

**S Y L L A B U S**  
**AFROAM/HIST 628: HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT - Fall Semester 2004**

TR 9:30-10:45 p.m.  
Professor Plummer  
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Office: 5111 Humanities Building  
263-1845, 263-1800

**Course Description.** This course focuses on the civil rights movement led by African Americans in the United States. It treats the historical background to movement emergence, including industrial and demographic transition, agricultural change in the South, the rise of the liberal coalition, and the impact of World War II and the Cold War on race relations. It examines civil rights litigation in the 1930s-1950s and the key events and consequences of the civil rights decade, 1954-1964. Black radicalism is explored, as well as civil rights in the urban North, the policies of the federal government, the impact of world affairs, and the role of gender. The course probes the fight against racial discrimination as it evolved in the 1970s to 1980. The activities and life stories of individual participants as well as broad historical forces are considered. The purpose of this course is to acquaint upper-level undergraduate and graduate students with the events and issues of the civil rights movement. The reading load normally consists of five books, or four books and a photocopied reader. There are two examinations. Two short papers are required. There is also an attendance requirement: students missing more than 8 classes without good reason cannot get a grade higher than C in the course.

**Organization:** Class meetings will center on lectures and presentations, discussion, and videos. Most of these will address assigned texts or scheduled topics. Scheduled topics provide broad chronological and thematic continuity and supply background material for students' own independent investigation. Students are encouraged to use the Social Action Collections at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, which includes one of the finest civil rights collections in the country. Wisconsin also has one of the most extensive collections of newspapers, including the African American press. The course offers an excellent opportunity to use these resources.

**Classroom policies.** The more controversial a subject, the more we need to respect one another's viewpoints. Class discussions can be lively and intense, but they must be diplomatic. Thoughtfully criticize an idea; don't attack the person expressing it. Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers while in class and enter and leave the room quietly at the beginning and end of the session.

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**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on the following:

- Midterm: This will consist of an in-class exam (mixed essay, multiple choice, and short-answer). 25 percent of the grade.
- Two short papers (seven pages each). (See below for details) Each is 25 percent of the grade.
- Final examination: (Mixed essay and short-answer take-home). 25 percent of the grade. Grades are not curved on exams.

What the grades mean:

**A**(93-100) - Reports that are thoroughly researched, knowledgeable and reflect mastery of the sources used. Thesis papers that have a well-defined, logically developed argument and that take into account possible counter-arguments. Papers that show strong evidence of original thinking. Papers that are soundly structured, skillfully written, without grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors and that are careful about citations. For exams, excellent knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. Indication of superior knowledge, ability to reason on the fly, and writing ability on essay questions.

**AB** (85-92) - Reports that are well researched but not exhaustively so, and that indicate solid understanding of the sources used. Thesis papers that are well argued and do not simply mirror the conclusions of other authors. Papers

that are clearly written and that identify all sources used and cited, but are not outstanding as far as writing style or insights are concerned. A minimum of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For exams, good knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. For essay sections, demonstration of sound knowledge, capacity to sustain an argument, and the ability to write clearly and well spontaneously.

**B (80-84)** - Reports that have covered some but not most of the bases in drawing factual information out of sources. Reports that have moderate organizational problems. Thesis papers that make a good argument but do not provide evidence to support all of it, or that may not be logical or well organized throughout. Slippage with regard to citations and grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For exams, good knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. Essays show an adequate grasp of the subject but arguments are not strongly supported, and writing is adequate but not impressive.

**BC (77-79)** - Reports that do not cover enough factual ground to support the second thesis paper. Reports that have serious structural or organizational problems. Thesis papers with weak arguments or adequate arguments that are weakly supported. Papers with compositional problems. Inadequate attention to grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For exams, borderline knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. Essays that don't fully answer the question, try to answer another question, or that are not clearly written.

**C (70-76)** - Reports that clearly indicate through inaccuracies or lack of material that research was not adequately done. Writing problems serious enough to confuse a reader. Thesis papers that do not present a real argument, or that do little to support an argument. Extensive citation just to fill up space with poor documentation of the citations. Little or no attention to grammar, punctuation, or spelling. For exams, limited knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. Essays skirt the questions asked, are not well structured, show evidence of writing difficulties.

**D (69-65)** - Reports that do not contain much information and that are organized and written poorly. Thesis papers with no thesis. Extensive difficulties with writing and documentation. No attention to the paper's appearance and extensive grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For exams, deficient knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple choice sections. Essays indicate lack of basic knowledge, have serious organizational and compositional problems.

**F (64)** - Failure to carry out the minimum requirements of the papers or exams as detailed above. Often a product of absence.

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#### **DUE DATES:**

- Optional submission of first draft for Paper 1- Oct. 7, 2004
- Midterm - October 14, 2004
- Paper 1- October 28, 2004
- Optional submission of first draft for Paper 2 - Nov. 16, 2004
- Paper 2 - Dec. 9, 2004
- Final examination - December 17 2004. Exam due by 4:45 p.m.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Attendance will be kept for each class session. The reason is to protect the interests of students who diligently come to class and help create a community by their presence. It is based on the idea of a classroom as a social entity and education as a commitment. Anyone can have up to 8 unexcused absences ( i.e., one month of classes) without penalty. Students who are members of teams, or involved with University-sponsored activities that may occasionally take them away from class, should provide a schedule of their absences to their professors. Students with constant schedule conflicts, or those who have difficulty getting up for morning classes, should make a decision about whether to take the course. Those otherwise missing more than 8 class sessions cannot earn more than a C in the course.

**Required texts:**

Jeanne F Theoharis and Komozi Woodward (eds), *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*

Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*

Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965*

Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*

Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*

Books for purchase are at the Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman St. All texts owned by campus libraries and the course reader are on reserve.

**Contact with professor:** My office is located in 5111 Humanities Building. The telephone number is 263 1845. Messages can be left with the History Department, phone no., 263 1800, or with the Afro-American Studies Department, phone no. 263 1642. E-mail is better. My E-mail address is [bplummer@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:bplummer@facstaff.wisc.edu). If you have an E-mail account, feel free to make use of it to contact me if you do not find me in my office. There will also be a class e-mail list to which you will be automatically subscribed if your registration is in order and you have a students.wisc.edu e-mail address. If you haven't received any mail from the class list by the end of the second week of the semester, please let me know. If you are having an e-mail problem and you have a hotmail account, you may need to change your settings. Students should also feel free to use the list to communicate with one another and share information about the course. E-mail is not a substitute, however, for class attendance and participation.

The course also has a web page on the Learning Support Services server:

<http://hum.lss.wisc.edu/bplummer/hist628/index.html>

**Detail on papers.** Paper 1 is a descriptive and factual report on an aspect of the civil rights movement. The emphasis is on providing factual information. Paper 2 draws on--and supplements--that factual information, but the accent in Paper 2 is on constructing an argument about how those facts should be interpreted. Historians often call a paper that focuses on making an argument a "thesis." Here are two examples of paper sets that treat aspects of movement history:

Example 1:

Report--"The Chicago Freedom Movement, A Descriptive History"

Thesis Paper and its argument--"The Chicago Freedom Movement." *Argument:* Tactics used by activists in the South had little success in large Northern cities.

Example 2:

Report--"A Factual Study of the Deacons for Defense"

Thesis Paper and its argument--"Deacons for Defense." *Argument:* In spite of opposition from "moderates," the Deacons for Defense made it possible for the 1966 James Meredith march to proceed in peace.

Students will be provided with a list of paper sets they can choose from. Those wishing to develop their own are free to do so after clearing the topic with the professor. Bear in mind that these papers are short, so topics should not be overly broad. For all the papers, think practically. Are you choosing a subject who can be researched and written within the time available to you? Is your topic meaningful?

**SOURCES:** Make use of the University's excellent libraries and the State Historical Society library. Consult online databases like JSTOR, Academic Full search, ProQuest, and WilsonWeb. (If another borrower has a book you want, consider the underutilized Madison Public Library. The downtown and Sequoya branches have surprisingly good collections on contemporary issues.) Think twice about inter-library loan, however, the time involved might slow you down.

**CONTENT:** A good short paper quickly identifies the subject matter, and the issue or problem being addressed. Both papers should have introductions and logical conclusions. For Paper 1, the introduction summarizes the report's

content and lays out the scope of the subject, making clear what is being addressed. Paper 2 has a thesis statement that makes an argument that you then back up with facts. In this paper, critical analysis and careful interpretation are critically important. Paper 2 should be internally logical. Plausible arguments should flow consistently from one point to another in coherent paragraphs. The conclusion should clearly resolve the issues raised in the body of the paper. Consider working from an outline that will help guide your structure.

**FORMAT:** The paper should be typed, double-spaced. Every page should have text from top to bottom. Margins should be no wider than 1 inches on any side. Type (fonts) should be conventional: 9 to 12 points. Standard citation conventions (MLA, Chicago, etc.) apply. Either footnotes or parenthetical references can be used, but be consistent, don't use both. If you want to directly quote a source in your text, use quotation marks and indicate the source of the quotation. Any ideas not your own should also be identified as borrowed. The purpose of grammatical and spelling conventions is to make your meaning clear. It is to your advantage to proof-read papers for typing, grammar, and spelling errors. Papers with serious errors or a lot of errors will be downgraded.