

History 2247

The Long Civil Rights Movement, 1861-???

Course Description

Most people think of the civil rights movement in the United States as a product of the 1950s and 1960s. In this class, we will explore the struggle for racial equality back to the beginning of the Civil War, when large numbers of slaves sought to secure their own freedom by fleeing to the Union lines. We will not focus on placing blame or offering praise, but on exploring the patterns of racial conflict and how and why they changed (and did not change) over time.

In class, through a combination of lecture and discussion, we will focus on the evolving (and often conflicting) ways historians, filmmakers, and other interested parties have analyzed and interpreted movements for civil rights since the Civil War. I will encourage you to think like historians: to examine primary and secondary documents and form your own interpretations of past events. In class, and in assignments throughout the term (described in detail below), you will learn the process of “doing history”: interpreting documents, synthesizing diverse perspectives, building historical arguments, writing good prose, and constructively criticizing and encouraging your colleagues’ interpretations.

Objectives and Outcomes:

Successful students in this class will learn to:

1. interpret (in writing) human experience in its spatiotemporal context;
2. use evidence to produce valid interpretations of historical events;
3. formulate academic arguments about history that use evidence from the past to support appropriate historical conclusions.

Readings:

All of the books below are available for purchase in the University bookstore and on reserve at Smith Library.

Stephen Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought To Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama*

Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*

Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer: The Savage Season of 1964 That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy*

Additional reading assignments will come from articles and book excerpts that I will make available on our class Blackboard site or through online sources. Readings will be posted on Blackboard and e-mailed to you every Friday for the following week.

Course Requirements:

1. Professional Engagement: All students in this class are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and professional manner. Your professional engagement in this class will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- a. Attendance:** In order to succeed in this class, you must be present at nearly all of the class sessions. Habitual absenteeism by any student negatively impacts the entire community involved with this project. Consequently, I have a strict attendance policy in my class. You are allowed three class absences over the course of the semester. The university makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences, and leaving class early or arriving more than 5 minutes late counts as an absence. After these three absences, you will receive a 1/3 of a grade penalty on your professional engagement grade for every additional absence. Attendance at all service learning sessions is mandatory unless you receive permission from me in advance. If this attendance policy will be a problem for you, come see me (once again, in advance). I will not consider explanations or requests for leniency after the fact.
- b. Participation:** Students are expected to be active participants in this course. This means you must complete all assignments in a timely and thorough fashion, and come to class prepared to engage your fellow classmates in a lively discussion. In addition, on a rotating basis students will be “on call,” which means they will produce questions for the day’s class discussions and assist me in leading those discussions. Your performance in the classroom will serve as the primary basis for your professional engagement grade.
- c. Professional Conduct:** I expect all students in this class to treat their classmates, me, and anyone else who becomes involved with the class in a mature and respectful manner inside and out of the classroom. We will be discussing sensitive at controversial issues in this class, and I want our classroom to be an open and safe space for voicing opinions and wrestling with challenging ideas. If a comment in class upsets you, I ask that you come talk to me about it as soon as possible and we will address your concerns in an appropriate manner. I encourage all of you to come talk to me outside of class as a means of processing the class readings and discussions; doing so will positively impact your professional engagement grade.

Professional engagement also means turning off all handheld electronic devices for the duration of our class periods; if students fail to do so, I will require everyone to drop such devices at the front of the room at the beginning of class. As a general rule, I will not allow the use of laptops in class; if you have a particular reason why you need to

use your laptop, you may ask for permission. Holding private conversations during the class is also unacceptable. Students who violate these standards of behavior will receive a significant penalty in their class participation grade.

Outside the classroom, professional conduct means treating all university and community members with respect. One particular area in which professionalism has emerged as a problem for students in previous classes is in communication through e-mails. When addressing class-related e-mails to me or to other men or women who are not your peers, please address the person by their title (Dr. Ringel, Dean Stoneking, Mr. or Ms. Smith) and be sure to spell their name correctly. You should follow this practice even if your correspondents do not. If the e-mail is requesting their assistance in writing or in person, please give them a reasonable amount of time to fulfill the request, recognizing that they have multiple other obligations beyond working with you. When dealing with me, requests that are not made in such a timely fashion will not be honored, absent exceptional circumstances. For more suggestions on e-mail etiquette in a classroom context, see <http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>.

2. **Quizzes:** Students will take weekly online quizzes in order to ensure that they are keeping up with and assimilating the material. I will include the ten highest grades from these quizzes as part of their grade for the course.
3. **Writing Assignments:** Students will complete three take-home essay assignments, each of which will require them to write an approximately 1000-1250 word answer to a question I will assign. The assignments will be due on **February 13th at 5pm, March 24th at 9 am, and April 26th at 9 am**. Students will have the opportunity to rewrite the first two assignments provided they follow established revision procedures. The rewrite on the first assignment will replace the original grade; the rewrite on the second assignment will be averaged with the original grade. There will be no opportunity to rewrite the final assignment.

Students who prefer to write an independent research paper in place of the first two writing assignments may have the opportunity to do so. Please come see me by January 23rd if you wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

I expect my students to be able to construct coherent arguments and to express themselves in clear, grammatically correct English. If you struggle with writing, I suggest you contact the HPU Writing Center, located on the fourth floor of Smith Library. The Writing Center provides writing assistance for students at any level

of study – from freshman to graduate – at any stage in the writing process, from invention through revision. The Writing Center staff will be available in a variety of locations around campus during various hours throughout the day, Monday through Friday. Go to <https://highpoint.mywconline.com/> to make an appointment. Appointments can only be made through the online portal. Appointments will be available starting January 19, 2015 for the Spring 2015 semester.

Writing Center tutors do not proofread or edit students' papers *for* them, but they do work *with* students to help them develop strategies for improving their writing in light of their respective assignments, instructors, and writing styles. For more information, contact interim Writing Center Director, Dr. Karen Summers, at ksummer0@highpoint.edu or (336) 841-9348.

- 4. Optional Oral History Assignment:** In addition to the required assignments listed above, students may also have the opportunity to complete an optional oral history assignment. This assignment would be a great way to improve your grade while learning about the civil rights movement from a more personal perspective. More information on this assignment will be forthcoming shortly.

5. Grading and Assessment:

The final grade will be computed from a weighted average of the individual grades you earn for professional engagement, written assignments, and exams.

The course requirements will be weighted as follows in determining your final grade for the course:

1 st Writing Assignment	20%
2 nd Writing Assignment	25%
3 rd Writing Assignment	25%
Quizzes	10%
Professional Engagement	20%

6. The Fine Print

- a. This syllabus is a road map for this class but it is not set in stone. I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus with proper advance notice given to you.
- b. You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade.
- c. All papers are due at the times stated below. You must submit papers electronically. All responsibility for technical problems such as e-mails not received by me lies with you. Late papers will automatically be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (the first day begins at the time they are due and weekend days count) unless you have written documentation from your advisor, an academic Dean, or from University medical services. Computer problems are **never** an acceptable excuse for late work.

- d. Students are responsible for checking their High Point University e-mail addresses regularly for information regarding this course. Failure to check this e-mail address is not an acceptable excuse for missing notifications about changes in assignments or deadlines for this class.
- e. If you have a question about a grade you receive on a paper, test, or for the course, please come to my office hours or make an appointment. I will not discuss grades over the phone or e-mail. However, I am happy to discuss questions about the course material via e-mail.
- f. Academic Honesty: The work you submit for this course should be completely and solely your own. This means that any and all quotations from the words and thoughts of others must be appropriately acknowledged in your assignments. To do anything less is stealing. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please talk to me about them in advance. I will be happy to help you sort through any confusion. Any evidence that you have failed to follow these rules will be immediately and thoroughly investigated, and any violations of the honor code will be submitted to the Honor Court. Be forewarned: I consider cheating to be a very serious and utterly avoidable offense. Expect no leniency from me in cases of suspected cheating/plagiarism.
- g. Students with Disabilities: Students who require classroom accommodations due to a diagnosed disability must submit the appropriate documentation to Disability Support in the Office of Academic Development, 4th Floor Smith Library. A student's need for accommodations must be made at the beginning of a course. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Class Schedule

Jan. 14	Introduction
Jan. 16	Interpreting Black History (readings on Bb)
Jan. 19	NO CLASS- MLK Day
Jan 21-23	Emancipation and Reconstruction
Jan 23	Last date to commit to research paper
Jan 26--Feb 2	The New South
Feb 4- 11	The Jim Crow South
Feb 13	1st essay due at 5 pm
Feb 13-27	The Great Migration

Feb 27	Optional 1st essay rewrite due at 5 pm
Mar 2- 6	The Great Depression
Mar 9, 11 & 13	Spring Break- No Class
Mar 16-23	Origins of the Postwar Civil Rights Movement
Mar 25- April 1	The 1950s
April 1	2nd essay due at 5 pm
Apr 3 & 6	NO CLASS
Apr 8-22	The Peak of the Postwar Movement: 1960-1965
April 15	Optional 2nd essay rewrite due at 5 pm
Apr 24-29	Black Power and Post-Movement Culture
May 6	Final Exam Period, 8-11 am 3rd Writing Assignment due at beginning of exam period