

Fall 2020
Professor Plummer
bplummer@wisc.edu
Class meets Tues, Thurs 11:00-12:15 a.m.
My office hours are W 11 a.m.; Thurs, 9:30 a.m.

AAS: HIST 628: HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

SYLLABUS

Information and rules during the present COVID-19 Pandemic

We will not be holding all our sessions in person. (See the course calendar on p. 6 below.) For those that are, there are some rules to follow. While on campus all employees and students are required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason. If you cannot wear a face covering for such reasons, you should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center. If you are requesting an accommodation for some other reason, you should contact the Dean of Students Office.

I will not teach unless everyone in the classroom is wearing a face covering and will cancel an in-person meeting if someone in the classroom refuses to immediately comply with this rule.

If you get sick:

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. If you get sick or need to isolate or quarantine, contact me to make plans for how I can work with you to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

This course is cross-listed. You may take it for either Afro-American Studies Department credit or History Department credit. Both fulfill the ethnic studies requirement. The 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 and the key events and consequences of movement insurgency. It explores black radicalism, 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 evolving fight against racial discrimination. It considers the activities and life stories of some individual participants as well as broad historical forces. Students will learn how the events and issues of this social and political movement changed the face of contemporary America. While social movements have developed around the demands for justice made by other groups, this course focuses on the African American experience. The growing body of work on civil rights history has multiplied our information on the subject and introduced numerous interpretations of the past. This course will examine diverse approaches, probe how historians have used and interpreted sources, and develop an appreciation for the variety of scholarship that they have produced.

Learning outcomes include: Familiarizing students with the history of the African American freedom struggle; fostering knowledge about the broader social context in which that movement has unfolded and continues to evolve; making students aware of some of the rich resources for

research available to them; exploring present-day controversies about civil rights and their relationship to the past; sharpening analytical and writing skills.

Why an ethnic studies requirement? (This section is based on the University's statement on ethnic studies.) Ethnic studies courses are conscious of how society has valued certain histories and discounted others. They illuminate how these differences have promoted disparities in contemporary American life. Ethnic studies courses aim to apply critical thinking skills and encourage students to harbor a healthy skepticism towards knowledge claims about race and ethnicity, whether in the form of media, political, or popular representations. As part of this process, the ethnic studies requirement should challenge students to question their own assumptions and preconceived notions on these topics.

Self-awareness is linked with awareness of and empathy towards the perspectives of others. Ethnic Studies courses give students an opportunity to think about identity issues, including their own identity, as well as the connections they might have to people "outside" their focused social circle. Ethnic Studies courses endeavor to be relevant to students' lives outside the classroom by enhancing students' ability to effectively and respectfully participate in a multicultural society. This participation can include being able to discuss race and ethnicity with a colleague or friend, for example, or recognizing inequities that may occur in interpersonal or institutional contexts.

Course organization: This 3-credit course meets in-person and online twice a week for two 75-minute sessions. The University expects students to spend nine hours a week on it. This includes in-class meeting sessions, time spent reading and writing, and online time where you are doing nothing else (no multitasking!), office hour visits with the professor, and test taking.

Class meetings center on lectures and discussion by both students and the professor. Scheduled topics provide broad chronological and thematic continuity and background material for students' own independent research. Students are encouraged to use digitized archival collections at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, which includes one of the finest civil rights archives in the country. The library also has a collection of digitized African American newspapers. The course offers an excellent opportunity to use these resources, and special consideration will be given to papers that use them *well*.

Required texts:

Books:

1. Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*
2. Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*

Articles:

3. Carol Anderson, "A History of Disfranchisement," from *One Person, No Vote*
4. Adina Back, "Exposing 'the Whole Segregation Myth,'" from Theoharis and Woodward, ed., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*
5. Interview with Ella Baker
6. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
7. Philip Randolph's speech at the March on Washington, 1963
8. Malcolm X speech, "Message to the Grassroots"

Items #3-8 will be on Canvas.

Evaluation: Grades are based on the following:

Three short-answer and multiple choice quizzes

A 5-page primary source paper

A topic, outline, and bibliography for the final paper

A final paper
There is no final exam

How performance is assessed: (Participation is taken into account but is not being graded)

A 93-100) - Papers and exams demonstrate excellent knowledge, reasoning, and writing ability. Papers are soundly structured and informative.

AB (85-92) - Exams evince superior factual knowledge, capacity to sustain an argument, and write clearly and well. Papers are well organized and based soundly on evidence.

B (80-84) – Exams characterized by good knowledge and understanding of the material studied. Papers are informative but do not provide enough evidence to support all the claims made or may not be well put together throughout.

BC (77-79) Exams indicate borderline knowledge. Essays may not fully answer the question, try to answer another question, or are not clearly written. There may be slippage regarding citations, and grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

C (70-79) – Exams indicate inadequate grasp of information. They may skirt the questions asked, lack structure, or show evidence of writing difficulties. Papers may be insufficiently researched and have serious structural or organizational problems. Not enough attention is paid to grammatical, punctuation, and spelling issues.

D (69-65) – Deficient exams indicate poor knowledge of facts. Papers do not contain much information and lack organization. Difficulties with writing—including grammatical, punctuation, and spelling—and with documentation are apparent.

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

I don't curve grades.

DUE DATES:

Oct. 1 - Quiz

Oct. 13 – Primary source paper - 5 pages

Oct. 22 – Quiz

Nov. 3 – Topic, outline, and bibliography for the final paper

Nov. 24 - Quiz

Dec. 17 – Final paper – 10 pages

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 assess an idea; don't attack the person expressing it. In the past I have banned laptops. Under the present situation, you may need to use a laptop, tablet or phone while in the classroom, because I will not be handling paper copies of materials. However, you still need to silence ringing and protect yourself from distractions.

Attendance: Because of the pandemic, past rules regarding attendance for this class have been changed. Attendance is required and a record will be kept for each class session. However, absences will not be penalized. An attendance record is needed in the event that someone gets sick and contact tracing needs to be done. Therefore it is important that you be honest about what days you were present in the classroom.

Disabilities. Students with a disability should contact the professor as soon as possible to arrange for alternative testing accommodations or any other special needs.

History resource: The History Lab is a History Department resource center where PhD students will assist you with your history papers. You can use it even if you are not taking the course for History Department credit. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Sign up for a consultation online: <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

Contact with professor: I will hold office hours online on Wednesdays at 11 a.m.; Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. E-mail me to set up a Blackboard appointment. There is a class list. You are automatically subscribed to it if you are registered. The list address is afroamer628-1-f20.wisc.edu

Please check e-mail and Canvas regularly, since face-to-face communication will generally not be available. Students should also feel free to use the list to communicate with one another and share information about the course.

AAS/HIST 628: PAPER GUIDE

This is a general handout about the papers. Additional information will be provided later.

Paper 1. In this paper you will analyze two primary source documents, excluding readings #5-8 above. A primary source is any document, media, or artifact that was created by a first-hand witness or participant in a historical event at the time. In contrast, a secondary source is a book, article, or media item that is about historical events but was created later.

The paper should answer these questions about both sources: Who created them? What was the intent? What were the circumstances that led to their creation? What viewpoint(s) do they express? What impact did they have? How useful are they for assessing the history of which they are part? How have they influenced the way that specific events have been understood? What limitations do they have?

This 5-page paper should be typed, double-spaced. Every page should be numbered except for the first. Most word processors will do this for you. Every page should be full. Margins should be no wider than 1.25 inch on any side. Type (fonts) should be conventional: 9 to 12 points. This paper does not require endnotes or footnotes or a bibliography.

Paper 2. The writing process for this paper will begin with a title that states the topic, an outline and an annotated bibliography of 6 to 10 items. The outline includes a thesis statement, your description of what you plan to assert as the main argument. An annotated bibliography is a list of references to which you have added brief descriptions. The annotated bibliography is a preliminary step to writing the term paper. Completing it means that you have selected some of the references that you will consult and that you have read enough of the material to be able to describe the contents in a few sentences.

Writing. Something attracted you to the topic you chose. What was it? What do you plan to say about the topic? What is its importance? How does it fit into the context of civil rights history? What do you want to say about it? How tight is your writing? Do your paragraphs have topic

sentences? Do you use evidence from your research to back up your claims? Are transitions within and between paragraphs smooth? Are sentences grammatical?

Sources for your topic. Do not use Wikipedia or other encyclopedia articles for anything other than finding books and articles. You probably know by now that not everything on the Internet is a credible source, but a lot that's out there is, in fact, valuable. The Cornell University Library has some useful tips for evaluating sources at <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/criticallyanalyzing>. Appropriate sources include primary source material, films, and pertinent books and articles.

Citation. Generally, in research papers, you should quote from a source

- * to show that an authority supports your point
- * to present a position or argument to critique or comment on
- * to include especially moving or historically significant language
- * to present a particularly well-stated passage whose meaning would be lost or changed if paraphrased or summarized

You should use your own words when

- * what you want from the source is the idea expressed, not the specific language used to express it
- * you can express in fewer words what the key point of a source is

Either footnotes or parenthetical references can be used, but be consistent, don't use both. If you use the parenthetical system, make sure you have included your bibliography.

There is really good information about all this at: <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/>

Format: This 10-page paper should be typed, double-spaced. Every page should be numbered except for the first. Most word processors will do this for you. Every page should be full. Margins should be no wider than 1.25 inch on any side. Type (fonts) should be conventional: 9 to 12 points. Standard citation conventions apply. That means that you can either use footnotes or the parenthetical system. You don't need to include a bibliography if you are using footnotes.

History Dept. Lab. Consider the History Lab, as described on the course syllabus. Unlike the Writing Center, the History Lab will correct spelling, grammar, and diction as well as give you useful advice. It doesn't matter whether you are taking the course for History credit or Afro-American Studies credit. You can make an appointment for a one-on-one consultation online at <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>



A freedman casts his first vote, 1867



People still waiting to vote after the polls closed, Richmond, VA 1964

