

**CES 335/History 313**  
**Black Freedom Struggle**  
**Fall 2009**

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. David Leonard	<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:djl@wsu.edu">djl@wsu.edu</a>
<b>Phone</b>	335-6854	<b>Office Hours</b>	MW 12:15-1:15 and by appointment
<b>Office</b>	Wilson 117		

Introduction and Course Description

The civil rights movement is spoken about in abundance within both popular and academic discourses. Most often cited as the moment in which America dealt with its racist past, which lead America toward the eventual election of Barack Obama, the dominant narrative of the civil rights movement is limited by its reliance on a model of progress, its focus on individuals, and its adoption of “great men” theories. In other words, the narrative of the black freedom struggle has been co-opted in a number of spaces as to provide legitimacy to hegemonic understandings of the American Dream and its corresponding paradigm of colorblind equality. In embracing such an approach, the complexities and realities of the black freedom struggle, in terms of the traditions of organizing (versus activism), the resistance of American institutions, and the inner battles are all lost upon students of this era. The task of this class is, thus, to look at how the civil rights movement and the Black power movement impacted the trajectory of the United States especially as it relates to the rights of the African American community. While this will lead to a discussion of the legendary historical events and figures -- Montgomery Bus Boycott, Greensboro, Freedom Summer, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party -- of the black freedom struggle, it will also result in conversations about organizing and the daily efforts to secure constitutionally-guaranteed rights to all Americans as well as those basic human rights that have often been denied to African Americans and other communities of color. For example, we will not only look at the Montgomery Bus Boycott and its significance within the movement, but the tactics used by African Americans there crucial during their organizing efforts. Likewise, we will examine that which led up to the March on Washington, and look at how people organized voter registration drives in Mississippi.

The theme of organizing, and the “participation” of numerous individuals, often unknown Southern blacks and African Americans students, will thus be at the forefront of this class. This should lead to a very different understanding of both the civil rights movement, as the names, faces, and actions of people like Ella Baker, Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hammer, E.D. Nixon, Diane Nash, James Bevel will be put into focus with this class. In order to recognize and learn from the past, we must broaden our scope of inquiry to include all, and not just those people/organizations/ actions, which appeared on the front pages. The importance of the black freedom struggle rests not simply with understanding the legacies of the movement but rather with the amazing contributions

and daily struggles carried out by inspiring people who fought for their rights and that of others.

### **Key Realities**

It is important that everyone arrives in class with an open-mind, a critical gaze (a willingness to go beyond common assumptions) and most importantly a willingness and desire to read and write. Without writing and reading skills (as well as a desire to engage in those elements of learning) this class will be a struggle. For those students who want to improve these skills, this class will facilitate that process. For those who want a class that does not require thinking, that does not mandate completion of the reading, that treats attendance as optional, that does not require focus and attention during class, and that is in all ways easy on the mind, you may want to look elsewhere.

### **Required Readings**

- *The Civil Rights Movement* by Bruce J. Dierenfield: Longman (July 21, 2008)
- *Origins of the Civil Rights Movements* by Aldon D. Morris: Free Press (September 15, 1986)
- *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965* by Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, Barbara Woods: Indiana University Press (October 1993)
- *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* by Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar: The Johns Hopkins University Press (May 5, 2005)
- *Remembering Malcolm: The Story of Malcolm X from Inside the Muslim Mosque* by His Assistant Minister Benjamin Karin (Paperback) by Benjamin Carroll & Graf Pub (December 1992) -- FIX

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Attendance**

You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and participate in an informed and consistent manner. PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARRIVE LATE OR LEAVE CLASS EARLY, OR SIMPLY DECIDE TO TAKE A BREAK DURING CLASS, YOU MAY BE GIVEN A PARTIAL ABSENCE. Anything less will not be tolerated and will result in problems in this class. After two absences (excused and unexcused – in terms of absences resulting from university-sanctioned activities, please see me) each missed class will lead to a 5% deduction (per day) from your overall grade, up to 15%. IN TOTAL, YOU WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCUMULATE 5 ABSENCES (FIRST 2 FREE, WITH EACH ADDITIONAL 3 RESULTING IN A 5% DEDUCTION PER ABSENCE). YOUR 6<sup>TH</sup> ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC “F” FOR THE COURSE. This may seem punitive but being present, being engaged, and otherwise contributing to the success of the class is in my mind the most important element of this class. Attendance usually will be taken at the beginning of class, so lateness will

potentially lead to an absence for that day. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away.

### **Participation (10%)**

While much of class will be dedicated to course lectures, I hope each and every class will elicit discussion, debate, and critical engagement. As such, in order for this class to be productive you will need to come to class each and every day prepared to discuss the material. This requires more than simply doing the reading (WHICH IS ESSENTIAL), but arriving at class with a readiness to discuss the issues for that day. Recognizing that silence is not always a result of a lack of interest or preparation, I envision participation along many lines. Participating in class not only consists of talking, but also includes **listening** (please do not talk while others are speaking), interacting with your peers, and contributing to our classroom energy (body language, being engaged – no newspapers, no playing “rock, paper scissors,” or cell phones). It also may include in-class work and your effort/contributions/success exhibited toward those potential activities (this could include quizzes)

There are three additional ways to enhance your participation grade and contribution to class:

- 1 You can e-mail me comments or questions prior to class
- 2 You can hand me a note at the beginning of class that asks specific questions (or relays comments) about readings, a previous lecture or film – I will do my best to incorporate into that day’s class
- 3 You can also enhance participation grade by reading the daily newspapers in print or online and bringing the class’s attention to relevant articles/developments

### **Participation Portion of grades based on following:**

- 9-10 Points: Active participant in class in all regards; enhances and invigorates the class
- 7-8 Points: Participates and contributes regularly; does not push class conversations in new directions but often contributes
- 5-6 Points: Contributes on occasions but does so at basic level; engaged, but not active
- 3-4 Points: Rarely contributes, but present; shows limited effort and interest in class
- 1-2 Points: Does not contribute, but physically present for most part; brings little energy and generally demonstrates little interest or effort within class
- 0 Points: Detracts from overall success of class because of disinterest, disengagement, negative attitude, rudeness, non or disruptive/destructive participation, etc.

### **Scrapbook (10%)**

You will be asked to keep a “scrap book” for the class, which should either tell the story of a particular event or movement or chronicle the entire struggle for black freedom. Like any scrapbook, the purpose here is to tell a story, to convey a narrative, and to educate through images, words (e.g. quotes from various activists and organizers), and other historical artifacts.

### **Exams (50%)**

There will be two exams for this class, both of which. They will be in-class exams, consisting of objective questions, short answer identifications, and potentially short essay questions. In totality, the exams will ask you to reflect on and analyze readings and class materials in both short answer and essay-type questions. An objective question and identifications will ask to recount specific historical information provided from class lectures, course films, and most importantly course readings. A short essay might ask you to discuss the motivations and tactics that guided nonviolent direct action.

### **Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will also be in-class, and will consist of multiple choice questions, identifications, short-answers, AND a cumulative essay question.

### **Assignment Schedule**

<b>Due Date**</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Grade Value</b>
<b>September 30, 2009</b>	<b>EXAM #1</b>	<b>25 points</b>
<b>October 26, 2009</b>	<b>EXAM #2</b>	<b>25 points</b>
<b>December 2, 2009</b>	<b>Scrap Book</b>	<b>10 points</b>
<b>December 15, 2009</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>30 points</b>
<b>Everyday</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>10 points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

100-93: A  
92-90: A-  
89-87: B+  
86-83: B  
82-80: B-  
79-77: C+  
76-73: C  
72-70: C-  
69-67: D+  
60-69: D  
59 and Below: F

## Course Outline

- 8/24 Introduction**
- 8/26 Background and Context**  
Reading: Morris, pp. ix-16; Dierenfield, pp. 1-11 and Document #1
- 8/31 “Origins of the Movement”**  
Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 15-40 and Document #2-4
- 9/2 “Beginnings and Confrontations”**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 17-39; Ogbar, pp. 37-41  
Film: *Eyes of the Prize*
- 9/7 No Class**
- 9/9 & 9/14 Montgomery Bus Boycott**  
Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 43-53; Morris, pp. 40-76; Crawford, et. al, pp. 71-84  
Film: *Eyes of the Prize*
- 9/14 Southern Christian Leadership Conference**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 77-99 and pp. 120-138  
Film: *Brother Outsider*
- 9/16 Citizenship Schools**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 100-119; Crawford, et. al., pp. 169-182
- 9/21 Cooperation and Conflict: Organizational Relationships**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 120-138; Crawford, et. al., pp. 99-120
- 9/21 Movement Halfway Houses**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 139-173; Crawford, et. al., pp. 145-168  
Film: *Integrated in all Respects*
- 9/23 Ella Baker and “Participatory Democracy”**  
Reading: Crawford, et. al., pp. 51-70 & pp. 183-202  
Film: *Fundi*
- 9/28 Nonviolence and Direct Action**  
Reading: Morris, pp. 174-194; Ogbar, pp. 41-52;
- 9/30 EXAM #1**

- 10/5**            **1960: The Student Sit-In Movement**  
 Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 54-62; Morris, pp. 195-228  
 Film: *Eyes of the Prize*
- 10/7**            **Freedom Rides**  
 Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 63-77; Ogbar, pp. 52-60; Dierenfield, Document #9-10  
 Film: *Eyes of the Prize*
- 10/12**          **Birmingham Movement**  
 Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 78-95; Morris, pp. 229-274; Dierenfield, Document #8  
 Film: *Eyes of the Prize*
- 10/14**          **The Organizing Tradition**  
 Reading: Crawford, et. al., pp. 1-26
- 10/19**          **Fannie Lou Hamer & the Mississippi Movement**  
 Reading: Crawford, et. al., pp. 27-50 & 203-218  
 Film: *Freedom on my Mind*
- 10/21**          **Freedom Summer**  
 Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 99-124 and Document #12-15  
 Film: *Freedom on my Mind*
- 10/26**          **EXAM #2**
- 10/28**          **Black Power**  
 Reading: Dierenfield, pp. 127-135; Ogbar, pp. 1-10 & pp. 60-67
- 11/02**          **The Nation of Islam**  
 Reading: Ogbar, pp. 11-36 and Karim, pp. 3-56
- 11/04**          **Malcolm X**  
 Reading: Karim, pp. 59-105  
 Film: *Malcolm X: Make it Plain*
- 11/09**          **Malcolm X, contd.**  
 Reading: Karim, pp. 109-165
- 11/11**          **No Class**
- 11/16**          **Malcolm X, contd.**  
 Reading: Karim, pp. 169-206; Dierenfield, Document #11
- 11/18**          **Black Power and the Decline of the Civil Rights Movement**  
 Reading: Ogbar, pp. 123-158 and Dierenfield, Document #16-17

**11/23 & 11/25 No class**

**11/30 The Black Panther Party**

Reading: Ogbar, pp. 69-92 and Dierenfield, Document #18-19

Film: *What We Want, What We Believe*

**12/2 Power to the People**

Reading: Ogbar, pp. 93-122

**12/7 The Movement Grows**

Reading: Ogbar, pp. 159-190

**12/9 The Struggle continues**

Reading: Ogbar, pp. 191-206; Dierenfield, pp. 136-137

**12/15 December 15, 2009, 3:10-5:10**

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and shifts in class needs. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made in your absence.

### **Course Policies**

Although I hope to redefine the classroom as a space of discussion, debate and intellectual transformation, even as we dedicate a good portion of each and every class to lectures, there are specific key guidelines that should guide your experience within the classroom. We can certainly expand on these, but the following represents rules/guidelines for our class, ones that are in part based on experiences in previous classes:

- 1 READ, READ, READ . . . .
- 2 **Turn cell phones off upon arrival to class – Please note that if I see your cell phone/other handheld device (not if it rings) whether because you’ve decided to text message, check scores, show friend a picture or listen to messages, you will receive a zero for participation for that day.**
- 3 **Given problems in the past, there will be little tolerance for text messaging in class. If you are seen to be texting in class, you will receive a 0 for that day’s participation. After the third instance during the semester you will a 2% deduction from your overall participation grade, with additional 2% for each successive infraction**
- 4 YOU ARE ASKED NOT TO GET UP DURING CLASS BECAUSE YOU FEEL THIRTY OR HUNGRY
- 5 Arrive to class on time (and that doesn’t mean put down your stuff before class begins and then leave for 25 minutes)
- 6 Sleeping or otherwise “tuning out” is not acceptable; class requires engagement and participation from all members of the community. You should not come to class with the sole intent of sucking up the classroom oxygen while you sleep. **If you fall asleep in class, you will be woken up once (in front of the entire class), and upon a second “offense” you will**

### **receive an absence for that day**

- 7 If you use class time to read the newspaper or do work for other classes, you will receive an absence for that day
- 8 Be respectful of others, in terms of engaging and listening to other's analysis, commentaries, points of discussion
- 9 Reflect on social location
- 10 Respect and understand rage
- 11 Don't be rude (egs – Offer a comment and then while someone is responding walk out of the room to get something to eat; walking out of the room to get something to eat CONSTANTLY; doing other work or engaging in rock-paper-scissors while in class; disrespect the privacy of the class by gossiping about issues or discussions of class)

### **Cheating**

DON'T CHEAT! IT IS PATHETIC, UNNACCEPTABLE, AND DISRESPECTFUL TO YOUR COLLEAGUES, THE MATERIAL, HISTORY, YOURSELF, ME, AND THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION. DON'T DO IT! What constitutes cheating: Copying a colleague's exam answers; sharing your answers with a classmate; bringing an unauthorized materials into an exam; or turning in any work that is not yours, whether that means copying and pasting from a website, using someone else papers, copying a friend's work, etc. If someone else said it, wrote it, thought it, etc. give them credit – DON'T STEAL THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF OTHERS. What you turn in should be your work, with your analysis, your prose, and your voice, spirit, soul, and effort. Your failure to follow these basic instructions, to respect the classroom, each other, history; in choosing to cheat, to take the easy route, to be in the business of pretending to learn, think, analyze, and otherwise be a student, is not acceptable in any regard. What this means is that if you cheat, and I conclude that it is intentional, you will receive a "0" for that assignment and you will be reported to student conduct. While I am not in the business of policing any decision to violate the sanctity and purpose of the classroom leaves me with little choice in this regard. If you are unfamiliar with WSU policy regarding cheating and confused as to what constitutes cheating (plagiarism), please consult with WSU Student handbook.

### **Students with Disabilities**

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please go to the Disability Resource Center (DRC) during the first two weeks of every semester to seek information or to qualify for accommodations. All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC, located in the Administration Annex Bldg, Room 205. To make an appointment with a disability counselor, please call 335-3417.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Many classes at the university level approach teaching in traditional terms (professor lectures, students listen and write down as much as possible in preparing to regurgitate information during exams). There is little room to think, discuss, analyze, and critically engage. It is my hope that we are able to deviate from this traditional approach, emphasizing critical thinking and collective discussions. This does not mean that I will not lecture as I will and you are encouraged to both

take notes and critically think about/engage the material, all while asking questions and inspiring discussions. Although I will ask questions throughout many class periods (note, there will be ample lectures in class), It is my hope that you initiate and foster discussion with the entire class. It is also my hope that we utilize the knowledge we generate in class through lectures, from films, and elsewhere as the basis of critical thought, debate, and otherwise challenging self and others.

A critical pedagogical approach, however, requires preparation and effort – to make it work you cannot passively use the class and wait for others to inform you. Take initiative and accept this responsibility as the failure to accept this role will negatively impact the classroom and invariably lead to increased lecturing. The following definition, from Henry Giroux, establishes some additional points of departure:

“The critical question here is whose future, story, and interests do the school represent. . . Critical pedagogy argues that school practices need to be informed by a public philosophy that addresses how to construct ideological and institutional conditions in which the lived experience of empowerment for the vast majority of student becomes the defining feature of schooling. Critical pedagogy attempts to:

1. “Create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplines and creating interdisciplinary knowledge.
2. Raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in schools and is concerned about how to provide a way of reading history as part of a larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are shaped around the categories of race, gender, class, and ethnicity.
3. Reject the distinction between high and popular culture so as to make curriculum knowledge responsive to the everyday knowledge that constitutes peoples' lived histories differently.
4. Illuminate the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and others use to produce particular cultural practices.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Guiding Principles<sup>2</sup>**

The classroom is a unique environment where we can come together to promote learning and growth in each other; it is a space that has the potential to be transformative along a number of lines. In order to make the best use of the classroom space it is important that we have some guidelines to frame our conversations. These are not rules or demands (as opposed to the above), but guidelines/suggestions that should ground each and every discussion, as well as your own reading, fostering a respectful and safe learning environment, that challenges all of us to reflect on our own analysis, positionality, privileges and racial/gender/class/nation/sexual ethos.

1. Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.perfectfit.org/CT/giroux2.html>

<sup>2</sup> Adopted from guidelines used by Dr. Lynn Weber and Dr. Patti Verstrat

forms of oppression exist.

2. Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. is that we are **all systematically taught misinformation** about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
3. **Read in an engaged way**, recognizing the ideology and politics imbedded in every text. Make notes in the margins – “**dialogue**” with the text, using exclamation points, questions or issue complete statements, questions or critiques. Ask yourself: what is significant in this piece, what elicits anger/sadness/laughter, but go beyond emotional responses to be prepared to make specific statements about the reading!
4. **Be aware of your own subject position, ideologies, privileges and prejudices.** Recognize your own relationship to institutions of power and structures of domination. This can help you make specific connections to the reading, class discussions and other forms of feedback. Rather than proclaiming, “This article sucks,” or “You are wrong,” you can get more specific about the basis and origins of your reaction. For example, rather than engaging in a discussion about homosexuality with statements of disgust and contempt, it might be better to state: “From my position as a white male, who was raised with the teachings of the Bible, I find homosexuality a bit troubling, especially in the context of the arguments made by \_\_\_\_\_ on page \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. Agree to **combat actively the myths and stereotypes** about your own “group” and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain. Read and listen with recognition of other people’s subject position and ideologies.  
**LISTEN TO OTHERS!**
6. Reflect on our **choice of language in and outside of class**, striving to rid our vocabulary of racist, sexist, homophobic words, phrases. Recognize that your choice of words reflect your own ideological position and may bother others (think about how others may react to your words – not just content, but the way we chose to express those thoughts)
7. **Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion.** If members of the class may wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside the classroom, they can preface their remarks with a request that the class agree not to repeat the remarks. Also, think about your language (including body language), posture, etc. contributes to safe/empowering or disempowering/unsafe learning environment.
8. **Take Risks:** I want this class to be a space where everyone should feel comfortable enough to disagree with each other. This needs to be safe space so reflect on the ways you engage others with your own pronouncements and how you react (with words, body language) to their statements – react privilege and positionality
9. **Read and dialogue in a politically engaged way.** Racial dynamics, for our purposes here, reflects **power**, and relationship to systems/sources of power. Power dynamics are contextual (situational) and relational. You may have power in some spaces and lack it in others, all depending on social location. Ask yourself these questions while reading and discussing within the classroom space: Is the analysis leaving anyone relevant out? For what reasons? Where is this analysis coming from? Whose knowledge base is being explored or forwarded?
10. **Speak with evidence** and “facts” on your side. Despite the popular pronouncements that there are no wrong answers, there are incomplete, problematic, superficial, surfaced, and unsubstantiated answers. Reflect on your own answers and the basis of your conclusions

11. **Go beyond an either/or dichotomy. Incorporate a both/and approach** rather than an “either/or.”
12. **Recognize the knowledge base of your peers.** Its ok – recommended and great, in fact – to respond to a counterpoint with “hey, I’ve never thought of it that way,” or “well, you do make a good point – I’ll have to think about that for a while.” Discussion in this class isn’t about proving, embarrassing, showing off, winning, losing, convincing, holding one’s argument to the bitter end – its about dialogue, debate and self-reflections.

### **Primary Learning Outcomes**

- To develop skills necessary to engage in history at a critical level
- Understand the mythology surrounding the black freedom struggle, and the fissures, shortcomings, and erasure that results in hegemonic history-making
- Ability to define and explain “key” individuals, events, movements within the black freedom struggle
- Ability to provide context for the emergence of the Black Freedom Struggle and the internal changes within that movement (shifts from integrationist approach to that of Black Power)
- Develop an understanding of the contributions and involvement of local organizations and organizers that comprise the black freedom struggle
- Ability to identify and critically link together the various components of the black freedom struggle
- Recognize the contributions of black women to struggles for black freedom and an understanding of how its participants and historians have erased their efforts
- Understand the historic and theoretical differences between organizers and activists; nonviolent direct action and more “revolutionary” tactics
- Recognizing the nature of coalitions within the black community, and those that existed between blacks and other communities
- Understanding the power of media, image, cultural frames and representation within and subsequent to the black freedom struggle
- Mastery over the manner in which the civil rights movement is memorialized and talk about in the present day, especially since the election of President Obama