve your grade in the course and will help you learn. Students should come to class prepared – having done the assigned reading and weekly questions. I expect you to be engaged listeners *and* participants. I strongly encourage each student to participate in the in-class discussion; you should also feel free to meet with me to discuss class participation strategies, if you are not comfortable speaking in class.

Late Paper Policy: An unexcused late paper will result in a full letter grade reduction. Extensions will be granted *only* in the event of emergency or illness and must be requested *before* the assignment is due. Students are responsible for providing an email from the appropriate administrative official.

Classroom Decorum: As a general rule, please show respect for your professor and your classmates. It is not courteous to be late or to walk out in the middle of class (varsity athletes should check their schedules and the syllabus for any possible conflicts). Cell phones should be placed on “silent” during class or turned off.

Honor Code: All students are expected to uphold the Wesleyan University Honor Code: www.wesleyan.edu/studenthandbook/3_honorsystem.html.

Course Requirements

Weekly Response Questions: Each week, you are responsible for submitting at least **three analytical response questions** based on some aspect of the assigned reading (upload to the Moodle). The questions are due no later than **10:00am** on **Tuesdays**. Your questions do not need to respond to *all* of the assigned materials for the week; however, they must critically engage *some* significant aspect of the required reading.

Film Journal: Over the course of the semester, you are required to watch several films outside of the classroom. You are also required to keep a film journal that documents your reaction to each film and analyzes how each film illustrates (or does not illustrate) the major themes of the course.

Papers: You will write three papers in this course – two short papers and one final longer paper. Please note: if you work with the writing tutor, you *must* acknowledge this in your paper.

Meetings: I encourage you to meet with me outside of class, especially if you have a question about your performance in the course, the discussion, writing, or research. Feel free to stop by my office hours or to schedule an appointment.

Writing Tutor: Each student is required to meet with the writing tutor, Kim Ingebriksen, for 10-20 minutes *before* each paper is due (October 4, November 8, December 16). Additionally, Kim will lead a group session on writing, and hold regular office hours throughout the semester.

Grading

Class Participation: 15%
 First Paper: 15%
 Second Paper: 25%
 Film Journal: 15%
 Final Research Paper: 30%

For details on my grading practices and expectations, please see the document at the end of the syllabus.

Required Texts

Texts are available for purchase at Broad Street Books. Additionally, students should feel free to purchase the books from other sources (alibris.com, amazon.com, half.com).

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual* (5th Edition, 2010)
The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader
 John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me*
 Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html.

Important Dates:

- **Every Tuesday by 10:00am:** At least three analytical questions based on the assigned readings.
 - You are not required to submit questions on the following dates:
 - September 6
 - October 4
 - October 25
 - November 8
 - November 22
 - December 6

- **Tuesday October 4:** First paper due at the beginning of class

- **Tuesday November 8:** Second paper due at the beginning of class

- **Tuesday November 22:** Bring the following to class:
 - Rough draft film journal
 - Brief description and outline for final paper (250 words or less)

- **Tuesday December 6:**
 - Film journal due at the beginning of class
 - In-class debate

- **Friday December 16:** Final paper due no later than 12:00pm

Class Schedule
(Moodle Documents Marked by **)

Week 1 (September 6): Course Introduction

No assigned reading
No response questions

Week 2 (September 13): Enduring and Resisting

**Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, pgs. 3-21, 28-33, 180-183
***Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)
**Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address”
**W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others”

Film week (check film schedule)

Week 3 (September 20): Great Migrations

**Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, pgs. 152-162
**Alain Locke, Excerpt from “The New Negro” (1925)
**Marcus Garvey/Universal Negro Improvement Association, “Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World,” (1925)
**Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” (1926)

Week 4 (September 27): Cold War Civil Rights

**A. Philip Randolph, “Call to the March” (1941) & “Why Should We March” (1942)
The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader, pgs. 64-81, 95-96, 103-106
**Paul Robeson, “Testimony Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities” (1956)

Film week (check film schedule)

Week 5 (October 4): Communities of Resistance

Eyes on the Prize, pgs. 37-45, 48-51, 57-60, 110-114, 119-122, 130-132
** Timothy B. Tyson, “Robert F. Williams, ‘Black Power,’ and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (Sep., 1998)

No response questions

FIRST PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (TUESDAY OCTOBER 4)

Week 6 (October 11): At the Forefront of a ‘More Perfect Union’

Eyes on the Prize Reader, pgs. 153-158, 160-165, 176-179, 611-613

**Danielle L. McGuire, “‘It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped’: Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, Is. 3 (Summer 2004)

Film week (check film schedule)

Week 7 (October 18): Navigating the Archives/Beyond Traditional Interpretations

John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me*

Week 8 (October 25): No Class – Fall Break

No assigned reading

No response questions

Week 9 (November 2): Black Power

**Excerpt from “An Interview with George S. Schuyler, Malcolm X, C. Eric Lincoln, and James Baldwin” (1961)

Eyes on the Prize Reader, pgs. 248-261, 282-286, 345-348, 529-538

**Excerpt from Elaine Brown, *Taste of Power*

Film week (check film schedule)

Week 10 (November 8): Guest Speaker – Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad

**“The Development of Black Identity at Wesleyan” (secondary source article)

**Primary source documents on “Black Studies”

No response questions

SECOND PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8)

Week 11 (November 15): Civil Rights & The Ballot Box

Eyes on the Prize Reader, pgs. 201-203, 341-344, 482-499, 631-651, 705-709

Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop*, 215-225, 264-268

Film week (check film schedule)

Week 12 (November 22): Journal Review & Final Paper Discussion

No assigned reading
No response questions

Please bring the following with you to class:

1. **Rough Draft Film Journal**
2. **Final Paper Description and Outline** (250 words or less)

Week 13 (November 29): Hip Hop Revolutions: A New Generation for Civil Rights?

Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, pgs. 7-19, 268-297

**Laurence Ralph, "As Soon as I Get Out Ima Cop Dem Jordans': The Afterlife of the Corporate Gang," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Vol. 17, Iss. 6 (2010)

Week 14 (December 6): Course Conclusion – In-Class Debate

Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, pgs. 357-379

**Cathy Cohen, *Boundaries of Blackness*, pgs. 1-26

**Primary source documents on Barack Obama

No response questions

FILM JOURNAL DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (TUESDAY DECEMBER 6)

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY DECEMBER 16 BY 12:00PM

**AFAM 151/HIST 140 Film Schedule
Fall 2011**

Films: Over the course of the semester, you are required to watch several films outside of the classroom. Each student is required to keep a journal that documents his/her response to each film. In addition to keeping track of your reaction, your journal should also analyze how each film illustrates (or does not illustrate) the major themes of the course.

Films marked with ** are available through Olin Library Course Reserve and through the Center for African American Studies (CAAS).

CHOOSE ONE FILM PER WEEK

Week 2 (September 13)

***Birth of a Nation* (1915; 190m)
Within Our Gates (1919; 78m) – CAAS only

Week 4 (September 27)

***A Raisin in the Sun* (1961; 128m)
***Miss Evers' Boys* (1997; 118m)

Week 6 (October 11)

***Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* (2003; 84m) – CAAS only
Revolution '67 (2006; 90m) – Olin only

Week 9 (November 2)

***Malcolm X* (1992; 202m)
***Panther* (1995; 123m)

Week 11 (November 15)

***Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed* (2004; 77m)
Furious Flower –Volume II: Warriors –The Black Arts Movement (1998; 111m) – CAAS only

Week 13 (November 30)

***Do the Right Thing* (1989; 120m)
***Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (2006; 61m)

GRADING PRACTICES

Papers

An **A or A-** thesis, paper, or exam is one that is good enough to be read aloud in a class. It is clearly written and well organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples, and, in the case of a research paper, is built on a critical reading of primary material.

A **B+ or B** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates many aspects of A-level work but falls short of it in either the organization and clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category are solid works containing flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A **B-** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer's independent argument because of weaknesses in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence. The paper may also suffer from poor mechanics – errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and citation format.

A **C+, C, or C-** thesis, paper, or exam offers little more than a mere a summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems. The paper may also suffer from errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and citation format.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between A and C- are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the **D or F** categories demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A **D** thesis or paper demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student's command of course, research material, and writing mechanics.

An **F** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates no competence in the course, research materials, or writing mechanics. It indicates a student's neglect or lack of effort in the course.

Class Participation

A student who receives an **A** for participation in discussion typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind. An 'A' discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

A student who receives a **B** for participation in discussion typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A 'B' discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

A student who receives a **C** for discussion attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion.

A student who fails to attend class regularly and is not adequately prepared for discussion risks the grade of **D or F**.

A Writing Lexicon*

When asked to describe academic writing in their fields, scholars and scientists use many of the terms defined below:

Thesis: A paper's central claim or promise.

In humanistic disciplines, the thesis is an arguable claim—i.e., an assertion someone could reasonably argue against; as such, it provides unexpected insight, goes beyond superficial interpretations, or challenges, corrects, or extends other arguments. In scientific disciplines, the thesis is a statement of purpose indicating that a particular investigation will be described and significant results presented—results that challenge standard opinions or methodology, or add to knowledge in the field.

Motive: Defined by Gordon Harvey as the “intellectual context” that's established at the beginning of a paper to suggest why the thesis is original or worthwhile.*

In both humanistic and scientific disciplines, the motive is typically an incongruity, puzzle, or surprise in the primary sources or data; and/or holes, limitations, or disagreements in the secondary literature. All good academic papers have a well-defined motive, which, according to Harvey, is “usually defined by a form of the complicating word ‘But.’”

Structure: A paper's line of reasoning, from beginning to end and also within and between paragraphs.

A successful structure is logical, coherent, and easy to follow. In humanistic disciplines, the structure allows for a dynamic development of ideas (is not merely a list of points or examples). In scientific disciplines, the overall structure is typically signaled with subheadings, such as Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion, and References; within each section, the structure allows for a logical development of ideas.

Key Words: A paper's main terms or concepts.

Key Words usually appear in the title, are defined early on (often with the aid of sources), and could be used in a library or Web search to locate the paper if it were published.

Methodology: The methods and strategies used to make an argument or conduct an investigation.

In humanistic disciplines, scholars typically don't discuss their methodology, except to describe an analytic framework, but social scientists and scientists always do, whether their projects are empirical or theoretical. One reason for the difference is that social scientists and scientists value reproducible *results*, which are dependent on methodology.

Evidence, or Data: Interpreted primary sources, empirical observations, or factual information.

In humanistic disciplines, evidence is usually quoted and analyzed. In scientific disciplines, data are visually summarized in labeled graphs and figures.

Analysis: The interpretation of sources.

In humanistic disciplines, analysis of primary sources is used to support claims, while analysis of other kinds of sources is used to advance the overall argument (for example, by providing a theoretical framework). In scientific disciplines, analysis of data leads to results (described in the Results section); the results are further analyzed for their larger implications (in the Discussion section).

Sources: The various materials used to develop an argument, including artifacts, information, and other people's ideas.

Primary sources are un-interpreted documents, artifacts, data, or information that, when analyzed, function as evidence. *Secondary sources*, also known as “the literature” or “the secondary literature,” are texts that make direct claims about the topic and may be used to establish a problem or question worth addressing, the standard opinion(s) on the topic, the standard way in which the problem or question is approached, or the current state of knowledge in the field. Other *relevant sources* are texts that relate indirectly to the topic and may be used to provide context or background information, key words or concepts, or points of comparison.

Sources appear in any of several forms: they may be *quoted* (if the style of writing is special or significant), *paraphrased* (if the style of writing is complex or jargon-laden), *summarized* (if the source is long and complicated), or *referenced* (if the source is briefly mentioned). In humanistic disciplines, sources appear in each of these forms. In scientific disciplines, sources are usually referenced or summarized, almost never quoted or paraphrased.

Orienting: Defined by Gordon Harvey as “bits of information, explanation, and summary that orient the reader.”*

The amount of orienting, or context, a writer provides depends on readers’ likely expertise in the subject. Even experts require some orienting; those with less expertise require more.

Citations: Bibliographic information that enables readers to track down a paper’s sources.

In academic writing, sources are always cited; the citation style employed (e.g., MLA, APA, CMS, CSE) depends on the discipline. A list of sources is called the Works Cited, Bibliography, or References, depending on purpose and discipline.

Conventions: The accepted standards of various elements of academic writing, such as paper format, voice, tone, diction, and citation style.

Academic writing in different disciplines follows distinctive conventions. Should a writer include a roadmap at the beginning of a paper or divide the paper up into conventional sections? Is the active or passive voice preferred? May a writer refer to him- or herself in the first-person singular? Is there a specialized language, or jargon, that the writer should use? Which citation style is appropriate? Writers can infer answers to these and other questions of convention by glancing through the most widely read journals in the field—for example, *PMLA*, *Social Science Research*, and *Nature*—or by reading excellent papers (by students or professionals) distributed by the professor or graduate student instructor.

Mechanics: Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and citation format.

Writing guides that focus on mechanics are readily available online, as are guides to the citation styles used in various disciplines. See, for example, “Resources for Writers” at <http://www.princeton.edu/writing/resources> and “Citing Sources” at <http://library.princeton.edu/help/citing.php>.

* Kerry Walk, director of the Princeton Writing Program, developed this lexicon with assistance from Judith A. Swan, assistant director Engineering in charge of Writing in Science and (WSE). The lexicon is indebted to Gordon Harvey’s “Elements of the Academic Essay” (Harvard University).