



FREEDOM SUMMER

A course co-created by
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Note: Dr. Burrowes and Dr. Levy first designed this course while holding predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships at the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies at the University of Virginia. The idea for the course was conceived by the department chair, Dr. Deborah McDowell, as a part of the 50th anniversaries of transformative events during the 1960s. This syllabus is based on summer session, which meets Monday – Friday, five days each week for six weeks. Educators should amend time allotted for readings and themes when teaching a course twice each week over 10 – 16 weeks. Below is a synthesis of reading material, assignments and documents over two courses; the first taught during summer session at the University of Virginia and the second taught to high school seniors enrolled in the Telluride Association Summer Program. Supplemental material includes chapters that were assigned in the first iteration of this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION



This course examines one of the most radical moments in civil rights history—the 1964 Mississippi Project. Widely known as “Freedom Summer,” this civil rights campaign organized a multi-faceted program that challenged white supremacy and racial terror through the establishment of Freedom Schools, voter registration drives, and an alternative political party called the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Even more, Freedom Summer called on Black women and men from the community, many of whom were poor and uneducated, to lead their own movement.

It was during the Freedom Summer campaign that activists debated the merits of non-violence vs. self-defense; the limits of charismatic male leadership; and the role of white allies in the struggle for Black freedom. In the face of extraordinary violence and economic deprivation,

Black Mississippians waged one of the most powerful, yet understudied, movements in civil rights history, and they modeled the maxim that “ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things.”

Using primary sources, music, film, and scholarly texts, students will explore the 1964 Freedom Summer Project in order to understand diverse struggles, leadership styles, and competing interpretations of what it means to be free. Borrowing directly from the original Freedom School curriculum, students will contemplate the “myths of society” as well as theoretical and conceptual frameworks necessary for the creation of a just society. Students will situate Freedom Summer in the larger context of the Black Freedom Movement in the United States, the Cold War, independence and human rights struggles.

Finally, this course seeks to draw connections through a roaming classroom format in which we gather at various historic sites in our surrounding community.

COURSE MATERIAL

Autobiography

- Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. New York: Dial Press, 1968.

Book Chapters from the following texts:

Carruthers, Charlene A. *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.

Holsaert, Faith S. and Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, eds. *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

McGuire, Danielle L. *At the Dark End of the Street—Black Women, Rape, and Resistance: A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.

Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Payne, Charles M. and Carol Sills Strickland, eds. *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African American Tradition*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.

Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2018.

Umoja, Akinyele Omowale. *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.

On-line Sources

- Civil Rights Movement Archive website, Summer Project Documents
<http://www.crmvet.org/docs/msfsdocs.htm>
- SNCC Gateway, Summer 1964 – Freedom Summer
<https://snccdigital.org/events/freedom-summer/>
- Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement
<http://www.msccivilrightsveterans.com/about-vmcrm.html>

Documentaries

- *Eyes on the Prize: Mississippi: Is this America?*
- *Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk*
- *The Murder of Emmett Till*
- *Freedom Riders*
- *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Freedom Summer*
- *Who is Nina Simone?*

COURSE OUTLINE

Week One: **Civil Rights Movement Re-mix**

Week Two: **Mapping the Movement**

Week Three: **Racial Terror in Mississippi**

Week Four: **Redefining Education: The Role of Freedom Schools**

Week Five: **Challenging the Political System: The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party**

Week Six: **Freedom Visions**

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After taking this seminar, students will be able to:

- Identify and critique the key strategies and programs of the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964
- Place Freedom Summer 1964 in broader historical, national, and international contexts
- Deconstruct central concepts such as freedom, civil rights, democracy, race, equality, gender, citizenship, and non-violence
- Identify many of the myths surrounding the civil rights movement and contemplate how these myths function politically
- Effectively evaluate historical, contemporary, musical, visual, and written sources
- Strengthen analytical, reading, writing, and oratory skills
- Produce a solid research project

*This course will give students a strong background for studying the humanities and social sciences including such fields as Africana/Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, American Studies, History, Political Science and Global Studies.

GROUP FINAL PROJECT

Working in groups, students will be expected to produce **one** of the following projects on a social justice issue or movement related to the themes and concepts of the course. **This is your opportunity explore a topic of interest to you!**

- 1) A 7-8-page journalistic article with a central argument
- 2) A screenplay for a 10-minute narrative short (approximately 10 pages).
- 3) A treatment for a 10-minute documentary short (approximately 6-7 pages).

Notes: Your research for this project should include a **MINIMUM** of 4-5 scholarly books and 4-5 academic articles. You should explore the historical basis for the topic you examine. Citations should be in Chicago Style. <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Deadlines:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Monday, June 24, 2019: | Project Ideas |
| Wednesday, July 3, 2019: | Project Proposal and Bibliography |
| Tuesday, July 9, 2019: | Annotated Bibliography (Draft 1) |
| Friday, July 19, 2019: | First Project Draft & Annotated Bibliography (Draft 2) |
| Friday, July 26, 2019: | Second Project Draft |
| Thursday, August 1, 2019: | Final Project Completed! |

READING SCHEDULE

*NOTE: There are assignments due on the first day of class.

WEEK 1 – CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT RE-MIX

6/24 – M **Introductions & Course Overview**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Watch [Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk](#) (1963-1966)
- b) Brainstorm ideas for final project.

IN-CLASS

Conceptual Analysis: Race; Racism; Civil Rights; Human Rights; Black Freedom Movement

6/25 – T **Catalyst for Change – From Emmet Till to Trayvon Martin**

Discussion Question: What does it mean to be a “catalyst” for change?

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Watch *The Murder of Emmet Till*
- b) Carruthers, Notes and Chapter 2, “Reviving the Black Radical Imagination”

IN-CLASS

Conceptual Analysis: Black Lives Matter; White Supremacy; Anti-Black Racism

6/26 – W **Gender, Leadership, and the Myth of Charismatic (Male) Leadership**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapters 1 – 3
- b) Alicia Garza Interview in *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*, p. 145 – 175
- c) [The Combahee River Collective Statement](#)

IN-CLASS

Resource: *Freedom Riders* documentary

Conceptual Analysis: Intersectionality; Gender; Black Liberation

6/27 – Th

Challenging Traditional Narratives of Passive Resistance

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Read the assigned chapter below using the critical reading guidelines provided in class.
- b) Prepare notes for small group discussion and peer-teaching jigsaw activity.
 - Umoja, Chapter 4: “Local People Carry the Day: Freedom Summer and Challenges to Nonviolence in Mississippi,” in *We Will Shoot Back*, p. 83 – 120

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“Rugged, Ragged ‘SNICK’: What it is and What it does,” crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Conceptual Analysis: Self-Defense, Nonviolence

Skills Review: Critical Reading, Note-taking, Oral Communication

Supplemental Material

- Payne, Chapter 3: “Give Light and the People Will Find a Way: The Roots of an Organizing Tradition,” in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 67 – 102

6/28 – F

Movement Music

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Click on the two links below to read the summaries of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project.
- b) Take notes on the “key points” to remember about Freedom Summer. How do these summaries differ? Be prepared to discuss in small groups.
- c) After reading these two summaries and taking notes on key points, write a 5 – 7 sentence paragraph summarizing the Freedom Summer Project.

[“What Was the 1964 Freedom Summer Project,”](#)

Wisconsin Historical Society

[“Freedom Summer,”](#) SNCC Digital Gateway

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“Mississippi Freedom Summer \(flyer for local MS blacks\),” crmvet.org](#)

- [“Information Sheet – Project Mississippi,” crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Resource: Freedom Songs

Skills Review: Analysis and Interpretation; Note-taking; Paraphrasing vs. Unintentional Plagiarism; Primary Sources

WEEK 2 – MAPPING THE MOVEMENT

7/1 – M **The Civil Rights Movement: A National Struggle**

Homework Assignment Due:

- Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapters 4 – 10
- Take notes following the critical reading guidelines.
- Answer discussion questions and submit online.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“Memo to Friends of Freedom in Mississippi from Bob Moses” crmvet.org](#)
- [“Mississippi Legislates to Outlaw Summer Civil Rights Project” crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Resource: *Eyes on the Prize*, Episode – Mississippi: Is This America?

Conceptual Analysis: *de facto* and *de jure* segregation; state-sponsored segregation

Supplemental Material

- [“Freedom Summer Orientation Briefing, Dr. Vincent Harding,” Documents from Freedom Summer June-August, 1964,” crmvet.org](#)

7/2 – T **An International Challenge**

Homework Assignment Due:

- Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapter 11
- Malcolm X, “The Black Revolution”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPRvQkys4tg>

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“If Only Neshoba County were in the Congo,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)
- [“Statement to Afro-Asian Missions to the United Nations,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Conceptual Analysis: Internationalism; Anticolonialism; Solidarity; Cold War

Skills Review: Academic sources; Chicago Style Citation; Annotated Bibliography; Topic Sentences

7/3 – W

Movement Organizations: From the NAACP to SNCC

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapter 12 – 17
- b) GROUP PROJECT: Project proposal and bibliography due.

IN-CLASS

Primary Sources: Founding Documents of the NAACP, CORE, Urban League; *The Student Voice*, SNCC Newsletter

Skills Review: Online Research of Primary & Secondary Sources related to Black Organizations; Concept Maps and Note-taking

7/4 – Th

NO CLASS MEETING

7/5 – F

NO CLASS MEETING

WEEK 3 – RACIAL TERROR IN MISSISSIPPI

7/8 – M

Introduction to the Mississippi Movement

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) As you view the film below, create a list of key players featured in the documentary.
- b) Write a reflection paper (approximately 500 words) documenting your reactions to the film. Offer an *analysis* in your reflection.

Film: *Freedom on My Mind*

- c) Read *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Part 3

PRIMARY SOURCE

- Jo Ann Ooiman Robinson, "[Mississippi 1964](#)," **crmvet.org**

IN-CLASS

Sources: Profiles from *Hands on the Freedom Plow*

Skills Review: Analytical Writing and Critical Reading

Supplemental Material

- John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, Chapter 11: "That Summer," p. 242 – 271

7/9 – T

On Lynching

Homework Assignment Due:

a) GROUP PROJECT: Annotated Bibliography Due, Draft 1

PRIMARY SOURCES

- "[Hostile letter sent to John Lewis](#)," **crmvet.org**
- "[Security Handbook](#)," **crmvet.org**

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review:

- [SNCC Digital Gateway](#)
- Equal Justice Initiative "[Lynching in America](#)" website
- "[Andrew Goodman's Freedom Summer Application](#)," **crmvet.org**
- "[Andrew Goodman's Freedom Summer Registration Form](#)," **crmvet.org**

Skills Review: Note-taking, Paraphrasing vs. Unintentional Plagiarism

Supplemental Material

- Charles Payne, Intro and Chapter 1: "Setting the Stage," in *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 1 – 28

7/10 – W

On the Gendered Nature of Violence

Homework Assignment Due:

a) McGuire, Chapter 6: "A Black Woman's Body Was Never Hers Alone," in *At the Dark End of the Street*, p. 156 – 173

7/11 – Th **Ella Baker & Community Organizing in the Heart of Dixie**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) [SNCC Debates Freedom Summer](#), SNCC Digital Gateway
- b) Payne, Chapter 8: “Slow & Respectful Work: Organizers and Organizing,” in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 236 – 264

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“Prospectus for the Mississippi Freedom Summer,”](#) **crmvet.org**
- [“Letter to College Professors,”](#) **crmvet.org**
- [“Letter to Parents of Summer Volunteers,”](#) **crmvet.org**

IN-CLASS

Source Review: “*I Have a Dream*” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Phillip Agnew, [“Two Minutes”](#) #OurMarch, Dream Defenders, 2013

Skills Review: Dialectics / Debate; Developing Arguments;

7/12 – F **Movement Music**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Watch *Who is Nina Simone?*
- b) *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapter 22 – 24

IN-CLASS

Resources: Music of Nina Simone, Pete Seeger and Sam Cooke

Skills Review: Writing the Documentary Treatment; Nuts and Bolts of Screenwriting

WEEK 4 – Redefining Education: The Role of Freedom Schools

7/15 – M **Freedom Summer Overview, Part I**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapters 25 – 30
- b) Charlie Cobb, “Organizing Freedom Schools” in *Teaching Freedom*, p. 69 – 74

Supplemental Material

- [“Freedom Schools in Mississippi, 1964 by Liz Fusco, coordinator,”](#)
crmvet.org

7/16 – T **Education for Liberation**

Homework Assignment Due:

- Read pages 1 – 5 in your assigned “Expert Group” package from [civilrightsteaching.org](#). Review the study questions on page 2.
- Take notes on the main ideas and key points you would share with the group and teach to others.

- Expert Group 1: [Origins of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 2: [Teachers of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 3: [Students of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 4: [Freedom School Curricula](#)

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review:

- “Freedom Schools,” in *The Student Voice*, August 5, 1964, p. 2 – 3.
- [“Overview of the Freedom Schools II,”](#) **crmvet.org**

Skills Review: Note-taking, Peer Teaching, Critical Reading, and Critical Thinking

Supplemental Material

- Charles M. Payne, “More Than a Symbol of Freedom: Education for Liberation and Democracy,” *Phi Delta Kappan*. 85, no. 1 (2003): 22 – 28

7/17 – W **The Meaning of Citizenship and Relevant Education**

Homework Assignment Due:

- Read pages 6 – 10 in your assigned “Expert Group” package. Review the study questions on page 2.
- Take notes on the main ideas and key points you would share with the group and teach to others.

- Expert Group 1: [Origins of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 2: [Teachers of Freedom Schools](#)

- Expert Group 3: [Students of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 4: [Freedom School Curricula](#)

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review

- Charles Cobb, “[Some Notes on Education](#),” [crmvet.org](#)

7/18 – Th **Freedom Schools, Scholar-Activism, and the Origins of African American Studies**

Homework Assignment Due:

- Read pages 11 – 15 in your assigned “Expert Group” package. Review the study questions on page 2.
- Take notes on the main ideas and key points you would share with the group and teach to others.

- Expert Group 1: [Origins of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 2: [Teachers of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 3: [Students of Freedom Schools](#)
- Expert Group 4: [Freedom School Curricula](#)

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review

- “[Responses from Freedom School Students to the Burning of Their School](#),” [crmvet.org](#)

Skills Review: Analysis, Close Reading, Peer Teaching, Knowledge Application

7/19 – F **Movement Music**

Homework Assignment Due:

- GROUP PROJECT: 1st Draft Due
- GROUP PROJECT: Annotated Bibliography Due, Draft 2

IN-CLASS

- “[Seeds of Freedom, Medgar Evers Play written and performed by Freedom Schoolers](#),” [crmvet.org](#)

WEEK 5 – Challenging the Political System: The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

7/22 – M Freedom Summer Overview, Part II

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) View *Freedom Summer* documentary and take notes using film analysis guidelines.
- b) Write a 500-word review of documentary.

IN-CLASS

Primary Resource Review

- [MFDP Flyer](#), [crmvet.org](#)
- [“MFDP Freedom Candidates”](#), [crmvet.org](#)
- [“Freedom Vote Platform,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)

Skills Review: Film Analysis, Interpretation, Compare and Contrast Freedom Summer documentaries

7/23 – T The Convention

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Fannie Lou Hamer, [“I am Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)
- b) Malcolm X, “With Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer” in *Malcolm X Speaks*

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Charles Sherrod, [“It was a cool day in August...”](#), [crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review

- [“Fannie Lou Hamer Convention Testimony,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)
- [Video of Fannie Lou Hamer Testimony](#)
- [“Ella Baker Letter to Convention Delegates about MFDP,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)

Supplemental Material

- James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, Chapter 49: “The 1964 Democratic Convention” and Chapter 50: “Profiles in Treachery,” p. 386 – 406

7/24 –W

A Radical Vision of Democracy

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, Chapter 11: “The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the Radical Campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s,” p. 330 – 356
- b) Charles Payne, Chapter 11: “Carrying On: The Politics of Empowerment,” in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 317 – 337

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [“MS Freedom Summer Primer #1,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)
- [“MS Freedom Summer Primer # 3,”](#) [crmvet.org](#)

IN-CLASS

Primary Source Review

- MLK Telegram to White House

Supplemental Material

- Stokely Carmichael, *Ready for the Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)*, Chapter XVII: “They Still Didn’t Get It,” p. 382 – 413; and Chapter XVIII: “The Unforeseen Pitfalls of ‘Success’ American Style,” p. 414 – 438

7/25 –Th

Black Women and Black Empowerment

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Victoria Gray Adams, “They Didn’t Know the Power of Women,” p. 230 – 239 in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, edited by Faith S. Holsaert and Martha Prescod, Norman Noonan.

7/26 – F

Movement Music

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) GROUP PROJECT: 2nd Draft Due

IN-CLASS

Resources: Freedom Singers; Sweet Honey in the Rock “Ella’s Song”; Dream Defenders & Movement Music

WEEK 6 – Freedom Visions

7/29 – M **“What We Want”: Then and Now**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Stokely Carmichael, “Power and Racism: What We Want,” (1966) reprinted in *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 27, no. ¾ (Fall/Winter 1997): 52 – 57
- b) “Black Panther Party Platform, Program, and Rules (1966),” History is a Weapon Website
Link: <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/bpp.html>
- c) Charles E. Jones and Jonathan Gayles, “The World is a Child’s Classroom”: An Analysis of the Black Panther Party’s Oakland Community Schools,” in *Teaching Freedom*, p. 100 – 112
- d) Black Radical Congress Freedom Agenda, April 17, 1999
Link: <http://eblackstudies.org/brc/aboutus/freedomagenda.html>
- e) Movement for Black Lives Policy Platform, “A Vision for Black Lives”
<https://policy.m4bl.org>

Supplemental Material

- Charles Payne, Chapter 10: “Transitions,” in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, p. 284 – 316

7/30 – T **Contemporary Freedom Summers**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Watch Detroit Summer Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR42kBKLyCk>
- b) Robin D.G. Kelley, “Another Freedom Summer,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 44, no. 1 (Autumn 2014): 24 – 41
- c) Nicole Burrowes, “[Building the World We Want to See: A Herstory of Sista II Sista and the Struggle Against State and Interpersonal Violence](#),” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 20, no. 4 (2018): 375 – 398

Supplemental Material on Reparations

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “[The Case for Reparations](#),” *The Atlantic*, June 2014
- Nathan Connolly, “[The Case for Repair: Part 1](#)” (Critique of Coates)
- Nathan Connolly, “[The Case for Repair: Part 2](#)” (Critique of Coates)

7/31 – W **Redefining Leadership**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) Barbara Ransby, “Ella Taught Me: Shattering the Myth of the Leaderless Movement” <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/ella-taught-me-shattering-myth-leaderless-movement>
- b) Carruthers, Chapter 4: “Three Commitments”
- c) Carruthers, Chapter 5: “Five Questions”

8/1 – Th **Group Work**

Homework Assignment Due:

- a) GROUP PROJECT: Final Project Due!

8/2 – F **Final Presentations & Closing**