The Long Civil Rights Movement
A Readings and Research Seminar
University of Erfurt (2010)
Professor: Steve Estes

Course Objectives:
This course is intended to give a broad overview of the history and historiography of the civil rights movement in the United States. The course extends the story of the African American freedom movement beyond the traditional narrative of the demonstrations and protests in the 1950s and 60s, and it explores the legacies of this struggle in movements for women’s rights, gay rights, and immigrant rights. Throughout the course, we will be working on the craft of research and the art of writing. By the end of the semester we will not only have a better understanding of what other scholars have said about the civil rights movement, we will also have contributed our own original efforts at chronicling the history of the struggle.

Course Requirements:
Classroom Participation & Reading: As an advanced history seminar, meeting once a week on Monday afternoons (13:00 - 15:00), this course requires that students keep up with the reading and actively participate in class discussions. (Participation is worth 20% of final grade)

Papers: There are five short reading response papers in this class and a final historiography paper. The response papers are one-page, single-spaced, and they are based on your original criticisms, praise, and questions of the week’s readings. Half of you will be turning in book reviews each week in a random assignment at the beginning of the semester. The final research paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced) will deal with some aspect of the civil rights movement, a person, place, event, or organization. You need to find out what other scholars have said about this topic and create an original argument about the topic’s significance to the civil rights movement. A paper proposal is due 7.6.2010. The final paper is due 5.7.2010. Students will present this work in the last week of the semester. (Book Reviews: 10% each for a total of 50% of final grade; Term Paper: 30% of final grade—including the grade on the research presentation.)

Course Schedule

Week I: Introduction (12.4.10)
Required Reading: None
Part 1: Student Introductions & Discussion of Reviews / Historiography Topics
Part 2: View & Discuss clips from Crash and Eyes on the Prize (Volume 1)

Week II: Origins and Chronology of the Movement (19.4.10)
Part 1: Discuss Jim Crow and the Beginnings of the Freedom Struggle
Part 2: Internet Research Presentations (a collective civil rights timeline)

Week III: The Long Historiography (26.4.10)
Part 1: Defining and doing historiography.
Part 2: View clips from Eyes on the Prize (Volume 2)

Week IV: Brown v. Board (3.5.10)
Part 2: Primary Source Workshop on Brown Documents and Retrospectives

Week V: Nonviolence vs. Self-Defense (10.5.10)
Required Reading: Simon Wendt, “‘They Finally Found Out that We Really Are Men’: Violence, Nonviolence, and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era,” Gender & History (2007): 543-564.
Part 1: Discuss Non-Violence vs. Self-Defense as Tactics (King Essay 1957—excerpt)
Part 2: Guest Speaker (Simon Wendt)

Week VI: Cold War Civil Rights (17.5.10)
Part 1: Discuss Cold War and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement
Part 2: Debate the Cold War’s Influence on Global Human Rights

Week VII: Pfingstmontag (24.5.10)
No class.

Week VIII: Women Warriors (31.5.10)
Part 1: Discuss Women’s Movement Memoirs and Roles of Women in the Movement
Part 2: Comparison of Gender and Racial Discrimination in U.S. and Europe

Week IX: The Movement and the Media (7.6.10)
Research Proposal Due: (Write a one-page paper (1.5 spaced) describing the area of civil rights history that you will write about for your final paper assignment. You should explain why you have chosen this topic and time period. Explain what primary and secondary sources you will use. Include a list of questions that your research will try to answer.)
Week X: Black Power & Brown Power (14.6.10)
Part 1: Discuss Race and Ethnicity in the Civil Rights Movement
Part 2: Compare Immigration Rights in the U.S. and Germany

Week XI: Sexuality and Civil Rights (21.6.10)
Part 1: Compare and Contrast the Black Freedom Struggle & Gay Liberation Movement
Part 2: Debate (Gay Marriage)

Week XII: The Politics of Jazz and Hip Hop (28.6.10)
Required Research: Bring in lyrics to an American hip hop song that is “political” in some way.
Part 1: Discuss the Relationship Between the Civil Rights and Hip Hop Generations
Part 2: Primary Source Workshop on Hip Hop Lyrics

Week XIII: Race and American Rhetoric (5.7.10)
Required Reading: Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” (1963); Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964); and Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (2008)
http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html
http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/malcolm_x_ballot.html
Required Writing: Historiography Paper
Part 1: Discuss Speeches and the evolution of race in America
Part 2: Students Present Research