

# History Workshop 506: 299 04

## The Black Panther Party in History and Memory

### Course Description

What is history? How do historians make sense of the past? What kinds of sources do they use and how do they reckon with competing narratives and contradictory evidence? What role do oral history, popular memory, newspapers, official documents, and private recollections play in how we determine, analyze, and construct historical narratives?

This course will address these broad questions of research design, interpretation, and analysis. It is intended to fulfill a requirement for the history major by exploring core questions about how historians go about researching, writing, and interpreting the past.

In this section of History Workshop, we will be using the Black Panther Party (BPP) as a lens through which to approach the historical imagination and its methods. In addition to being introduced to different types of historical sources including published and unpublished secondary sources, mainstream newspapers, memoirs, oral history, oral sources, and visual culture, we will also learn about different types of social history analysis including how to research social movements, analyze regional differences between different chapters of the BPP, the role of state repression in shaping the historical trajectory of the Panthers, the importance of women's history, gender and sexual politics to the BPP; and finally, how do we use history to inform and correct popular myths about the organization that J. Edgar Hoover called, "the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States." The timing of this course has a special meaning as this October will be the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party.

By the end of the semester, students will have a set of practical and conceptual tools that they can transfer to other history courses and the practice of doing history.