

Civil Rights in American Culture

AMST 401T: Fall 2021

Instructor: Professor Eric Gonzaba ▪
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General Course Information

Class Time: Tuesday, 7:00-9:45 PM
Classroom: Gordon Hall 319
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 PM-4:30 PM
Office 409

(Appointments highly encouraged)



Required Texts

No books are required for this semester of the course. All readings and films are available online for free.

Catalog Description

This course explores the meaning of civil rights and civil rights movements in American culture. We will use a variety of sources to analyze the changing ways civil rights and civil rights movements have been interpreted, politicized, and commemorated.

Course Description

This course examines the history and culture of civil rights and citizenship in the modern United States. While most Americans associate civil rights with the history of the African American freedom struggle, as we'll learn in this class, the fight for civil rights has never been limited to one group. This course will explore different marginalized groups and their quest for civil rights, including women, immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, racial minorities, and more. By comparing and coming to terms with these groups' struggle for societal recognition and civil rights, we'll gain a better understanding of the nature of American citizenship and how and why civil rights remains a contested idea in wider American culture.

This course is an intensive research seminar that is intended to be the culmination of your Major or Minor in American Studies. The goal of this class is for you to produce a substantial work of scholarship (12+ pages) that draws on both primary and secondary sources on a subject that interests you within the confines of the course theme, civil rights in America.

Course Prerequisites

Completion of Completion of G.E. Category D.2 **OR** graduate standing.

Assignments

Participation (15%): This is a small upper division seminar. Beyond that, it is a course in which we are all going to work together to help everyone produce the best work they can. I expect you to participate each

day in class, having completed the assigned readings and films viewings. Students are allowed one unexcused absence this semester. Further absences will result in reduction in one's participation grade.

Class Bio (5%): Please reply to the class bio discussion forum on Canvas with your name, major, where you're from, and some fun facts. This bio is due before class on September 7. Full instructions listed under discussions in Canvas. Please also reply to at least one other student's bio.

Presentations (20%): You have three presentations to do for this course. The first two are informal and short and designed are to get you used to talking in front of the class. In the first presentation, you and 1-3 other classmates will be asked to present on one reading that explains the argument of the chapter and then ask a series of open-ended discussion questions. Your second presentation, you will present to a class a primary source you found in your research. Be ready to share your screen to show us this source and explain it within 5-7 minutes. Your last presentation is a formal individual presentation of your research during the final week of class. It should be 10-15 minutes and should include an audio, visual, or material source. Think of this as an opportunity to teach your findings to the class. While PowerPoint is fine to use, just reading bullet points is greatly discouraged.

Proposal (10%): I must have a project proposal from you by Friday October 1 at 10 PM. This proposal should include:

- 1) A research question that your project will endeavor to answer
- 2) A description of your topic that explains how researching this topic will help you answer your research question.
- 3) A discussion of how your project relates to and will address some or all of the following areas of American Studies research:
 - a. Identity
 - b. Context
 - c. Power Relations
- 4) A list of at least 2 Primary and 2 Secondary sources you plan to consult as you conduct your research. Please note, your final project is required to include at least 8.

Primary Source Analysis (10%):

Select one primary source from your early research and analyze it as you might do in the context of your final paper. You should explain to the reader the context of the source (what it is, when was it created, etc.) and how it ties into your possible argument. As this is an analysis, a simple description is not enough. What does this primary source tell us about your topic that we might not have known before? Does it assist in your argument? This analysis should be about 400 words, or about a page and a half. It should NOT be written in the first person; rather, write it as if it was a part of your final paper. Use of this analysis in your final paper is totally acceptable. The analysis is due before class on October 12, the same evening you'll present it in class.

Introduction and Thesis Statement Draft (10%):

An introduction to your final research paper and a clearly stated thesis statement is due November 16 at 10 PM. Your introduction should be about a page or two in length and should catch the reader's attention (see examples from articles assigned in class). For this assignment, you should highlight your thesis statement in the word document. It is perfectly acceptable to have a thesis statement that is more than one sentence.

Final Paper (30%): Your final research paper should be at least 12 pages long, double-spaced, with 12-point font and normal 1-inch margins. You may format the paper in either MLA, APA, or Chicago style; just be consistent.

The requirements for undergraduate and graduate students differ, and students are evaluated separately according to their undergraduate or graduate status. Graduate student work is expected to be of a higher quality and developed scope than that of undergraduates. Graduate final papers must be at least 15 pages. Graduate students will also write a 5-page book review on a scholarly book that deals with some aspect of civil rights, broadly defined. This book should be cleared by Professor Gonzaba by week 3. The book review is due on Canvas by the end of the semester. This book may be used and cited in the student's final paper, but this is not required.

Grading Policies and Extra Credit

In this course the plus/minus system will be used. Grades will be calculated using a standard scale. An A+ is 98-100%, A is 93-97, A- is 90-92, B+ is 88-89, B is 83-87, B- is 80-82, C+ is 78-79, C is 73-77, C- is 70-72, D+ is 68-69, D is 63-67, D- is 60-62, and F is anything 59% or below. Late assignments may be penalized 2% for every unexcused day overdue. Extensions must be requested in advance of the assignment deadline. There are currently no extra credit assignments for this course; if I elect to add extra-credit assignments during the semester, they will be equally available to all students.

Schedule

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Course Introduction: Remembering the Civil Rights Movement

Reading due:

- Scott A. Sandage, "A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963"

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Disability Rights

Reading due:

- Watch *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* (2020)
- Douglas Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History"

Assignment due:

- Class bio on Canvas on August 31

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

Black Women's Bodies

Reading due:

- Danielle L. McGuire, "Joan Little and the Triumph of Testimony"

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

How to Research

Reading due:

- None. Special Guest: Megan Graewingholt of Cal State Fullerton, Libraries
 - Fun fact: Megan Graewingholt is a CSUF American Studies Alum!
 - We will meet at the CSUF Pollak Library (Room TBA)

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Abortion Rights

Reading due:

- Robert O. Self, “Bodies on Trial: The Politics of Reproduction” in *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy in the 1960s*

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Gay Rights

Reading due:

- Timothy Stewart-Winter, “The Law and Order Origins of Urban Gay Politics,”

Assignment due:

- Paper Proposal due on Canvas on Friday October 1 at 10 PM.

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Student Rights

Reading due:

- Gael Graham, “Flaunting the Freak Flag: Karr v. Schmidt and the Great Hair Debate in American High Schools, 1965–1975”

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Primary Source Presentations

Reading due:

- None. Be prepared to give a five-to-seven-minute talk on a primary source related to your final project.

Assignment due:

- Primary source analysis due before class.

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Immigrant Rights

Reading due:

- Watch “Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary” (1997)
- “Excerpts from Supreme Court's Opinions on the Education of Illegal Aliens,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1982

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

Trans Rights

Reading due:

- Susan Stryker, “Portrait of a Transfag Drag Hag as a Young Man: The Activist Career of Louis G. Sullivan,” in *Reclaiming Gender: Transsexual Grammars at the Fin de Siecle*

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

The War on Terror

Reading due:

- Chris Finan, “9/11” from *From the Palmer Raids to the Patriot Act: A History of the Fight for Free Speech in America*

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Tax Discrimination

Reading due:

- Andrew Kahrl, “The Power to Destroy: Discriminatory Property Assessments and the Struggle for Tax Justice in Mississippi,” *Journal of Southern History*

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Personal Research Day – No Class

Reading due:

- None. Work on research and writing for final paper.

Assignment due:

- Introduction and Thesis Statement Draft due at 10 PM.

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

Happy Thanksgiving! – No Class

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Paper Presentations

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Paper Presentations Continued

**Final Papers Due:
Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 11:55 PM**