

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT HIST 5674, CRN 16871

Syllabus for Teachers in the **Teaching American History** Program
Room 715, Higher Education Center, Roanoke
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Tuesdays 5:00 – 7:50 (1/16 – 5/8, except 2/13, 3/6, and 4/17), Spring 2007

Graduate catalogue course description: “This course will explore the modern U.S. Civil Rights Movement, 1930s – 1960s, a combination of litigation, direct action, and political efforts that sought to eliminate the various facets of Jim Crow, particularly segregation and disfranchisement, from the nation in general and the South in particular.”

The Civil Rights Movement is often conceived as a series of events during the decade 1954/55 – 1964/65 — between *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or between the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A more adventurous definition might begin the story no later than the March on Washington Movement in 1941, and what I call “the greatest march that never was.” An even more expansive conception might hold that the story of the struggle for black freedom and equality had no particular beginning and has had no end. Moreover, a larger definition of the struggle for equality, especially in the 1960s and after, might well include the efforts by white women, deaf people, and other groups — parallel movements or movements partly spawned by, and often modeling, the black civil rights struggle.

The spring 2007 edition of “The Civil Rights Movement” (HIST 5674) a graduate course designed for public school teachers in the Roanoke Valley area, will adopt the middling conception, emphasizing African Americans in the years from the late 1930s through the 1960s. Largely a reading and discussion class, it will entail some work of the sort that might be done in a readings class, a research course, or a methods course.

Everyone will write a short research paper (2,000–2,500 words, 7–10 pages, plus citations; I’ll provide guidance on this) — probably using materials locally available, whether electronically or at the Roanoke Public Library or in the libraries of Roanoke College, Hollins University, or Virginia Tech. I am assured that, as a Tech student, you have access to such on-line tools as LexisNexis, JSTOR, and the electronic *New York Times* (on the library web page, go to “off campus sign in”).

Everyone will also work up a plan, at the appropriate grade level, for introducing materials of this course to your teaching situation — possibly including films like “Eyes on the Prize” but also getting students engaged in the raw materials of constructing a history, whether on a local event, a statewide phenomenon, or a national development.

For most class meetings, there will be a common reading assignment, averaging approximately 70 pages for each of eleven weeks, in one of the nine assigned books. We will be reading all of some books, but just portions large or small of others; I want you to sample the possibilities, and I want you to have these books on your shelf after the semester is over. In addition, especially for the other class meetings, we will discuss (1) any additional short reading (to be distributed or selected); (2) the short research projects everyone will be doing; and/or (3) the lesson plans everyone will be

developing. To a substantial degree, you'll be working together and learning from each other.

In advance of each class meeting (by the beginning of that day), please send me (in an e-mail) either (1) an approximately 300-word response to the latest reading/s (when we have assigned readings) or (2) something else you have written for that week (from a research project or lesson plan).

WEEK 1. Jan. 16. Getting acquainted and organized. Books get distributed.

2. Jan. 23. Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, preface through chapter 3 (pages 3–87); and look through the bibliographical essay. The classic formula, from a regional perspective.

3. Jan. 30. Sitkoff, *Struggle for Black Equality*, chapters 4–6 (pages 88–183).

4. Feb. 6. Peter Wallenstein, *Blue Laws and Black Codes: Conflict, Courts, and Change in Twentieth-Century Virginia* (2004), introduction (pages 1–14), chapter 3 (just 60–66), and chapters 4–5 (pages 82–141). A state study, from the Upper South, beginning the story far earlier.

5. Feb. 13. NO CLASS MEETING. Betty Kilby Fisher, *Wit, Will & Walls* (2002), chapter 3 (pages 75–113), telling her own story. Also: begin considering your research project.

6. Feb. 20. Betty Kilby Fisher; plus Ruby Bridges, *Through My Eyes* (1999), all (pages 1–64).

7. Feb. 27. Constance Curry et al., *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* (2000), foreword, preface, “the authors,” and any one chapter (about 45 pages), by Joan C. Browning, Dorothy Dawson Burlage, Constance Curry, Casey Hayden, or Sue Thrasher.

8. March 6. NO CLASS MEETING. Wallenstein, *Blue Laws and Black Codes*, chapter 6 to end (pages 142–216). Also: research projects; lesson plans.

9. March 13. Frank Fitzpatrick, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game That Changed American Sports* (1999), acknowledgments, rosters (page 17), scoring (244), and chapters 5–7 (pages 104–178, or you may substitute other chapters).

10. March 20. Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (2007), chapter 23 to end (pages 344–408). Also: research projects; lesson plans.

11. March 27. James C. Cobb, *The Brown Decision, Jim Crow, and Southern Identity* (2005), all (pages 1–75). Also: research projects; lesson plans.

12. April 3. Renee Christine Romano and Leigh Raiford, eds., *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (2006), about 50 pages in all: the introduction; the introductions to parts 1, 2, 3, and 4; and any one or two chapters. Also: research projects; lesson plans.

13. April 10. Short reading/s to be distributed; synthesis; research projects; lesson plans.

14. April 17. NO CLASS MEETING. Work on your research project and lesson plan.

15–16. April 24, May 1. Short reading/s; synthesis; reports from research projects and lesson plans.