

# History 19-01P (29954) The Civil Rights Movement

3 hours, 3 credits

**Term:** Spring 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Debra L. Schultz, Assistant Professor

**Department:** History, Philosophy, and Political Science

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**“Ordinary people can do the most extraordinary things.”**

--Dorothy M. Zellner, civil rights movement veteran, former staff member, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC—pronounced SNICK).

## Course Description

To many people, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s may seem like ancient history. However, recent events suggest that the racialized past is very much present in U.S. society: police shootings of unarmed African Americans; Dylan Roof’s attack on African Americans in their South Carolina church; white supremacists marching in Charlottesville, Virginia and killing counter-protester Heather Heyer; and heated debates over whether to take down Confederate monuments. The country is still grappling with legacies of slavery, the Civil War, Jim Crow segregation, racial violence, and unfinished civil rights agendas. As Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative suggests, racial bias in the criminal justice system, including racial profiling and mass incarceration, reflects the persistent influence of what he calls the “myth of racial difference.” Scholar Michelle Alexander argues that mass incarceration is “The New Jim Crow.” You will read her work this semester.

In our history class, we will use the civil rights movement as a case study in how ordinary citizens challenged this country to live up to its democratic ideals. The learning objectives for this course are to be able to explain the strategies of the major campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement; the grassroots leadership roles of women, students, and local southern people; the role of national organizations; the major legislative victories for civil rights; and the movement’s limits and legacies for today’s issues.

This class will use textbook essays, primary sources, documentary film, music, discussions, free-writing, formal writing in reader reflection assignments, and group projects. The skills you will practice are critical reading; analysis of primary and secondary sources; college-level writing; collaboration; research; and participation in a group documentary film project.

## Useful Information Sources:

1. *New York Times*. All CUNY students have free digital access to [the New York Times](#).



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- Scholars and veterans of the civil rights movement have created online resources to document the movement that are excellent for research, including [Tougaloo College's Civil Rights Movement Veterans](#) and [the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](#).

## Grade Requirements:

Students will be graded on their contributions in class, on all written assignments, and for participation in the class documentary film group final project.

### *Active Participation:*

Points	Grading
20 points	Attendance, Reader Reflection Papers, In-Class Comments, Quizzes, Participation in Group Brainstorming and Projects
20 points	Mid-Term
60 points	Final Exam/Group Project

### *Extra Credit Opportunities*

Throughout the semester, I will make suggestions for extra credit assignments and you are welcome to email me with your own proposed ideas. For example, you can watch the new documentary about James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*, and write a two-page film review. In order to get extra credit of 5 points, I must receive your essay/paper **no later than Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> (after Memorial Day weekend)**.

### *Grading Approach*

You can calculate your final grade yourself, and convert it to a letter grade using simple math and the letter grade allocation from the student handbook, reprinted below:



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Number Score	Letter Score
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
66-69	D
00-65+	F

## Course Policies

- 1. Disability Services:** It is the policy of Kingsborough Community College and of this instructor to provide all reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a physical, psychological, or learning disability, please contact the Kingsborough Community College Access-Ability Services (AAS) located in room D205
- 2. Commons Site, Blackboard, & Email:** A copy of the syllabus and all assignments and course documents will be posted on our Commons Site. It is extremely important that you get logged into the site as soon as possible so you don't miss out on the class activities. Weekly quizzes will be conducted on Blackboard. I will email the class through Blackboard's email function, so as soon as possible, be sure that you know how to use Blackboard and how to access the email that is linked to it.
- 3. Courtesy and Civility:** Students must treat each other and the facility with respect. Any electronic devices are for classroom purposes only- our textbook is digital and we will be using technology in class, so feel free to bring your tablet or laptop, but remember that during class, it is a tool for learning about course content, not Facebook/Snapchat/etc. Make the accommodations necessary for your best learning, but please do be considerate of the instructor and your fellow students- so far as it is possible, try to refrain from leaving the room during class, keep food and drink to a discreet minimum and clean up after yourself. Some of the topics we will cover may be traumatic for different students because of their personal experiences. If you anticipate or are experiencing any such difficulties with course materials or assignments, please email me as soon as possible so an alternative assignment can be arranged.
- 4. Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is of the utmost importance. Cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including academic and disciplinary sanctions (i.e. failure or suspension). This includes, but is not limited to, having other people do your coursework, buying prepackaged



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or custom answers to papers, tests, or assignments, and working with other students on class projects when not specifically permitted to do so. Keep in mind, if you can find a place to buy a paper/answers on the Internet, your professors probably can find the same place, because we have the Internet too. Please familiarize yourself with [the official KBCC policy](#).

5. **Support Services:** Take advantage of the many, many opportunities for support in your development as a student available at Kingsborough. Some offices on campus that may be helpful to you include (but are not limited to):
- [Tutorial & Academic Support Center](#) (L-605, x5118),
  - [Single Stop](#) (V-231, x5411)
  - Food for Thought Campus Food Pantry- T-4 216
  - [Counseling Services](#) (D-102, x5975)
  - [Health Services](#) (A-108, x5684)
  - [Women's Center](#) (M382, x4700)
  - [Other Student Services](#)

## Topical Course Outline

**Syllabus and schedule subject to change!**

We will use a variety of sources of information, which, whenever possible, will be included as a link below. The required text for this course is [U.S. History](#) edited by Corbett, Jansen, and others. It is a free digital download provided by OpenStax.org.

Spotify Civil Rights Movement Music Playlist: **CRM Profdschultz**

***Week 1 (March 5<sup>th</sup>): Introductions: What are Civil Rights? Why is it Important to Study this History Now?***

Watch [Writing History's Next Chapter](#).

- What are civil rights? What is the relationship of the Civil Rights Movement to U.S. democracy?
- How has the study of history changed in the last 50 years? Are those changes related to the Civil Rights Movement?
- What are some of the key concepts that the civil rights movement introduced?
- Why will we look at major campaigns of the civil rights movement? What were the goals, tactics and strategies it used to bring about social change?
- What online tools will we use in this course? (demonstrations of Blackboard, Openstax, SNCC Digital Gateway, etc.)



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**Week 2 (March 12<sup>th</sup>): Contexts: How did slavery begin and end in the U.S.—or did it?**

**Reflective Writing #1**

Read Openstax History Text PDFs: [Chapter 12 “Cotton is King”](#) and [Chapter 16 “The Era of Reconstruction”](#)

- How did slavery become institutionalized in the colonies and the United States? Did women experience slavery differently? How did enslaved people resist their condition?
- Why was the Civil War fought? How and why did President Lincoln free the slaves? What does it mean to be free?
- What challenges did the former slaves and the country face after Emancipation?
- What was the purpose of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments?

**Week 3 (March 19<sup>th</sup>): Why did the U.S. retreat from Reconstruction and allow Jim Crow to develop?**

Read: [Hannah Grabenstein’s “Inside Mississippi’s notorious Parchman prison”](#)

Read [Ida B. Wells, “Lynching Our National Crime”](#)

Read Richard Wright’s essay, [“The Ethics of Living Jim Crow”](#)

- What happened to Black political participation during Reconstruction? What forms did the backlash against Reconstruction take?
- What is the ideology of racial difference and white supremacy?
- How did law and custom help shape the Jim Crow era?
- What roles did African Americans and whites play in segregated life?

**Week 4 (March 26<sup>th</sup>): Who were the forerunners and long distance runners of the civil rights movement?**

**Reflective Writing #2**

**No class during the first week of April for spring break**

Read [U.S. History Section 28.5, The African American Struggle for Civil Rights](#)

- Why do historians now talk about the “long civil rights movement?”
- When and why did the NAACP come into being? Is it surprising that whites co-founded the organization?
- What was the role of the Great Migration and the Double V campaign of World War II in jumpstarting the Civil Rights Movement?



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- How did Medgar Evers become an early leader in Mississippi?
- How did people like Ella Baker and Amzie Moore lay the foundations for future civil rights activities in the South?
- What are forerunners, mentors and allies?

**Week 5 (April 9<sup>th</sup>): The 1950s: The Brown Decision, Emmett and Mamie Till, The Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Read [U.S. History Section 28.5, The African American Struggle for Civil Rights](#)

- Why was the Brown decision so crucial? Did it end segregated schools immediately?
- Why was Emmett Till killed? What happened to his killers? How should we remember Emmett Till today? Should the Smithsonian Museum display his casket?
- Can we see familiar historical figures like Rosa Parks and Dr. King through new eyes?
- How did women before Rosa Parks lay the groundwork for the Montgomery Bus Boycott? How did Rosa Parks become Rosa Parks?

Read about the implications of the Recy Taylor case today on historian Danielle McGuire’s blog, [Recy Taylor and How the Civil Rights Movement is Rooted in Resistance to Rape](#).

**Week 6 (April 16<sup>th</sup>): How did the strategy of nonviolent resistance become the hallmark of the 1950s and early 1960s Civil Rights movement?**

**Midterm**

- What was the difference between the 1959 Nashville sit-ins and the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins?
- How did the sit-ins lead to SNCC’s founding? What was Ella Baker’s role and belief about the need for SNCC?
- What was the culture of SNCC? What is the idea of the “beloved community?” How did music play an important role in the Movement?

Watch film “Freedom Song” in class to illustrate the culture of SNCC.

**Week 7 (April 23<sup>rd</sup>): How did the 1961 Freedom Rides attempt to force implementation of new Civil Rights laws?**

**Reflective Writing #3** based on watching the documentary *Freedom Riders* on You Tube.

Read [Introduction and Chapter One in Debra Schultz, Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement](#):



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- What were the Freedom Riders seeking to accomplish? Were they prepared for what happened? Did Diane Nash make the right judgment call after the first bus was attacked?
- Why did they send arrested Freedom Riders to Parchman Penitentiary? How did women experience life in that segregated prison and in prison in general during the Civil Rights Movement?
- Why did white volunteers risk their lives to go South?

***Week 8 (April 30<sup>th</sup>): Why was 1963 the Best and Worst of Times for The Civil Rights Movement?***

Read brief section from text, [Rey Taylor and How the Civil Rights Movement is Rooted in Resistance to Rape](#)

Watch the documentary on “**The Children’s Crusade**” in class (40 minutes)—available free upon request from “Teaching Tolerance,” a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

- Why did Dr. King criticize liberals in “Letter From a Birmingham Jail?” Why did he have to rely on children to demonstrate?
- How do we understand resistance when we study Bull Connor and what happened to Medgar Evers, JFK, and the 4 girls from Birmingham in 1963?
- What does “the Children’s Crusade” teach us about how social change happens?

***Week 9 (May 7<sup>th</sup>): What sacrifices were made in the 1964 Freedom Summer?***

**Reflective Writing #4 (after you watch the documentary, “Freedom Summer”)**

Read [Rita Bender’s address at Mt. Zion Church in 2014—on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#)

- Why was Mississippi so resistant to change? What was the strategic goal for Freedom Summer? What were the three main programs of Freedom Summer? Who were Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman? What role did Fannie Lou Hamer play?
- What were the main provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act?
- How do we look at the sacrifices made by the Civil Rights Movement today?

***Week 10 (May 14<sup>th</sup>): How did Selma capture national attention in 1965 and what is the status of the Voting Rights Act today?***

- Why were there three different attempts to march in Selma?
- What was the purpose of the final march? What did the march achieve?
- Who was Viola Liuzzo and why did she get involved?



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- What role did LBJ play in passage of the Voting Rights Act? What is its status now?

Watch the SPLC documentary on Selma in class (40 minutes)

***Week 11 (May 21<sup>st</sup>): How were Black Power ideas introduced by malcolm x, the lowndes county freedom party, and the black panther party?***

***Reflective Writing #5***

Watch [Eyes on the Prize Part 7](#)

- How did Malcolm X's ideas shift the dynamics of the civil rights movement?
- What does the idea of self-defense mean in this context?
- How did SNCC, Stokely Carmichael, and Lowndes County, Alabama introduce the language of Black Power?
- How did the Black Panther Party present itself publicly? Do you think its 10-Point Program was/is reasonable?

***Week 12 (May 30<sup>th</sup>): What are today's Civil Rights issues?***

**No class on Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>— Memorial Day**

- What issue or situation would you be willing to protest and go to jail for?
- Which organizations are on the front lines of civil rights issues today?

***Week 13 (June 4<sup>th</sup>): Review/reflect/celebrate--last class***

**KCC schedules final exams from June 6-12—be on the lookout for announcements**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

**First Assignment: Complete the following questions before the next class, using your current address (even if you are not a US citizen). Here are two good resources for following New York politics and for figuring out how to register to vote. The Fall 2018 elections will determine the course of this country for a long time to come. VOTE if you can!**

[https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York)

<https://www.vote.org>



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President of US: \_\_\_\_\_

Your US Senators: \_\_\_\_\_

Your US Representative &  
District \_\_\_\_\_

Your Governor: \_\_\_\_\_

Your State Senator &  
District: \_\_\_\_\_

Your State Representative &  
District: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Local Government Executive and Representative Officials (ex: Mayor, Borough President, City Council Member, Community Board)

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If you are not eligible to vote because you are not a citizen, find a friend, family member or classmate who is eligible and use their information to do this assignment

- I. If you are eligible, find out if you are registered to vote.



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- II. If you are not registered, do so now.
- III. If you think you won't be able to vote in person, get an absentee ballot.
- IV. Find out where your polling place is.
- V. Sign up for reminders to vote.

Your Local Polling Site:

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When are the Fall 2018 Elections?

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