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*


*Book Chapters from the following texts:*


**On-line Sources**

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

a) *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapters 4 – 10

b) Take notes following the critical reading guidelines.

c) 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:**

a) *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Chapter 11

b) 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
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


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:
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

Supplemental Material
7/16 – T

**Education for Liberation**

**Homework Assignment Due:**

a) Read pages 1 – 5 in your assigned “Expert Group” package from civilrightsteaching.org. Review the study questions on page 2.

b) 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:**

- “Overview of the Freedom Schools II,” crmvet.org

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

**Supplemental Material**


7/17 – W

**The Meaning of Citizenship and Relevant Education**

**Homework Assignment Due:**

a) Read pages 6 – 10 in your assigned “Expert Group” package. Review the study questions on page 2.

b) 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:
b) 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:
a) GROUP PROJECT: 1st Draft Due
b) 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
7/24 – W  A Radical Vision of Democracy

Homework Assignment Due:

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

7/25 – Th  Black Women and Black Empowerment

Homework Assignment Due:

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:

b) “Black Panther Party Platform, Program, and Rules (1966),” History is a Weapon Website
   Link: [http://www.historyisawapon.com/defcon1/bpp.html](http://www.historyisawapon.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
   [https://policy.m4bl.org](https://policy.m4bl.org)

Supplemental Material


7/30 – T  Contemporary Freedom Summers

Homework Assignment Due:

a) Watch Detroit Summer Video:
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR42kBKLyCk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR42kBKLyCk)

Supplemental Material on Reparations

- 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:
  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