

Religion and The Civil Rights Movement
AFA 3930/Section 2452
REL 3938/Section2445

Fall Semester 2013
Tuesdays 4th period
(10:40 – 11:30 am)
Matherly - 0002
Thursdays 4 & 5th periods
(10:40am -12:35 pm)
Matherly Hall –0013

Format: Discussion & Research Projects
Instructor: Gwendolyn (Zoharah) Simmons, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Mondays: 1:30 – 2:30
 Wednesdays: 1:30 – 3:30
 & By Appointment

Course Description:

Humanities Credit is given for this Course

This is a Gordon Rule 6 Course

This Course will examine the African American Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s. We will also examine some of the historical events that made a Civil Rights Movement necessary for African Americans to secure a modicum of equal rights and fair play. We will investigate the men and women who were both leaders and followers and the organizations they formed. The Civil Rights Movement has been hailed as the most successful social movement in American History. It was a Movement that transformed the American South with its racial apartheid systems of government and institutions into a more racially equitable society offering some of the benefits of American life to its African American citizens and other persons of color who chose to live in this part of the United States. It also transformed this whole nation as institutional racism and a racial caste system operated in the North as well as in the South. We will explore the role of Religion in this African American led Movement, which galvanized people of all races in the effort to make this nation truly one of liberty and justice for ALL.

Course Goals:

- Review in brief the history of African Americans in the United States from the slavery period until the Civil War and the development of racism that was used to justify their enslavement and continued oppression after slavery ended through historical film documentaries.

- Explore (briefly) African American history from the Reconstruction Era to the early 20th Century and the development of the Jim Crow system of black-white apartheid in the South that persisted until the latter half of that century. Learn about the class underpinnings of this U.S. brand of apartheid through documentary films and readings supplied by the instructor.
- Learn about the critical role of the black church which was the foundation of the black resistance movements throughout this troubling history.
- Learn about Movements, like the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), CORE (Congress of Racial Equality, and others that led up to the launch of the modern day Civil Rights Movement.
- Gain knowledge of the details of the 1954 Montgomery Bus Boycott that launched the modern day Civil Rights Movement and the careers of Mrs. Rosa Parks, and the *Women's Political Action Committee* as well as of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who were both very critical for the success of this watershed event in our Nation's history.
- Acquire more knowledge of Dr. King and his philosophy of non-violence, the founding of the *Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)* that he led and the role of Miss Ella Baker (a largely unknown architect of the Civil Rights Movement) in its founding.
- Acquire knowledge of the founding and work of the *Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)* before and during the Civil Rights Movement
- Gain knowledge of the Student led 1960s Sit-In Movement that began in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960 and the students who led this Movement.
- Learn about the founding, movement philosophy and activities of the *Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)* and its leaders; James Foreman, John Lewis, Ruby Doris Robinson, Bob Moses, Stokely Carmichael and others. Learn how SNCC evolved from a movement whose symbol was two hands, one black and one white clasped together to one whose rallying cry became BLACK POWER! and its logo became the Black Panther. Examine the changes in thought that accompanied these symbolic and ideological conversions.
- Acquire knowledge of the Freedom Rides and the brave Riders –women & men, black & white - who risked life and limb to end segregation on interstate public transportation.
- Learn about the founding and work of the *Black Panther Party (BPP)*; assess the BPP's advocacy of the right to self-defense vs the non-violent resistance theology of Dr. King. Learn what enraged and frightened white Americas most about the BPP.
- Gain knowledge of the ideas and the roles of some of the other key players in the Civil Rights Movement, including: James Farmer, James Foreman, John Lewis, Diane Nash-Bevel, Ruby Doris Robinson, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hammer, Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Mrs. Victoria Gray, Bob Moses and others.

- Assess the short and long term impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the caste and class system in U.S. South and the whole of this country and its role in making the Presidency of Barak Obama possible.

Requirements: This is a reading and writing intensive research course.

- This Course meets the Gordon Rule # 6- Requirement of 6000+ words. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures that the students both maintain their fluency in writing and learn to use writing as a tool to facilitate and enhance your learning.
- To receive your **Writing Credit** you must receive **a grade of C or higher** as well as a satisfactory completion of the writing components of the Course

Hopefully this course will be fun, lively and engaging as we will be discussing some of the most critical issues that confronted this nation during the 1960s and 70s and are still facing us in the era of President Obama, the rise of the Tea Party, the Occupy and Dream Defenders Movements. Additionally we will focus on the role of racism in the history and legacy of America and its current role in the public policies of today. Hopefully you will find that the issues we will engage in this class will be of great interest in light of the Trayvon Martin killing and the acquittal of George Zimmerman for his death; the rise and fall of the Occupy Movement and the rise and development of the Dream Defenders Movement which some are comparing to the student movement of the 60s – SNCC.

Some of your work will be done in small research groups focused on a topic you will select by the 3rd week of class and continue working on throughout the term, which is explained below.

- 1) Attendance and **active** participation in your group and class discussions are important. Roll will be taken at each class after the first one. You are permitted two unexcused absences, after which your grade will be negatively impacted by additional unexcused absences. Such absences after the first two will lower your cumulative grade by 3 grade points. To be chronically late for class will also negatively impact your grade and can count as absences too. Leaving the class before it ends without cause and without notifying me in advance can be counted as an absence also. Therefore please let me know in advance if you will be late (and the reason) or if you need to leave class early.
- 2) **Four Reaction Papers** to assigned readings (6 pg. minimums equal 6000 +words) will be written during the course of the term (Reports on these readings will be made in class by an assigned person in each class and along with the instructor's comments on the readings will serve as the basis for our weekly discussions). The teacher will grade each paper and return it with comments and critique of your writing. Each student will be given the opportunity to re-write a paper that has less than a B grade. (A signup sheet for these reaction papers and presentations will be circulated at the 2nd meeting of this class.) The four reaction papers will count for **40% of your grade.**

- 3) **Small Group Projects.** Each student will participate in a small (2 or more persons) research projects on a major Civil Rights Organization, such as CORE, the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, BPP and/or key leaders in the movement such as, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hammer, Mrs. Rosa Parks, Diane Nash Bevel, James Forman, Stokely Carmichael, or some other topic related to the Civil Rights Movement that two or more people are interested in researching and writing about with the instructor's approval. Each group will make periodic reports in class on your findings; dates for these reports will be listed on the Course Outline. Students should post interesting info on the Sakai site for things you discover in your research or civil rights issues confronting us today for immigrants, gay and lesbian people, etc. for sharing with the class. If you have an idea for another group topic and there is interest, it can be added to the list.

Each group will prepare an **in depth final written research paper (10-12 pages)** at the end of the term on their organization, individual or Civil Rights topic that they did their research on. **Each individual member of the group is responsible for writing some specific subset of the overall project, (ten pages minimum). This can be combined with the others and bound or it can be turned in separately. This part of the report must be identified as each person's work and will be graded.** The group will make an oral presentation on your research at the Mid-Point of the Term and at the End of the Term with each group member preparing a written synopsis of your research to be distributed to the class at the time of the groups' oral presentations. Everyone will be asked to sign up for one of the groups at the 3rd meeting of the class and to hold the first meeting of their group at that time.

At the groups first meeting ,(3rd class) members of each group are to exchange telephone numbers and e-mail addresses as each group will need to meet periodically and to communicate regularly via e-mail. Also the groups will be given time to meet throughout the term during class time. This Project (the research, individual written segments {10 pgs minimum}, oral presentation with handout) will count for - **40% -(a substantial portion of your grade) in this class**

- 4) **A written 5 to 7 page book report** is to be written by each student on a book to be selected by each of you, preferably related to your group project. All book titles are to be submitted to me for approval. Additionally, an oral presentation {with a minimum two-page synopsis of the book review to be distributed to the class at the time of your oral presentation} is to be made. Guidelines for the book report will be e-mailed to each of you and posted on Sakai. The written book report plus your oral presentation with synopsis for the class will count for **20% of your class grade.**

In Summary, Grades will be based on the following:

- 1) Four reaction papers (6 pg. minimum) during the term. These four papers will be turned in for grading and will be returned accounts for **30%** of your grade. Additionally each student will select one of the dates on which they are writing a reaction paper to lead the class discussion on the assigned reading for that date. You will prepare a hand-out for the class or a Power Point Presentation on the assigned readings for that class period. Leading the class discussion with a hand-out or Power Point accounts for **10%**

- 2) Small group project on a selected title with each member having a specific component on which to write a 10 pg (minimum) paper and make oral presentation in class. 40%
- 3) Book Review (7- 10 pp) on book plus oral presentation with two-page synopsis for distribution to the class. 20%

Required Texts for this Class

Required texts will available at the UF Bookstore and perhaps others here in town. You may want to purchase your books on line as they are much cheaper even than the used books at the book store.

- 1). *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, by Aldon D. Morris, New York, The Free Press, 1984, ISBN 0-02-922130-7 pbk.
- 2). *In Struggle: SNCC & The Black Awakening of the 1960s*, by Claiborne Carson, Cambridge: Harvard U.P. ISBN: 0-674447271 pbk.
- 3). *Sisters In The Struggle: African Women in the Civil Rights – Black Power Movement* by V. P. Franklin & Bettye Collier-Thomas, N. Y.: New York University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8147-1603-2 pbk.
- 4). *Waiting 'Til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*, by Peniel E. Joseph, N.Y. : Henry Holt & Company, 2006. ISBN 0-8050-8335-9 pbk .

Recommended Texts that we will read chapters of:

- 1). *Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, And First Hand Accounts From the Black Freedom Struggle 1954-1990*, General Editors: Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding & Darlene Clark Hine, Penguin Books, 1991, ISBN 978-0-14-0155403-0 pbk. [We will read some material from this book that will be scanned and e-mailed.]
- 2). *Hands On The Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, edited by Faith S. Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, et al, Urban, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-252-0-7888-0 pbk. [We will read some material from this book that will be scanned and e-mailed.]

You can also select from one of the books below to write your Book Review on:

- 3). *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*, by Danielle L. McGuire, New York, Vintage Books, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-307-38924-4 pbk. [We will read some material for this book that will be scanned and e-mailed.]
- 4). *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*, by Manning Marble, 3rd edition, Jackson, Miss., University Press of Mississippi, 2007, ISBN: 1-57806-154-7 pbk. [We will read some material for this book that will be scanned, e-mailed and posted on Sakai.]

5). *Class, Race, & The Civil Rights Movement*, by Jack M. Bloom, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1987, ISBN: 0-253-20407-0 pbk. [We will read some material for this book that will be scanned, e-mailed and posted on Sakai.]

Additionally, we will view several documentaries including segments from the *Eyes on the Prize I* Documentary Series and others on Slavery, Reconstruction, & the early Jim Crow years that will enhance your understanding of the circumstances leading up to and during the Civil Rights Years. Viewing these films is a requirement for this class.

Students with disabilities:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me with your requests for specific accommodations.

Policy on Absences

Because of the importance of class attendance, **Roll will be taken at each class. Only two unexcused absences are permitted before it impacts negatively upon your grade. All unexcused absences above the first two will decrease your grade by 3 points. Chronic lateness can cause you to be recorded as absent for that day unless you have alerted me in advance that you will be late for a valid reason. Roll will be taken soon after class begins.**

Excused absences include:

- a). **Serious illness.** You must have a note from your doctor **written on her or his stationary** from the **University Infirmary or your private physician** saying that you were too ill to attend class on the **specific date (s)** that you missed. Also serious illness of a **close family member** (mother, father, child, sibling, grandparents) that requires your assistance **verified on a doctor's stationary will be considered as an excused absence.**
- b). **Death of a close family member** whose funeral or other service you attend that is certified by a letter from the funeral director or religious official who handled your family member's service. **This must be on official stationary from the funeral home or the religious official.**
- c). **Attendance and participation in university activities,** i.e. choirs, debating teams, sports teams, etc. Please inform the instructor at the beginning of the term of your membership in these activities and your expected days of absence. I need official documentation of your membership and confirmation from the university official advising the group of your scheduled absence on official stationary with a phone number. Also graduating seniors who have interviews for jobs, internships and the like will be excused with official papers confirming such meetings.

Please be responsible and let me know about other problems not on this list that might have caused you to be absent. Let's discuss any problems with your assignments early in term before they become big problems. Everyone should make an A in this class! I am here for you and want to be helpful in any way that I can. TALK TO ME AND LET ME KNOW IF THERE IS A PROBLEM! I WANT TO HELP!!!!

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