

History 300-0-32
The Civil Rights Movement
Spring 2020

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50
and Friday discussion sections

Instructor: Kevin Boyle
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Office Hours: Thursdays 7:30 to 9:00 PM and by appointment, all via Zoom
Teaching Assistant: Kathryn Harvey

Course Description and Expectations

History 300 explores the African American civil rights movement from the solidification of segregation at the turn of the twentieth century to the mid-1970s. By stretching the movement's history beyond its traditional boundaries, the course will emphasize the power of the American racial regime and the complexity of the movement that tried to topple it. We will be paying particular attention to the various strands of African-American political activism that ran through the movement, from the NAACP's emphasis on equal rights before the law to the Nation of Islam's call for racial separatism. We will also trace how the movement broke the nation's racial regime – and how portions of the regime endured.

The course has two components. Tuesday and Thursday sessions will be devoted to lecture, Friday sessions to discussion. Both components are of critical importance – there is no text book to fall back on for missed material -- so attendance is required. I'll begin the course by giving the lectures live at the assigned course time. With luck that will work. If we run into problems with the technology I may have to rethink that plan.

Students are expected to have the required reading completed before each class meeting, to fully engage in class discussion, to complete written assignments by the due date, and to present their work in clear, precise, vigorous, and engaging prose.

Finally, a word about our unusual circumstances. I will do my best to give you the class you deserve. But there will be rocky passages along the way – for all of us. I appreciate your understanding of the difficulties that are likely to arise. I promise to be understanding too.

Required Readings

James Goodman, Stories of Scottboro (New York: Pantheon, 1994)

Barbara Ransby, Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

Danielle McGuire, 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 (New York: Knopf, 2010)

Peniel Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America (New York: Henry Holt, 2006)

There are also a number of book chapters and documents listed in the lecture schedule. These are required reading as well. In the reading schedule I've noted whether they are available on-line or through the library's electronic reserve system, which can be accessed through the course's Canvas website.

The books are available for purchase at the Norris Bookstore and on Amazon.com.

Course Requirements

Final grades will be determined by five components: three very brief response papers (10 % in total); three essays, the first two worth 15 % each, the third worth 35%; and participation in discussion (25 %).

The response papers will be based on the course readings. The three essays will draw on readings, lecture material, and class discussion. The first essay is due on Canvas on April 30. The second essay is due on Canvas on May 26. The final essay is due on June 11. Please consult the reading schedule for the due dates of the response papers.

Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of personal or medical emergency. Should you have such an emergency you must notify me **BEFORE** the assignment is due. I reserve the right to ask for written evidence of the emergency. It is not acceptable to hand in paper assignments via email. Be sure to keep track of all deadlines.

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the university's rules of academic integrity. Those rules are available at <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html>.

Any suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university's disciplinary system immediately.

Please do not text, email, tweet, or spend time scrolling through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram during the class.

Students who require special arrangements due to physical or learning disabilities should contact

the instructor as soon as possible.

Lecture and Reading Schedule

- April 7 Introduction
- April 9 Building the Racial System I
Reading: W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk, chapter one.
Lillian Smith, Killers of the Dream, chapter one.
- April 14 Building the Racial System II
Reading: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in Georgia,” available on line.
Warning: Graphic Violent Content
: Grace Hale, Making Whiteness, chapter four
- April 16 In the Pale, Still Morning
Reading: W.E.B. DuBois address to the Niagara Movement, 1906
: Call for a National Conference to Address Racial Inequality, 1909
: Declaration of the Rights of the Negro People of the World, 1920
: Marcus Garvey, “African Fundamentalism,” 1925, all available on line
- April 21 The Radical Edge
Reading: Goodman, Stories of Scottsboro, part one
- April 23 Justice
Reading: Goodman, Stories of Scottsboro, part two
First Response Paper Due on Canvas.
- April 28 The Popular Front
Reading: Goodman, Stories of Scottsboro, parts three and four
- April 30 War
Reading: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapters 1-4
First Essay Due on Canvas
- May 5 Peace
Reading: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapter 5
- May 7 With All Deliberate Speed
Reading: Richard Kluger, Simple Justice, chapter 19
- May 12 Mrs. Parks

Readings: McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street, prologue, chapters 1-3
Second Response Paper Due on Canvas

- May 14 Suffer the Children
Readings: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapter 6-7
: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, introduction and chapter 1
- May 19 The Quickening
Reading: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapter 8
: McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street, chapters 4-5
: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, chapter 2
- May 21 Revolutions I
Reading: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapters 9-10
: McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street, chapters 6-7
: Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," available on line.
- May 26 Revolutions II
Reading: Ransby, Ella Baker, chapters 11-12
: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, chapters 3-5
Second Essay Due on Canvas
- May 28 The Splintering
Reading: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, chapters 6-9
- June 2 Pushing the Limits
Reading: McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street, chapter 8.
: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, chapter 10
- June 4 Hitting the Limits
Reading: Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, chapter 11
Third Response Paper on Canvas

JUNE 11 FINAL ESSAY DUE ON CANVAS NO LATER THAN 2:00 PM