

HIST 244
American Civil Rights History, 1877-1970
Fall 2010, T Th 11:30-12:45
Library Study Room

Dr. Susan Youngblood Ashmore
Office: Language Hall 205A
Office Hours: MW2:00-3:30
T Th 3:30-4:30 or by appointment
E-mail: sashmor@emory.edu
Phone: 770-784-8318

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the modern civil rights movement in America from 1877 to 1970 by paying particular attention to how historians do their work. As a survey that concentrates on the struggle for black freedom we will pay particular attention to the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of the grass-roots movement that ended legalized segregation. In order to understand how America in general, and the South in particular, came to terms with its racist past we will look at three themes throughout the semester: first, the variety of ways African Americans reacted against oppression; second, the ways the political system—on the federal, state, and local level—responded to the demands for change; and third, the myriad ways white Southerners reacted to their changing environment. The struggle for African Americans to gain legal recognition as full citizens did not follow a straight path, and as a result this course will look at why it took almost one hundred years to accomplish some important goals. We will have the opportunity to visit historical sites associated with the civil rights movement in Atlanta, Georgia.

Course Goals:

There are several objectives for this course. First, by gaining a factual knowledge of this historical period the course seeks to assist students in learning to think historically by recognizing and criticizing evidence and using primary and secondary sources to understand the process of history. Second, this course strives to help students discover, understand, and appreciate the interplay of forces and personalities that shaped the history of the modern civil rights movement. Third, as a writing intensive class that fulfills the sophomore writing requirement, this course will also assist students in developing and refining their writing abilities by organizing, describing, and reaching conclusions on paper about material that they have studied. These skills will benefit students in the future when they are in upper division courses.

Required Reading: These books are available at the campus bookstore and on reserve at the library

Steven F. Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating The Civil Rights Movement 1945-1968*, 2nd ed., Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: New York, 1998.

Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*, New York: The New Press, 2009.

Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Marshall Frady, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Life*, New York: Penguin Press, 2002.

Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Primary documents and journal articles provided through JSTOR on the library web page under Information Gateway and/or by the professor.

This course fulfills the sophomore writing requirement and a course in the History/Society/Culture component of the Oxford College General Education Program.

Grading and Assignments:

Biographical profile on NAACP, 6-8 double-spaced pages, (15%) due at the *beginning* of class on September 30th. **Various short writing/creative assignments** (photo-voice, film responses, reading journal writing) due at the beginning of class announced throughout the semester (10%) **Midterm essay exam** (20%) given on October 28th **Film Analysis**, 6-8 double-spaced pages, due at the beginning of class on December 2nd (20%) **Final essay exam** (25%) given on **Friday, December 13th from 9:00-12 noon**. **Class participation and attitude** (10%) includes attending at least one outside trip scheduled throughout the semester: Saturday, September 18th to the Atlanta History Center in Atlanta to see “Voices Across the Color Line: The Atlanta Student Movement,” or Saturday December 4th to see the Martin Luther King National Park on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta; as well as regular attendance and active participation in class discussions. All assignments as well as your final course grade will be based on the +/- system.

Honor Code:

We are a community of scholars. Therefore, academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Your name or signature on a paper, test, or journal entry submitted for credit shall indicate you have neither given nor received unauthorized information on the work, nor have you condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information by others. As a student at Oxford College of Emory University you have agreed to abide by the honor pledge and have taken upon yourself the responsibility of upholding the Honor Code; you are urged to inquire of the Honor Council about any doubtful case at any time throughout the semester. For complete details on the Honor Code please see the Oxford College 2010-2011 Catalog found on line.

Note on writing and plagiarism: Students must be scrupulous to avoid plagiarism and to give very precise and complete citations for any work used in any way. Always make it exactly clear to the reader through the use of quotation marks and citations which words, if any, are taken from some other source. Be very careful if you draw on any source—whether from the internet, a film, a photograph, or an archival reference—to give the precise source of each and every word used. Even when paraphrasing you need to cite the source used. For further details see William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, especially Chapter 3 (on reserve in the library) as well as the American Historical Association’s “Statement on Plagiarism” that will be handed out and discussed in class.

Attendance Policy:

Class begins at 11:30 and ends at 12:45. This is a course that requires your regular attendance and active participation in class. Students are allowed two absences, every absence after that will deduct points from the class participation/attitude portion of your final course grade. It is your responsibility to obtain missed notes from class and to turn in all assignments on time. During class discussion of reading material I expect you to have prepared before class. You will be expected to attend at least one (although you can go on more than one) outside trip scheduled for Saturday September 18th to the Atlanta History Center or Saturday December 4th to the Martin Luther King National Park, Atlanta, GA.

If you miss a due date for the midterm or final exam, **only absences due to medical or family emergencies** (for example, you are in the hospital) are valid. You will need to present written evidence of your illness or family emergency for an excused absence. If you miss a due date on a written assignment, a late penalty of **five points per day** (including weekends) will be deducted from your grade for that assignment. If you turn in your written assignment in after the beginning of class but on the same day it is due you will be deducted **2.5** points from your grade for that assignment. If you turn in your written assignment after the beginning of class, place it **under** my office door, Language Hall 205A. You cannot change the time of your final exam because of travel plans, vacation plans, job opportunities, or having more than one final exam on one day.

I encourage you to visit me during my office hours, or make an appointment with me if my office hours do not coincide with your schedule. One of the positive experiences you can have at Oxford College is getting to know your professors well. So, take advantage of that opportunity and come see me throughout the semester.

Class Etiquette:

Office Hours and Visiting Your Professor: I encourage you to visit me during office hours or by appointment. This provides you with the chance to discuss something from class in more detail, get ideas on ways to improve your writing, talk politics, share music you love, etc. One of the benefits of an Oxford College education is the opportunity you have to know your professors well. Take advantage of that opportunity.

Class Discussion: We will spend time this semester discussing readings written by professional scholars, civil rights activists, as well as by ourselves. In this process of discussion it is important to nurture the habit of being a good listener. Practice paying close attention to what others are saying as well as what you are saying. Through this process of listening well we will also respect each other. Our goal is to understand, not to operate only out of a place of judgment. In this manner we will be able to see the nuance and historical context of what we study to gain a deeper understanding. It is also essential that we build a sense of trust among ourselves that will enable us to speak frankly about some difficult parts of our historical past. If education means anything it changes us. That is not easy because we do not like change. So we have to be prepared to face historical reality to enable us to see the world from the perspective of others.

Cell phones: I do not take phone calls during class so you should not either. Turn off your cell phone when you are in class, watching a film, or when we are visiting a historic site. If this becomes a common occurrence, I will ask you to leave the class.

E-mail: We will have a class conference on LearnLink that corresponds with this course. I will post on the conference all assignments as well as other pertinent items that may enhance class discussion. When communicating with your fellow classmates on the conference or with me on my personal e-mail address do not post anything that you would not be comfortable saying to your classmates or to me in person. Most importantly, remember that even though you cannot see them, you are communicating with real human beings whenever you send e-mail. Do not let the impersonal screen make you forget to be as respectful in your communication as you would be when speaking face to face. Take time to think about your message before you send it. Never send a message when you are feeling emotional, particularly if you are upset or angry.

E-mail has become an important part of our society. All of us use it on a regular basis. However, the convenience of e-mail can often lead to informality and misunderstanding. For this reason, there are different rules for writing in formal situations—class discussions, e-mail messages to professors, student discussion lists—that do not necessarily apply when writing to friends and family. So, here are my suggestions for using e-mail in our class. When writing to me or on our LearnLink conference you should use a serious tone. Address me by my proper title, follow rules of grammar and mechanics, and do not use all lower or upper case letters or instant messaging abbreviations. You should use black ink in your e-mail messages. Avoid using curse words and other slang in formal situations. I have heard it said that writing is like fashion, one style is not appropriate for every situation. For example you would not wear your bathing suit to a job interview at a bank. So, get in the habit of using your professional voice when communicating as a professional, in your case your profession right now is being a college student.

Do not assume just because you *can* get in touch with me when you want to that I will be available to read your message. I rarely check e-mail once I leave campus, which is usually around 5:30 p.m., and I don't check e-mail over the weekend. So, note that I read e-mail from 9:00-5:30 Monday through Friday.

I also do not accept written assignments via e-mail. Only turn in a hard copy of your written assignments either at the beginning of class, or if it is late, under my office door, Language Hall 205A.

Finally, remember that e-mail is not a very private communication system. Your messages can be printed out, and they can also be sent on to others as forwarded messages. Any private message you send potentially can come under public scrutiny; therefore you should not write anything that would cause you or someone else embarrassment or trouble should your e-mail become public.

SCHEDULE

Aug 26	Syllabus, Defining the Civil Rights Movement–what is it?	
Aug 31	Debating the Civil Rights Movement	Lawson/Payne, pp. 3-46
	Photo-voice project posted to class conference by the beginning of class	
Sept 2	Debating the Civil Rights Movement	Lawson/Payne, pp. 115-155, Obama's speech on race
	Photo-voice project posted to class conference by the beginning of class	
Sept 7	Creation of Jim Crow Segregation	Martin, pp. 61-86
Sept 9	Response to Jim Crow Segregation	Sullivan, Chaps 1 and 2
Sept 14	World War One and Its Aftermath	Sullivan, Chaps 3 and 4
Sept 16	The Great Depression and New Deal	Sullivan, Chaps 5 and 6
	**Sept 18 Trip to the Atlanta History Center to see “Voices Across the Color Line: The Atlanta Student Movement”	
Sept 21	World War II and the NAACP	Sullivan, Chaps 7 and 8, Martin 102-109
Sept 23	NAACP Plan to Overturn <i>Plessy</i>	Sullivan, Chaps 9 and 10, Lawson/Payne, p. 49-58
Sept 28	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	Martin, pp. 1-38, 121-198
Sept 30	Response to <i>Brown v. Board of Educ</i>	Martin, pp. 199-237
	Biographical Profile on NAACP due at the beginning of class	
Oct 1-4	Watch HBO film “Boycott” on reserve at library for discussion in class Oct 7th	
Oct 5	Montgomery Bus Boycott	Frady, pp 1-57, King address Oct 7 Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC Septima Clark document
Oct 12	No Class – Fall Break	
Oct 14	Student Sit Ins and Creation of SNCC	Hogan, pp. 1-55, Lawson/Payne p. 159-60
	Film response of “Boycott” due at the beginning of class	
Oct 19	Albany Campaign, What Went Wrong?	Frady, pp. 57-97, Hogan, pp. 56-92, L/P p.161-62 Oct 21 New Battlefields
Oct 26	Voter Registration	Hogan, p. 143-154, L/P, p.163-65
Oct 28	Midterm Essay Exam – all lectures through Albany Campaign, readings, documents, films, and photographs	
Nov 2	Birmingham Campaign	Frady, p.98-121; L/P 79-87
Nov 4	Birmingham Campaign	e-reserves Letter from a Birmingham Jail
Nov 5-8	Watch Spike Lee's “Four Little Girls” for discussion in class Nov 9th	

Nov 9	March on Washington and the Federal Response	e-reserves
	Film response to “Four Little Girls” due at the <i>beginning</i> of class	
Nov 11	Freedom Summer, 1964	Hogan, pp. 155-184, L/P p.166-67,170-188
Nov 12-15	Watch “Freedom on My Mind” on reserve in library for class discussion Nov 18th	
Nov 16	The Civil Rights Act–why it mattered	e-reserves
Nov 18	Atlantic City and Aftermath	Hogan, pp. 185-218
	Film response to “Freedom on My Mind” due at the <i>beginning</i> of class	
Nov 23	Selma and the Alabama Black Belt	Frady, p. 121-169
Nov 25	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday	
Nov 30	Voting Rights Act and Southern Black Power	Ashmore essay
Dec 2	SCLC in Chicago and Memphis	Frady, p. 170-214
	Film analysis due at the beginning of class	
**Dec 4	Visit the Martin Luther King National Park, Atlanta, GA	
Dec 7	How the Civil Rights Movement is Remembered	e-reserves readings
Dec 8	Reading Day	
Dec 13	Friday, Final Essay Exam 9:00-12 noon, bring pen or pencil	