Instructor: Sara Rzeszutek  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 or by appointment  
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**Course Description**

This course examines the twentieth century Black Freedom Movement, with particular emphasis on the struggle for civil rights between World War II and the 1970s. We will explore the relationship of widely differing styles of protest and desired outcomes, using race, class, gender, sexuality, and region as important categories of analysis. We will also work to understand the relationship between grassroots activism, large regional and national organizations, and the federal government. This will allow us to focus on how the larger national and international political contexts shape both methods of struggle and forms of resistance to change. Finally, we will assess the long-term political, social, cultural, and economic impacts of the civil rights movement.

The following syllabus is subject to change at my discretion in order to satisfy the goals of the course.

**Required Text:**
The text for this course is available at the Rutgers University bookstore. Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine, General Editors, *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle*  
OPTIONAL: Steven Lawson & Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*  
Additional readings are available on the course website.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance Policy**

- Students are required to attend class, arrive on time, and participate. One unexcused absences is allowed; two unexcused absences will result in a full letter grade deduction from the final grade; three unexcused absences will result in a grade of F for the course. On excused absences, the Rutgers catalog states that: "the recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions." In addition, students are expected to arrive to class on time and ready to participate. Frequent lateness will also negatively affect your grade: 3 lates will count as one unexcused absence.
Participation --- 10% OF FINAL GRADE

• Participation in discussion is a course requirement. Participation will be assessed based on the quality of contribution, consistency and improvement, and engagement in class material. At the beginning of each class, students will each be expected to state one thing they found interesting from the assigned reading. Classes will also include group activities and discussion.

Response Papers & Discussion Questions--- 50% OF FINAL GRADE

• Each week, students will be expected to turn in one reading response and one discussion question based on the assigned readings for the week. Reading responses are designed to help you focus on important aspects of assigned readings, interpret material, and understand the historical significance of events, groups, individuals, and themes. Students will be divided into two groups: Group A will have reading responses due on Tuesdays, and Group B will have reading responses due on Thursdays. Five reading responses are required, total. The reading response question for every class is:

What is interesting about the assigned reading, and why is it important?

Responses should be roughly 1 page, double-spaced. In addition, each student is required to write one question for discussion per reading response. These questions should be analytical and open-ended. Response papers and questions are due in the Sakai drop box or via email (srzeszutek@history.rutgers.edu) by noon on the day they are due. I will read them before class and use them to direct discussion.

Final Paper--- 40% OF FINAL GRADE

• Students will be responsible for a 6-8 page paper due at the end of the term. The paper is designed to assess not only your knowledge of the readings, but also how well you can interpret and connect the important themes we have covered. It will function as a final exam to measure your grasp of the material from the course and as an opportunity for you to think more broadly and reflectively on the themes from the course. The assignment is listed on the last page of the syllabus.

Assignments are expected on time in the format specified on the syllabus.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is a violation of the Rutgers code of academic integrity. Any student found plagiarizing in this course will have his or her cause sent to the appropriate dean for adjudication. Plagiarism is defined as follows on http://history.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=1 47:

“Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in
one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc, need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.”

If you have any questions or are confused in any way about what constitutes plagiarism, please discuss it with me. I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and will send any suspected plagiarism directly to the dean.

All of your written work must contain the following statement:

“I understand the definition of plagiarism and I certify that the material handed in constitutes my original work.”

Class Schedule

7/8 – Race, repression, and resistance in the twentieth century United States

7/10 – The Popular Front, World War II, and the rise of Modern Civil Rights
READINGS: Esther Cooper Jackson: This Is My Husband: Fighter for His People, Political Refugee ON SAKAI
Eyes on the Prize: Prologue, 1-34

7/15 -- Awakenings & Fighting Back
READINGS: EOTP, 35-106

7/17 – Ain’t Scared of Your Jails & No Easy Walk
READINGS: EOTP, 107-165

7/22 – Mississippi: Is This America & Bridge to Freedom
READINGS: EOTP, 166-227

7/24 – The Time Has Come
READINGS: EOTP, 228-287

7/29 – Two Societies & Power!
READINGS: EOTP, 288-382
7/31 – The Promised Land & Ain’t Gonna Shuffle No More
READINGS: EOTP, 383-499

8/5 – A Nation of Law?
READINGS: EOTP, 500-590

8/7 – The Keys to the Kingdom
READINGS: EOTP, 591-655

8/12 – Back to the Movement
READINGS: EOTP, 656-722

FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON, AUGUST 13 VIA EMAIL OR IN SAKAI DROP BOX. ANY ESSAYS TURNED IN AFTER THAT TIME WILL BE PENALIZED.

Assignment:
Using the readings, discussions, films, and lectures, write a 6-8 page essay in which you engage with one of the major debates in civil rights history. Although you are required to argue for the importance of one side or the other of the given debate, you will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the positives and negatives of both sides. You may focus on specific events, but you should be sure to situate your essay in the larger context and long-term development of the Civil Rights Movement.

DEBATE OPTIONS:
• Self-defense/armed resistance vs. Nonviolent direct action/passive resistance
• Group-centered leadership vs. charismatic leadership*
• Top-down (government) vs. bottom-up (grassroots)*

*If you are interested in either of these themes, you should seriously consider buying the optional text, which will provide a historical frame for these debates.

You should also take into consideration the following themes:
• Gender
• Class
• The role of white liberals and black nationalism
• The implementation of civil rights gains

Your essay must include proper citations and draw on specific evidence from the class.

I am happy to read drafts, even in the early stages of development. If you would like me to provide feedback, I will accept drafts until 6pm on August 10.