

In honor of the Black Panther Party's 50th anniversary of its founding in October 1966, this research seminar will examine the history of the Black Panther Party and its links to other American social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. We will begin the semester reading secondary literature, memoirs, and primary sources accounts from the period. The rest of the class will be devoted to students developing a primary source paper based on the Black Panther newspaper and government publications on the Party itself. Possible research topics include regional histories of the Party in Chicago, Los Angeles or New York City, studies of the Panthers' ties to New Left groups, women and the BPP, gay liberation and the BPP, or more targeted accounts examining state repression and the BPP. The full run of the BPP newspaper and of FBI, state, and Congressional publications on the Panthers are not available on line, microfilm, and through a large database Rutgers has recently acquired. This should make for a very exciting semester where students can create original papers fully based on original documents. Because these electronic sources have been made available to the public so recently, students have an exciting opportunity to write about subjects that have received little scholarly attention and to do truly original work.