**Rethinking Civil Rights and Black Power**

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**Office:** TBD  
**Office Hours:** TBD and by appointment

**Course Description**
This course encourages a rethinking of the complex arguments and activities that have characterized the civil rights movement. In it, students will be pushed to think beyond the master narrative of Montgomery to Memphis, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Students will understand Black agency, actions, and politics through careful reading of scholarship in the field, documentary film, and art. Students will also read primary sources alongside secondary scholarship.

Each week students will focus on an individual case study, building upon the past week to understand the civil rights movements in the United States, including in the urban North, the Midwest, and elsewhere. This course will answer the questions: did the Civil Rights Movement really just happen in the South? What was happening in other parts of the country? What made local movements similar or different? How can we use these movement histories to understand how we got to where we are today?

**By the end of this course, students should be able to:**
- Identify the conditions that led to the Great Migration and the conditions of new urban Black communities in the North;
- Demonstrate critical familiarity with key events, figures, and developments that have shaped African America history in the 20th century;
• Analyze the impact of structural, demographic, and cultural shifts on the social and economic conditions of Black communities in the US North;
• Understand current events- how did we get here?
• Recognize that the Black freedom struggle did, and still does, take place in many local communities across the country;
• Develop critical analysis and writing skills through exposure to primary and secondary sources, participation in course discussion, and completion of written assignments.

Requirements
You will be graded on six components throughout the semester:

Reflective Writing 20%
Primary Source Journals 20%
Take Home Midterm 20%
Final Project Presentation 10%
Final Research Project 20%
Participation 10%

Reflective Writing (20%)
○ In lieu of typical discussion questions or Canvas posts, students will correspond with another student in class about the readings for each session. You will write a 500 word letter (email) to another student reflecting on the readings and sharing what you found most interesting/confusing in the readings.

Primary Source Journals (20%)
○ We will spend time each class session examining primary sources together. Following each session students will write a short (1-2 page) informal reflection due the next day by 5pm. In this reflection you will describe the source, analyze its potential use as a primary source, and make connections between the primary source, readings, and lecture.

Take Home Midterm (20%)
○ At the end of the second week students will be assigned a take home midterm consisting of two short essay questions related to assigned readings and course materials.

Final Paper Proposal (ungraded)
○ Students will submit a short (1 page or less) proposal on their final projects. In it, students will describe their topic and list potential secondary and primary sources. Students should be prepared to discuss their proposals with other students in class. Instructor will also provide feedback on proposals.

Final Paper Presentation (10%)
○ The last two sessions of class will consist, in part, of 5-8 minute presentations from each student on their final project.

Final Paper (20%)
○ 8-10 page paper. Consider the case studies we have looked at this semester. Either look deeper at one of these studies or find another case study. Analyze the movement, the
specific local implications, why people organized, etc. Where available, utilize primary sources as well as secondary sources. Students should feel free to study their hometown, New Haven, or anywhere else in the United States that has been left out of the master narrative of the civil rights movement.

Participation (10%)
- Participation will be graded based on many factors. This is meant as an opportunity to boost your grade, not as a way to intimidate students into talking. For those who are more shy, I am happy to regularly meet during office hours as an opportunity to participate. I encourage all students to push themselves outside of their comfort zones, but I also understand that everyone has different engagement styles.
- Because course materials are available on Canvas, technology will be allowed in class. Feel free to use tablets and laptops. That said, I encourage students to commit to being present during class. Consider putting your technology on airplane mode or do not disturb.

Course Accessibility
I am committed to making this class as accessible as possible to everyone enrolled. If I am ever using language that is not easily understandable in lecture, in assignments, or in your feedback, or if I am otherwise coming up short in my responsibility to help you learn, please let me know. You can do this in class, in office hours, via email or note, or in the feedback forms I will distribute throughout the term.

If you anticipate needing any kind of modification to the class as structured due to disability, medical ailment, or personal circumstance, please let me know as soon as possible. Should you need further advice on modifications or accessibility needs, reach out to Student Accessibility Services: https://sas.yale.edu/.

Academic Integrity and Classroom Conduct
Please review the university’s conduct and plagiarism codes. All of the work you submit for this class is expected to be your own, and to be original for this course. Plagiarism, deliberate or accidental, will be taken seriously.

I expect every member of this course to be treated with respect and treat others with respect. This means listening to one another as we speak. It also means interpreting one another’s words generously. I encourage you all to approach each other with care and respect, inside and outside of the classroom. Think carefully about the impact of your words, especially if they come from places of fear, pain, or hatred.

Course Materials
All required materials will be made available on Canvas or for free through the library website.

Lecture and Reading Schedule

Week 1
Session 1: Introductions and the Great Migration


**Session 2: Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association**


**Week 2**

**Session 3: Nonviolence and the Congress of Racial Equality**


**Session 4: A Southern Movement**

o Documentary: *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (360 min)

**Week 3**

**Session 5: The Watts Rebellion**


**Session 6: The Chicago Freedom Movement**

o Excerpts in *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North* (2015)
  ▪ “Introduction”
  ▪ Chapter 2 “Interpreting the Chicago Freedom Movement: The Last Fifty Years” by James R. Ralph
  ▪ Chapter 3 “Toward the Apex of Civil Rights Activism: Antecedents of the Chicago Freedom Movement, 1965-1966” by Christopher Robert Reed
  ▪ Chapter 17 “Women in the Movement I: The Women of SCLC-WSCP Take Action” by Molly Martindale


**Week 4**

**Session 7: Boston School Crisis**

**Session 8: The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense**

**Week 5**

**Session 9: Black Power Politics**

**Session 10: Black Lives Matter and Beyond**
- Choose one book/article/website/other reading from the Charleston Syllabus to discuss in class, https://www.aaihs.org/resources/charlestonsyllabus/