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Civil Rights in America: Since 1954

Peter Kolozi
CUNY Bronx Community College

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POL 41—Civil Rights in America: Since 1954 (3 Credits)

Course Description and Objectives:
This course about the history and the political ideas of important social movements in America in the second half of the 20th century. Throughout the semester students will read several secondary source historical narratives and study primary source materials from each movement. Student will read key writings and speeches by both well-known social movement figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Cesar Chavez and lesser known activists and groups such as Fred Hampton, the Young Lords, the Combahee River Collective group, among others. is to get students to understand the ideas and history key social movements the second half of the 20th century. Studying the history of these movements along with the political thinking that was central to them will encourage students to analyze and evaluate the political strategy, the political philosophy, and the goals (those achieved and those yet unrealized) of each of these movements. Such critical engagement with the history and the political ideas of social movements in the past century might offer insights about those in the present.

Course Learning Objectives:
This course meets General Education Goals required of BCC graduates in areas of reasoning, analysis, information literacy, and communication. To demonstrate these proficiencies students will be asked to meet the learning outcomes outlined below:

- Gather, interpret, and evaluate information from a number of sources including primary sources, such as the writings, speeches, and interviews of social movement activists and secondary source historical narratives and interpretations of 20th century and contemporary social movements.
- Produce well-reasoned discussion board posts and/or exam essays to explain and analyze the achievements and limitations of the Civil Rights (African-Americans), Women’s Liberation, and the Latino/a-Hispanic Rights, gay/lesbian movements.
- Through quizzes, exams and/or essays identify, analyze and evaluate the influence of the Civil Rights Movement (African-Americans), Women’s Liberation Movement, and the Latino/a-Hispanic Rights, gay/lesbian movements on contemporary political, economic, and social institutions.

Required Materials:
This is an Open Educational Resource (OER) course. All of the required readings are available and fully accessible online. See, “Course Outline” section below for URL for each reading.

Each student is required to obtain a Blackboard Account and to maintain access throughout the semester. All assignments will be posted on Blackboard and must be completed on Blackboard.
Procedure to Access Blackboard:

1. Go to: CUNY Portal  https://cunyportal.cuny.edu/cpr/authenticate/portal_login.jsp
2. Type in your username and password
3. Left side box (Applications/Resources) click on Blackboard
4. Right side box (My Courses) click on the appropriate course

Course Grades and Evaluation:

Grades will be assessed based on weekly quizzes, discussion board participation, and exams. Each of these assessments will be conducted on Blackboard.

Blackboard Quizzes: 30%

Each week the instructor will post a short quiz based on the readings assigned. The quiz is intended to measure students’ comprehension of the ideas and concepts addressed in the assigned readings. The quizzes will be in the format of short answer and multiple-choice questions.

Please note, each week’s quiz will be open only for one week. Please be sure to keep up with the readings and the quizzes. There are no make ups allowed for missed quizzes.

Blackboard Discussion Board Participation: 30%

For each week’s readings the instructor will post a discussion board prompt on Blackboard. The prompt is intended to encourage students to analyze, interpret, and apply the ideas discussed in the readings. Each student is required to offer a substantive reply to the prompt and, in addition, to comment on another student’s contribution to the discussion. In other words, each student must participate at least two times per week to receive credit for discussion board participation.

Please note, each week’s discussion will be open for one week. Please be sure to keep up with the readings and the discussion board prompt and comments. There are no make ups allowed for missed participation on the discussion board.

Exams: 40%

There will be two exams throughout the semester: a mid-term and final exam. Each exam is worth 20% of your grade. The purpose of the exams is for students to critically think about the connections among the readings and to demonstrate their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the ideas and arguments presented. The exam assessments will be in the form of essay questions. The exams will be posted on Blackboard and students are required to complete each exam within the given time.

Please note, each exam will be open and available on Blackboard for ten (10) days. Please be sure to be aware of exam announcements and deadlines. There are no make ups allowed for missed exams.
COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1: Civil Rights Movements


Recommended material:


Week 2:


Week 3:


Week 4:

3. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” MLK, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/kingjail.html

Recommended material:


**Week 5:**

   http://www.crmvet.org/docs/moworg2.pdf
3. “The Revolution is at Hand,” John L. Lewis, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/lewis.html
4. “President Kennedy’s Civil Rights Address,” (video clip) Library of Congress
   http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/kennedys-civil-rights-address.html
5. “Divergent View of President Kennedy’s Civil Rights Address,” (Malcolm X) Library of Congress
   http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/birmingham-protests.html
6. “Message to the Grassroots,” Malcolm X, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/malcgrass.html

**Week 6:**

   http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/johnsons-speech-on-civil-rights-act.html
   http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/epilogue.html#video10_4
   http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/johnsons-speech-on-civil-rights-act.html
4. “The Ballot or the Bullet.” Malcolm X, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/malcolm.html
5. “To Fulfill These Rights Speech at Howard University,” Lyndon Baines Johnson,
   http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27021

Recommended material:


**Week 7:**

2. “Malcolm X on Afro-American History” Malcolm X, History is a Weapon,
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/malconafamhist.html

3. “Beyond Vietnam,” MLK


Recommended material:
1. Martin Luther King Jr., Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010).

Mid-term Exam

Week 8:

   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/blackpower.html

2. “Black Panther Party Platform, Program and Rules,” History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/bpp.html

3. “Power Anywhere Where There’s People,” Fred Hampton, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/fhamptonspeech.html

   https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2010039_crhp0051/

Recommended material:

**Week 10:**

2. “Address to the Commonwealth Club of California,” Cesar Chavez, *History is a Weapon*
   Jose Palafox, *History is a Weapon*
4. “Be Down with the Brown,” Elizabeth Martinez, *History is a Weapon*

**Week 11: Women’s Liberation Movement**

2. “Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo,” Casey Hayden and Mary King, *History is a Weapon*
4. “Abortion on Demand: A Woman’s Right, Caroline Lund and Cindy Jaquith, *History is a Weapon*

**Recommended material:**


**Week 12:**

1. “Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women’s Movement,” *History is a Weapon*
2. “Who Will Revere the Black Woman,” Abbey Lincoln, *History is a Weapon*

**Week 13: LGBTQ Rights Movement**

1. “Chronologies of LGBTQ History,” OutHistory.org
   http://www.outhistory.org/items/browse?search=&advanced[0][element_id]=97&advanced[0][type]=contains&advanced[0][terms]=Timeline&type=17&submit_search=Search

2. “The Queer Nation Manifesto,” History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/queernation.html

3. “The Woman Identified Woman,” Radicalesbians, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/radicalesbianswoman.html

4. “The Hope Speech”, Harvey Milk, History is a Weapon
   http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/milkhopespeech.html


**Week 14:**

Contemporary Struggles:


“The Souls of Poor Folk,” Poor People’s Campaign https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/audit/

**Week 15:**

Final Exam