HIST3151: Course Outline

The African American Experience from Martin Luther King to Barack Obama

Semester 1 - 2010
Unit Weighting 20
Teaching Methods
Lecture
Film Screening
Tutorial

Brief Course Description
This course traces the history and culture of African Americans since World War II, focusing on individuals as well as social trends that informed the twentieth century struggle for racial equality. While most attention will centre on the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and the leadership of Martin Luther King, the course also explores the more extreme expressions of black militancy and separatism tied to Black Power and the leadership of Malcolm X. Moving into the post-civil rights era, we will chart the progress made by African Americans in the United States after 1968, emphasizing the emergence of a black middle class alongside black politicians and a black entertainment industry dominated by musicians, actors and sporting heroes. But by also scrutinizing the experiences of the black poor in this period, we will remain attuned to the persistence of racial disadvantage in America and raise fundamental questions about the nation’s failure to address the systemic roots of inequality. Finally, the course will conclude optimistically with an assessment of the “Obama phenomenon” and its meaning in the context of twenty-first century American race relations.
Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term
Tutorial for 2 Hours per Week (commencing in Week 2)

Course Objectives
1. To familiarize students with key issues and themes in African American history from World War II to the present.
2. To expose students to a wide range of historical sources such as speeches, autobiographical accounts, legal documents, oral histories, photographs and film.
3. To teach students how to analyze these sources in the context of African American history.
4. To develop students' ability to think critically and to conduct research.
5. To improve students' written and oral communication skills.

Course Content
Course topics may include: the impact of World War II on the political consciousness of African Americans; the civil rights and black power movements of the 1950s and 1960s; the leadership of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X; the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations; the rise of the black middle class in the 1970s; the deteriorating circumstances of the black underclass in the 1980s and 1990s; black entertainment (especially music, movies and sport); the Los Angeles Riots; the "OJ" Simpson case; Hurricane Katrina; the Barack Obama phenomenon; and/or other similar topics as appropriate.

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Test</th>
<th>15%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>Short essay 1500 words (worth 20%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research essay 3000 words (worth 40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group/tutorial participation and contribution</td>
<td>Tutorial participation based on contribution to discussion (15%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Knowledge
20 units in History at 1000 level or equivalent.

Callaghan Campus Timetable
HIST3151
The African American Experience
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 - 2010
Lecture and Tutorial Commences Wk 2

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;
b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

**Plagiarism** is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

**Turnitin** is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

**RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS**

Students can access the University's policy at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html)

**MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM**

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS**

*Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations* items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in **Late Penalty** (under student) at the link above.

**Requests for Extensions of Time** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

- applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
- whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html)

**Note:** different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:
- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

*Late applications may not be accepted.* Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

**STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS**

University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: [www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability).

**CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT**

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.


Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

**Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term**, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: [https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au](https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au)

**STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS**

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit: [www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/)

The **Student Hubs** are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>City Precinct</strong></td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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**OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>Dean of Students Office</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

End of CTS Entry

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information

Details about Written Assignment Presentation and Submission are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
## Course Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week starting</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Tutorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 4/3</td>
<td>Administrative Introduction / Issues and Themes in African American History.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>NO TUTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 11/3</td>
<td>A Decade of Confusion 1945-1955</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: Awakenings</td>
<td>The African American Experience in World War Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 18/3</td>
<td>Fighting Back: The Early Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: Fighting Back</td>
<td>The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Emergence of Martin Luther King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 25/3</td>
<td>MLK and JFK: Freedom Dreams in the Kennedy Era</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk</td>
<td>With All Deliberate Speed: Brown and the Struggle for Racial Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5 1/4</td>
<td>From Civil Rights to the Black Muslims: The Challenge of Malcolm X</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: The Time Has Come</td>
<td>Martin Luther King: Nonviolence and the “Dream”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6 15/4</td>
<td>Ghetto Riots, Black Power and “Shattered Dreams”</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: Two Societies</td>
<td>Malcolm X: The Ballot or the Bullet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 22/4</td>
<td>African American Culture in the “Radical” Sixties: An Exploration of Music, Film and Art.</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: The Promised Land</td>
<td>Ghetto Upheavals: Riots or Revolts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 29/4</td>
<td>American Dream or American Nightmare? The 1970s Black Experience</td>
<td>Eyes on the Prize: Keys to the Kingdom</td>
<td>Black Power and the “Other” Martin Luther King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10 13/5</td>
<td>Race and Class in the Clinton Era</td>
<td>Two Nations of Black America</td>
<td>“Two Black Americas, Separate and Unequal?”: Racial Politics in the Reagan Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11 20/5</td>
<td>The Obama Phenomenon: Perspectives and Implications</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>The LA Riots and the O.J. Simpson Case: Racial Unrest in the 1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 27/5</td>
<td>Summing Up</td>
<td>“A More Perfect Union”, speech by Barack Obama</td>
<td>Barack Obama and the Politics of Racial Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13 3/6</td>
<td>Class test (90 minutes)</td>
<td>NO VIDEO</td>
<td>NO TUTES</td>
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**Consultation:**
My formal consultation times are Wednesday 11-12 and Thursday 9.30-10.30. But I am, of course, pleased to see you any time you can find me in my office (which is most of the time!). Should these arrangements prove unsatisfactory, you can phone me to make an appointment at a mutually acceptable time (see contact details at the front of this course outline). Also, don’t hesitate to contact me via email; I always reply promptly.

ASSESSMENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Date due</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay (1500 words)</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Essay (3,000 words)</td>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Test</td>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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1. SHORT ESSAY (20 marks):

You are required to write one short essay (1500 words) for this course. The due date is **15 April**.

Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech was delivered before the Lincoln Memorial on 28 August 1963, as the keynote address of the March on Washington for Civil Rights. The television cameras allowed the entire nation to hear and see him plead for justice and freedom. Reflecting on the speech, King’s wife Coretta would later comment: “At that moment it seemed as if the Kingdom of God appeared. But it only lasted for a moment.”

**Question:**
Discuss the historical and political significance of Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. In the context of the early 1960s, was his a radical or moderate message to the United States?

The obvious place to begin your preparation for the Short Essay is with any relevant tutorial readings. But the libraries have other materials, with which you can supplement the weekly readings. I have found from past experience that the best short essays almost always utilize additional sources, so I would strongly encourage you to consult the library and see what different historians have had to say about King’s speech. But ultimately I would like to know what you think, so read (and watch) the speech closely, before writing your essay. Please use footnotes, however, where appropriate (ie. when you are referencing other people’s ideas, or quoting them directly). This essay should be presented as a formal piece of work.

2. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (10 MARKS):

You are required to compile your own Bibliography for the major essay, which will have a major bearing on the depth of your research, and hence on the quality of your essay. I am, of course, happy to offer advice and assistance in compiling your Bibliography. Remember that a good essay requires wide reading. (Obviously, writing a satisfactory essay requires you to go well beyond textbook accounts.)
A useful place to start your research for many questions is with the various edited collections – many of which have been placed in Short Loans, and a number of which are listed later on in the course outline. (As you’re examining these edited collections, bear in mind that different editions of the same book will usually include different essays and/or documents.)

And be VERY WARY of on-line sources (see my above comments, further on, about “Using the Web”). I cannot emphasize strongly enough that you need to consider such sources very critically.

Wikipedia is NOT A SCHOLARLY SOURCE. To borrow Dirty Harry’s best line: “Don’t even think about it.”

This exercise consists of a brief (two or three sentences will be sufficient in most cases) discussion of the value – or otherwise – of each of the sources you have consulted. The annotated bibliography should also include an introductory discussion (of no more than one paragraph) clearly outlining what the topic is, why it is significant and how you plan to pursue it (ie what is your methodology?). The purpose of this exercise is to encourage you to think critically about your topic and the books and articles you intend to use. The Annotated Bibliography must be submitted on April 29.

I appreciate that many of you will not have written an Annotated Bibliography before, so I’ll discuss the exercise in more detail in lecture and tutorials. In other words, don’t be intimidated. Please note: you are still required to include a “normal” Bibliography, appended to the end of your major essay.

3. MAJOR ESSAY (40 marks):

You are required to write one major research essay (3000 words) for this course. The due date is May 20. Since the essay is due relatively close to the end of semester, and because you will almost certainly have other work due around that time, it is important that you start work on the essay at an early stage. By organizing your time effectively, you are most likely to do your best work (and that’s what I want to see you do!).

With regard to finding sources for your essay, it might be helpful to begin with the list included in this course guide, which indicate the books that have been placed on 3-Day Loan. But when researching and writing your essays, as well as considering and evaluating the arguments put forward by various historians, some questions will be best answered if you also try to utilize primary source materials – speeches, autobiographical writings, newspaper articles, interviews etc. If you’re in any doubt about the value of these sources, please feel free to come and discuss them with me, and I will endeavor to point you in the right direction.

Finally, the library databases offer a rich selection of journal articles that will be relevant to your essays. I tend to use JSTOR, and I have found the following journals particularly useful for my own research in African American history (I think you will too).

1. Journal of African American History (or Journal of Negro History)
2. Journal of American History
3. Journal of Southern History
4. Phylon
5. Journal of Black Studies
6. Reviews in American History
7. American Quarterly
8. American Historical Review
SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the significance of World War Two to the emergence of the civil rights movement.

2. What contributions did Martin Luther King make to the development and success of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s?

3. What factors explain the rising prominence of black nationalism in the United States during the 1960s?

4. Compare and contrast the leadership of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Which man better represented the aspirations and mood of African Americans in the 1960s?

5. How did John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson affect the civil rights movement? Which of these presidents had the greatest impact, and why?

6. Assess the impact of the Cold War on the American civil rights movement.

7. How and why did Martin Luther King’s fight to win civil rights in the American South evolve into a broader struggle against imperialism and economic inequality by the time of his death?

8. Analyze and evaluate the role of black women in the civil rights struggle.


10. How did soul music reflect the changing social and political status of African Americans during the 1960s?

11. How useful is the film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* – starring Sidney Poitier and Katharine Hepburn – to an understanding of American race relations in the 1960s?

12. Where did the term and philosophy “Black Power” come from? And what, ultimately, was its political impact?

13. Discuss the significance of “Africa” in black intellectual and political discourse in the 1960s and 1970s.

14. Did the African American experience of the 1970s suggest that race – as a force in American life – had declined in significance?

15. Discuss the significance and limitations of budding black political power in the 1970s.

16. Why have such intense conflicts arisen since the 1970s over the question of affirmative action in the United States?


18. Assess the historical significance of the “Jackson Phenomenon” in American politics during the 1980s.

19. What did the O.J. Simpson case reveal about race and class in modern America?

20. Does the success of Barack Obama suggest that the aims and objectives of the civil rights movement have been achieved?
NB: THESE ARE ONLY SOME SUGGESTIONS. THERE ARE MANY OTHER TOPICS YOU CAN WRITE ABOUT. IF YOU WISH, YOU ARE WELCOME TO DEVISE YOUR OWN ESSAY TOPIC – IN CONSULTATION WITH ME.

USING THE WEB
Some excellent material is now available on the Web. But there is, of course, also a great deal of rubbish. Because many aspects of African American history are the source of much debate and dispute, be particularly wary of some of the groups or individuals who use the Web to push their own particular line: while the Internet is in some respects a “democratic” medium, it is also the case that we must treat some of the material that is available there with a great deal of skepticism. As with any historical source, any material you obtain from the Web should be course to the most rigorous scrutiny. You should ask yourself: who wrote this material?; would it be published by a reputable academic press or in a quality refereed journal?; why has the “author” put this material on the Web? If you bear these points in mind, you’ll no doubt find some useful material on the Web.

Notwithstanding these concerns, if used judiciously the Web can offer a good deal of useful material, particularly primary source material. A look at the Library of Congress homepage, for example, or at the sites maintained by other major archives or state historical societies, will lead you toward a number of useful sights pertaining to the various topics we’ll be examining this semester.

If you’re thinking of using the Web, please consult:


4. CLASS TEST:

A Class Test, worth 15% of your final grade, will be held during the time scheduled for the final lecture (3 June). You will have 90 minutes to complete the Test.

♦ You will be required to write 1 compulsory “long essay” on the following topic: “One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body….The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife.” Discuss the relevance of this comment by W.E.B. Du Bois, made in 1903, to the history of African Americans between 1945 and 2009. This section is worth 9 marks.

♦ You will also be required to answer 2 “short essay” questions. These questions will be based on the topics covered in the various tutorial topics. (However, where appropriate, I do expect you to bring to bear the material covered in lectures.) This section is worth 6 marks (ie, 3 marks for each question. Towards the end of the course, I will circulate a list of possible short essay questions to assist your revision.

VIDEO MATERIAL:

There is a rich array of video material that is relevant to this course, including:

1. The Speeches of Malcolm X
2. A Huey P. Newton Story
3. American Gangster The Complete First Season
5. Black History from Civil War through Today
6. What Black Men Think
7. The Marva Collins Story
8. 500 Years Later
9. The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till
10. 4 Little Girls
11. The Story of Gospel Music
12. Two Nations of Black America
13. Arthur Ashe: Citizen of the World
14. Eyes on the Prize – Series 1 and 2
15. Dreams of Obama
17. The Inauguration of President Obama

While I’d encourage you to exploit video material, I would also emphasize that you need to use videos in the same way you exploit any other historical source – critically. Try to avoid watching (“reading”) videos passively, as an easy or entertaining alternative to reading a book or a journal article; rather, ask questions about who made the video, what sources have they exploited, have they asked the right questions, have they omitted significant material? Used appropriately films, both documentary and non-documentary, are a fascinating and rich resource; used inappropriately, they can sometimes lull us into glib understandings of complex issues. More generally, I hope that as you study American history you’ll become more attuned to the way in which African American history is represented in American culture.

**EXTRA SOURCES:**

These books are available on Three-Day Loan, and might prove useful for your essays. But you should consult the library for other sources as well.


Hine, Darlene Clark, Wilma King & Linda Reed, eds. “*We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*”: A Reader in Black Women’s History. Carlson, 1995.


Lowndes, Joseph E. *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism*, Yale University Press.


**Course Reader:**

A Course Reader – consisting of the readings for the weekly tutorials – is available for purchase from the bookshop on campus. I would urge you to purchase Reader, but if you are unable to do so, copies will be placed in the Auchmuty Library’s Short Loans Collection.

**Tutorials:**

Tutorials will be conducted as discussion groups (no student presentations, unless you really want them!), with the tutor as chair. They will ensure that you engage with the tutorial readings, enhancing your understanding of the unit’s themes and developing your oral skills. Each member of a tutorial group should attend throughout the programme, do the assigned reading, and participate in discussion. Systematic non-attendance at tutorials without a valid explanation may result in failure.

Your contribution to tutorials is expected to be an informed and will be worth up to fifteen (15) percent of your final grade. You’ll be assessed on the quantity and quality of your participation in tutorial discussion. Lots of participation which doesn’t reflect preparation or insight won’t do you much good, but even a few well-prepared and insightful interventions once-in-a-while will gain a good mark. Consistent participation reflecting close engagement with the recommended readings and genuine insight will result in a high mark (it’s one of the few areas where I sometimes give 100 percent!). Tutorials are a collective experience. Particularly high marks, then, will be awarded to students who stimulate discussion and encourage others to participate. Overriding others or aggression will be penalised.

As you’re studying the various readings from the Course Reader, you should be looking not just for “information” about the topic, but should also be interrogating the primary and secondary sources under consideration:

• what do the primary sources suggest?
• what disagreements can you discern between various historians’ accounts?
• have historians’ interpretations changed over time?
• why have historians disagreed?

The criteria for assessing tutorial participation are listed below.

**Tutorial participation marks will be allocated as follows:**

**High Distinction**
You have contributed substantially to the discussion. You worked hard to integrate your reading for tutorials & lectures into an overall understanding of what each topic was about, and how it related to the course as a whole. You made informed and thoughtful contributions that helped others in the tutorial to understand the topic.

**Distinction**
You participated substantially each week. You demonstrated a conscientious effort to come to terms with the topic each week and relate it to the course as a whole.

**Credit**
You participated regularly in discussions, demonstrating that you have made an effort to come to terms with the topic each week.

**Pass**
You contributed a few words in most tutorials, based on the required readings.

**Fail**
You have said nothing each week, or have only once or twice participated. Remember: attendance is not part of this grade; you must contribute to the discussion.
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR TWO

World War Two helped African Americans by providing new employment opportunities in the services and in industry. It also raised expectations of advancement towards equality, created dilemmas for black leaders pursuing that goal, and eventually caused disillusionment by providing new evidence of white prejudice. The essence of the African American military experience is captured in the article by Reynolds. We will spend a little time discussing the hostility that blacks faced both in uniform and in civilian life. But more time will be spent looking at the different approaches of black leaders and organizations to the challenges and opportunities of the war, and at the overall impact of the war on the lives of African Americans. What were the dilemmas faced by the National Negro Congress at the start of the war? What was the “Double V” and why does Lee Finkle suggest its aims were “conservative”? What important observations does Sitkoff make about the black-white relations during World War Two? Finally, from your general knowledge and the readings provided, what would you say was the relevance of World War Two and the activities of A. Philip Randolph and CORE to the later civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s?

Readings (in Course Reader):

Broderick & Meier, eds, writings by and/or about The National Negro Congress; A. Philip Randolph, James Farmer, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).


WEEK 3

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT AND THE EMERGENCE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING

In the mid-1950s Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as the leader of a movement which promised to end by nonviolent activism the centuries-long second-class citizenship of African Americans in the United States. Although King’s emergence must be seen and understood in the context of a long history of black resistance to white racism, the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott was certainly “the event” that brought him to the attention of America and the world. After watching last week’s documentary and completing the readings listed below, you should have a solid understanding of the Boycott and its historical significance. What, then, was the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and what were its underlying causes? How effective was the organization and strategic decision-making of the local black leadership? Why did King – and not E.D. Nixon – become the symbol of African American resistance in Montgomery? What was significant about his oratory? Could the Boycott have been successful without King? If not, why not? How would you describe Rosa Parks? And more broadly, what role did black women play in Montgomery? When writing about the Boycott, do you think historians should focus on the contributions of King and the black leadership, or the grassroots activists whose mobilization ultimately made the campaign possible?

Readings:


WEEK 4

WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED:

BROWN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

On 17 May 1954 the United States Supreme Court handed down the landmark ruling in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka that laws mandating racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional. The unanimous verdict, which overturned the pernicious “separate but equal” doctrine established 58 years earlier in Plessy v Ferguson, rocked the nation to its foundations and provoked a serious backlash across the (white) South. After watching last week’s documentary and completing the readings listed below, you should have a solid understanding of the Brown decision and its meaning for American race relations. In today’s tutorial, our conversation will revolve around the following questions. What was the historical significance of Brown in the context of 1954? How important were the activities of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in securing the decision? What arguments did the NAACP’s lawyers deploy to support their position that segregated schooling needed to be abolished? How convincing do you find these arguments? Why was education earmarked (by activists) as a critical sphere in the struggle for racial equality? What was the “popular response to Brown,” and to what extent can this week’s primary sources be considered an accurate reflection of public sentiment? Why do you think white Southerners, in particular, responded so aggressively to the Brown verdict?

Readings:


WEEK 5

MARTIN LUTHER KING: NONVIOLENCE AND THE “DREAM”

Martin Luther King, civil rights leader, advocate of social justice and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, inspired and sustained the struggle for freedom, nonviolence and interracial unity in the United States and internationally. In this tutorial, we will look closely at the words and deeds of a man whose legacy continues to shape the lives and destinies of millions of people worldwide. Although King rarely took time to defend himself against his opponents, in his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” we see the civil rights leader responding to critics who warned that his strategy of nonviolent resistance would have the effect of inciting “civil disturbances” (code for retaliatory violence from white segregationists). In this historic essay, how did King defend himself, and the civil rights movement generally, from such criticism? What connections did he draw between morality and law? Why did he support nonviolent methods to combat white supremacy? In other words, how did he justify nonviolence in philosophical and practical terms? Do you think King’s methods for procuring change were moderate or radical, conservative or militant? How convincing or compelling was his approach to the “race problem”? Finally, what do you believe were the major factors that shaped the civil rights leader’s philosophical worldview and determined his political trajectory?

Readings:

Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”


WEEK 6

MALCOLM X: THE BALLOT OR THE BULLET?

After converting to the Nation of Islam while in prison in the late 1940s, former pimp and street hustler Malcolm Little assumed the name Malcolm X (the X symbolizing the “African family name that he could never know,” in contrast to “Little”, the name derived from “the white blue-eyed devil” who had owned his forbearers). By the late 1950s Malcolm X had become the leading voice of the Black Muslim movement in America, preaching the wickedness of the white race and championing black nationalism – the idea that blacks should control their own communities and oppose white racism “by any means necessary.” Eventually Malcolm broke with the Nation of Islam and moderated his views, but he continued to advocate self defense instead of nonviolence and his rhetoric dripped with what might be called radical rage – a fierce articulation of the physical and psychical wounds caused by white supremacy. In this tutorial we will examine the nature of Malcolm X’s thought and activism. Discussion will revolve around (but not be confined to) the following questions. What were the major arguments presented by Malcolm X in his 1964 “Ballot or Bullet” speech, and how convincing do you find these arguments? What was his view of the civil rights movement? How compelling is his defense of violence as a political strategy? To what extent can Malcolm be considered a genuine revolutionary? How did he define revolution? How did you account for the widespread support this black nationalist leader enjoyed in the black community, especially in the North? Was Malcolm X’s brand of politics a realistic alternative to the integrationist vision of Martin Luther King? And finally, why do you think Malcolm subscribed to militant black nationalism?

Readings:


“Malcolm X Defines Revolution, 1963.”


WEEK 7

THE GHETTO UPHEAVALS: RIOTS OR REVOLTS?

From 1965 to 1968 virtually every major city in the North and West of the United States experienced some sort of violence in its black ghetto. The uprising in the Watts area of Los Angeles in 1965 was the first to command major national and international attention. The peak of the rioting came in 1967 with 164 nationwide “disturbances,” and with prolonged revolts in New York, New Jersey and Detroit providing vivid television images of burning and looting. The last major sequence of riots followed the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. Race riots were not a new phenomenon; indeed, they had recurred throughout American history. This week’s readings, however, suggest several ways in which the character of the 1960s riots was quite different. What, then, was unusual about the 1960s upheavals? What is the connection between the ghetto riots and the general ferment of 1960s radicalism – students protest, the Vietnam War, conscription, etc? How important was media publicity? If poverty was the cause, why did the riots occur at a time when Lyndon Johnson had declared a “War on Poverty”? What, according to Kenneth O’Reilly, was the role of J. Edgar Hoover and his FBI in responding to the riots? Were the riots mainly economic, cultural or political? Are you more convinced by the arguments of Fogelson or Banfield? Finally, what were the connections with the new circumstances of black activism; the white violence against the non-violent civil rights movement in the South; and the shift from non-violence to “Black Power” among some leaders?

Readings:


**WEEK 8**

**BLACK POWER AND THE “OTHER” MARTIN LUTHER KING**

Between 1964 and 1968, as black riots/rebellions engulfed almost every major American city outside of the South, a tremendous outpouring of frustration and discontent served notice to the nation (and the middle-class black leadership) that a shift in the basic orientation of the black freedom movement was afoot. On 16 June 1966, in Greenwood, Mississippi, Stokely Carmichael announced: “This is twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain’t going to jail no more. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power.” Black Power was an emotive, threatening term. Although both its advocates and opponents struggled to define precisely what it meant in political and economic terms, it was undoubtedly a consciousness-raising, energizing slogan that encouraged blacks to lay claim to a distinctive culture.

In his 1966 article, “What We Want”, how does Carmichael define and explain Black Power? What was the historical context from which the philosophy emerged and what were its political demands? What kind of organization were the Black Panthers? What do you think of the Party’s platform? What arguments does Martin Luther King deploy to refute Black Power ideology? How convincing do you find his arguments when placed beside Peniel Joseph’s? Although King formally rejected black political militancy, by 1967/68 there was plenty of evidence to suggest that he too had been radicalized by political currents in American society. What was this evidence? Why did King become more radical? In light of his personal/political evolution, is it accurate to depict King as an idealistic dreamer?

**Readings:**


Martin Luther King, *Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community?*, Boston, 1967, pp. 23-66


WEEK 9

THE 1970S
BACKLASH, BUSING AND THE POLITICS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

After the widespread radicalism of the 1960s American society in the 1970s retreated into conservatism on many fronts long before the advent of Ronald Reagan’s presidency at the start of the next decade. In this period African Americans achieved political power in several hundred American cities. To a small extent this was the result of considerable numbers moving into the middle class. To a much greater extent it was the result of economic and demographic change which left blacks and other disadvantaged minorities numerically dominant in decaying inner city areas. A recent lecture will have stressed the ways in which these trends meant that the new black political power was unaccompanied by any economic power to address the problems of the ghettos.

The purpose of this tutorial is not to look at this particular issue but at the way these trends contributed to a conservative backlash against the recent advances in civil rights. After all, the upward social mobility of many African Americans in the late 1960s and early 1970s provided ammunition for conservative whites, who attributed the growth of the black middle class to unnecessary and unfair affirmative action programs. Most spectacularly the backlash was expressed in widespread and sometimes violent resistance to “busing,” the attempt to achieve racial balance in education by transporting children to schools some distance from their place of residence. Was the backlash primarily an emotional outburst of prejudice or did it have valid intellectual arguments grounded in the historical and sociological circumstances we have studied in this course? Why – according to Thomas Sowell – was busing implemented in the first place? What were the major arguments for and against race-based affirmative action in the 1970s? If you had been alive and politically active in that decade, would you have supported or opposed the policy? After reading the different arguments presented by D’Souza, Fish and Johnson, do you support affirmative action now? If so, why? If not, why not?

Readings:


Dinesh D’Souza, Letters to a Young Conservative, Basic Books, 2002, pp. 91-99

Stanley Fish, “Reverse Racism or How the Pot Got to Call the Kettle Black,” Atlantic Monthly, November 1993, pp. 128-136.

TWO BLACK AMERICAS, SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL?
RACIAL POLITICS IN THE REAGAN ERA

Since the civil rights revolution of the 1960s considerable numbers of African Americans have moved into the middle classes. Some have achieved fame and wealth as sportspeople and show business personalities; others, roles in government and academia that would have been exceptional a generation earlier. This process has widened the gap between upwardly mobile African Americans and those left behind in poverty in the ghettos of the large cities and led some commentators to argue that the fundamental divisions in American society at the end of the twentieth century need to be seen in terms of class rather than race. In today’s tutorial, we will focus on the 1980s and explore the class schisms within the black community that became so pronounced in Reagan’s America. Our discussion will revolve around (but not be confined to) the following questions. What arguments does Manning Marable advance to explain racial poverty and privilege in the Reagan era? How should we interpret and assess these arguments? To what extent do Marable’s explanations for the growth of the black underclass resemble William Julius Wilson’s thesis? What variable or dynamic does Wilson believe is the basis of contemporary black disadvantage? And how plausible, in your view, is his position? What does the article on the Cosby Show reveal that is significant about the 1980s African American community? Finally, after reading Jesse Jackson’s speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, discuss some of the reasons for his failure to secure the Party’s presidential nomination.

Readings:


WEEK 11

THE L.A. RIOTS AND THE O.J. SIMPSON CASE:
RACIAL UNREST IN THE 1990S

In the late 1970s the black liberal sociologist William Julius Wilson published a book provocatively entitled *The Declining Significance of Race*. Appearing on the stage of history at a time of conservative revival, the book was deliberately misinterpreted by right-wing intellectuals to mean that “race didn’t matter anymore.” By the 1990s these intellectuals were pointing to the growing ranks of the black middle class and insisting that King’s dream of a colour-blind America had finally been achieved. But two events from that decade suggested that the nation had a long way to go to overcome its racial divisions. The Los Angeles Riots in 1992 and the O.J. Simpson case in 1995 highlighted the extent to which racial controversy and polarization continued to haunt America. Why did the Los Angeles Riots occur? Were they a justifiable political expression of black rage (in the face of continuing white racism) or a manifestation of the cultural dysfunction long associated with the black underclass. Marable, Puddington and Watts advance different arguments concerning the Riots. Whose arguments do you find the most convincing, and why? The final article for the week – by Thernstrom and Fetter – covers the O.J. Simpson case, which I discussed briefly in last week’s lecture. Why is this case so significant in the context of American race relations? Is there any indication that Thernstrom and Fetter’s assessment of the case may be biased? What does Manning Marable say about Simpson, and why is this noteworthy?

Readings:


BARACK OBAMA AND THE POLITICS OF RACIAL HOPE

If a “turning point” is a period or moment in history when significant change takes place, then the swearing in of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States in January 2009 must surely rank among the most extraordinary turning points in American history. One hundred and forty six years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation ending slavery, and 46 years after Martin Luther King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech summoning the nation to the struggle for racial equality, the United States finally has its first black president. That a nation which enslaved blacks for centuries and, thereafter, subjected them to 100 years of second-class citizenship, has now chosen an African American to be the most powerful human being on earth is a truly stunning development that no-one could seriously have predicted 40 years ago when Martin Luther King was tragically gunned down. Perhaps it is a sign that in 2008/09 America’s democratic principles have at last moved beyond the tribalism of race? Drawing on your general knowledge, this week’s readings as well as other material covered in this course, assess the plausibility of such a claim. In this week’s tutorial, we will also consider the following questions. What are Obama’s views on race (as expressed in his 2006 book The Audacity of Hope)? How would you characterize these views? Does his 2008 election victory signal the “end of racism” in America and the dawn of a new color-blind era? How important was race as a factor in the election itself? What do Obama critics – such as Muravchik – say about him, and how we should we interpret their assessments?

Readings:


