

COMPARATIVE FREEDOM MOVEMENTS:
THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH AFRICA

Macalester College

Spring 2006

History 394-01/American Studies 394-01

M nights, 7-10 PM, Old Main 002

Film viewings, T's or W's, 7PM, H402

Peter Rachleff Old Main 306

X 6371

rachleff@macalester.edu

Office hours: MWF, 10AM – Noon and by appointment

Preceptor: Rachel Tenney

rtenney@macalester.edu

Two of the most important movements to challenge institutional racism in the second half of the 20th century were the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa (both of which also had transnational dimensions and connections with each other). This course will explore these two movements in a comparative fashion: the nature of institutionalized racism, structures, ideologies, and identities in each society; the leadership produced by both movements; the functioning of both movements at a grassroots level; the demographics of both movements and the roles of particular cohorts – women, workers, youth, allies – in each movement; internal tensions, conflicts, and diversity of visions, ideologies, strategies, and tactics in each movement; the uses of culture – music, theater, poetry, visual art, etc. – in each movement; and the ultimate consequences of each movement, in transforming its participants and impacting larger social, political, and economic structures. While our primary interest will be in deepening our understanding of these movements, we will also be interested in what their study has to offer us in thinking about the making and sustaining of movements in our own lives, and in the challenge and value of undertaking comparative historical study.

Class sessions will move from lectures to small group discussions and question and answer formats. We will move around quite a bit within our three hour sessions with ever-changing responsibilities for keeping class dynamic. At times we will be dealing with difficult material and it is important that we maintain a classroom environment in which we speak thoughtfully, listen respectfully, and treat each other as colleagues. In our preparation, we will rely on scholarly readings, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, primary documents, music, documentary and dramatic films, and guest speakers.

This is an advanced level course which assumes, first of all, that students are highly motivated to engage this material and are willing to take considerable responsibility for their own learning. Secondly, it assumes that students have some knowledge of comparative racial formations, the analysis of racism and the challenges of anti-racist activism. Thirdly, it assumes that students have some experience interpreting primary documents, weighing historical arguments, and writing analytical papers that present an argument/hypothesis and support it with historical evidence. There are no expectations that students have any prior knowledge of the histories of the United States or South Africa, let alone these particular movements, or any prior experience in a History course at Macalester.

This course is intended to provide a substantial learning experience and students should take it only if you are prepared to make a substantial commitment to it. Meeting only once a week raises the danger that students who assume a passive orientation to the class can become lost. It is imperative that you attend every class session and that you make every effort to see the weekly films, either by attending the group screening on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings or by borrowing the VHS or DVD and seeing it on your own. I encourage you to google each film as we come to it, as the relationship between the context in which it was made to the subject matter is not always apparent yet is important to understand. We will discuss films in class. I hope that you will meet together on your own outside class, that you will come see me or meet with Rachel Tenney, our preceptor, for further discussion, in relation to paper assignments, readings, film viewings, or issues that arise for you. We will also rely on email for conversations between class sessions and as a way to prepare for class discussions, so that we make the most of each session. The reading load is heavy, typically an entire book in a week. There will even be recommended supplementary readings. You will also have access to a terrific electronic journal, SAFUNDI: A JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE AMERICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES. At times, I expect you will skim some of the reading, but our conversations in class will engage the key arguments, information, and thrust of the assigned texts. I will circulate by email questions and issues for focus in preparation for the Monday night sessions, and I encourage you to do the same. Your involvement in class discussions and in the preparation for these discussions will be an important element in your final grade.

The remainder of your grade will depend on three analytical papers of 4-6 pages in length and a 2-3 page paper in response to the American Studies Conference (which will focus on environmental racism). These will not be “research” papers that go beyond the syllabus for information but will ask you to pull together readings, class discussions, and films in response to a question or in exploration of an issue or theme. You will be expected to present and support an argument/hypothesis in each of your papers and to provide footnotes, references, and a bibliography in a scholarly format. I hope you will come and talk with me as you prepare your papers. I will also allow you to revise and resubmit papers for improved grades.

Many of the supplementary and even some of the required readings will be provided in the electronic course folder or through JSTOR. The following books will be available at the college bookstore and, hopefully, on reserve at the library:

Frederickson, WHITE SUPREMACY
Campbell, SONGS OF ZION
Marable, RACE, REFORM, AND REBELLION
Gerhart, BLACK POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA
Payne, I’VE GOT THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM
Bozzoli, THEATRES OF STRUGGLE AND THE END OF APARTHEID
Robnett, HOW LONG? HOW LONG?
Berger, THREADS OF SOLIDARITY
Honey, SOUTHERN LABOR AND BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS

Syllabus
Caution: subject to change

- M 1/23 Introduction to the course
Introduction to freedom movements
Please come prepared to discuss either Garrow, BEARING THE CROSS or
Mandela, LONG WALK TO FREEDOM
- T 1/24 or W 1/25 7 PM Screening (H 402): *Mapantsula* (100 minutes)
- M 1/30 White Supremacy
Reading: Frederickson, WHITE SUPREMACY (try to complete)
Reviews available:
Frederick Cooper, "Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,"
AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW (October 1996), 1122-1138 [JSTOR]
Shula Marks, "White Supremacy: A Review Article," COMPARATIVE
STUDIES IN SOCIETY AND HISTORY (April 1987), 385-397 [JSTOR]
Also recommended:
Greenstein, "The Study of South African Society: Towards a New Agenda
Comparative Historical Inquiry," www.safundi.com, Issue 10 (April 2003)
**Hand out paper topic #1, due W 2/15 at Noon
- T 1/31 or W 2/1 7PM Screening (H 402): *Nothing But a Man* (95 minutes)
- M 2/6 White Supremacy (cont.)
Reading: Frederickson, WHITE SUPREMACY (material left over)
Required readings in electronic course folder:
Cedric Robinson, BLACK MARXISM: chapter 1: "Racial Capitalism: The
Non-Objective Character of Capitalist Development"
Harold Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labor Power in South Africa: From
Segregation to Apartheid"
Leonard Thompson, A HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA: chapter 6: "The
Apartheid Era, 1948-1978" and chapter 7: "Apartheid in Crisis, 1978-1989"
Manning Marable, HOW CAPITALISM UNDERDEVELOPED BLACK
AMERICA, chapter 1; "The Crisis of the Black Working Class"
- T 2/7 or W 2/8 7PM Screening (H402): *Bamboozled* (135 minutes)
- M 2/13 From Comparisons to Connections: The Lens of Religion
Reading: Campbell, SONGS OF ZION

- T 2/14 or W 2/15 7PM Screening (H402): *Boesman and Lena* (85 minutes)
 Recommended preparation: Errol Durbach, "... No Time for Apartheid: Dancing Free of the System in Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena*," in Blumberg and Walder, eds., SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE AS/AND INTERVENTION (electronic course folder)
- W 2/15 Paper #1 due at Noon
- M 2/20 The U.S. Movement: A Macro View
 Reading: Marable, RACE, REFORM, AND REBELLION
 Required reading in electronic course folder:
 Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past"
- T 2/21 or W 2/22 7PM Screening (H402): *Freedom on My Mind* (110 minutes)
- F 2/24 and Sat 2/25 American Studies Conference: *Environmental Racism*
- M 2/27 The South African Movement: A Macro View
 Reading: Gerhart, BLACK POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA
 Required reading in electronic course folder:
 Lalu, "Incomplete Histories: Steve Biko, the Politics of Self-Writing and the Apparatus of Reading"
 Recommended reading in electronic course folder:
 Gibson, "Black Consciousness 1977-1987: The Dialectics of Liberation in South Africa"
 Steve Biko, I WRITE WHAT I LIKE, selections
 **Paper on American Studies Conference due in class
 **Hand out Paper #2 due W 3/22 at Noon
- T 2/28 or W 3/1 7PM Screening (H402): *Cry Freedom* (160 minutes)
 Recommended preparation: Elaine Dubordieu, "Biko, Blackness, and Black Consciousness in Richard Attenborough's *Cry Freedom* (electronic folder)
- M 3/6 The U.S. Movement: A Micro View
 Reading: Payne, I'VE GOT THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM
 Recommended readings in electronic course folder:
 Hill, THE DEACONS FOR DEFENSE: ARMED RESISTANCE AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, ch.4: "Not Selma" and ch.5: "On to Bogalusa"
 Tyson, "Robert Williams, 'Black Power,' and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle," JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY (Sept. 1998) [JSTOR]
- T 3/7 or W 3/8 7PM Screening (H402): *4 Little Girls* (102 minutes)
- 3/13 SPRING BREAK

- M 3/20 The South African Movement: A Micro View
 Reading: Bozzoli, THEATRES OF STRUGGLE
 Screen and discuss in class: *Bopha!*
- T 3/21 or W 3/22 7PM Screening (H402): *Sarafina* (117 minutes)
- W 3/22 Paper #2 due at Noon
- M 3/27 Women in the Movement: U.S. Experiences
 Reading: Robnett, HOW LONG? HOW LONG?
 Recommended readings in electronic course folder:
 Ransby, ELLA BAKER AND THE BLACK FREEDOM MOVEMENT,
 Ch.8: "Mentoring a New Generation of Activists"
- T 3/28 or W 3/29 7PM Screening (H402): *Fannie Lou Hamer* (60 minutes)
- M 4/3 Women in the Movement: South African Experiences
 Reading: Berger, THREADS OF STRUGGLE
 Required reading in electronic course folder:
 Bahati-Kuumba, "'You've Struck a Rock': Comparing Gender, Social
 Movements, and Transformation in the US and South Africa"
 Hiralal, "'We Shall Resist': The Role of Indian Women in the Passive
 Resistance Campaign, 1946-1948" -- access via:
 (<http://www.queensu.ca/sarc/Conferences/1940s/Hiralal.htm>)
 **Hand out paper #3 due W 4/26
- T 4/4 or W 4/5 7PM Screening (H402): *You Have Touched a Rock* (50 minutes)
- M 4/10 Labor in the Movement: U.S. Experiences
 Reading: Honey, SOUTHERN LABOR AND BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS
 Recommended in electronic course folder:
 Montgomery, "Introduction: Union Activists in Industry and in the
 Community," in Huntley and Montgomery, BLACK WORKERS'
 STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN BIRMINGHAM
 Korstad, "CIVIL RIGHTS UNIONISM: TOBACCO WORKERS AND THE
 STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE MID-20TH CENTURY SOUTH:
 Chapter 11: "It Wasn't Just the Wages We Wanted, But Freedom"
 Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class
 Opposition in the Jim Crow South," JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY
 (June 1993) [JSTOR]
- T 4/11 or W 4/12 7PM Screening (H402): *At the River I Stand* (60 minutes)
Finally Got the News (55 minutes)

M 4/17 Labor in the Movement: South African Experiences
Readings in electronic course folder:
Sitas, "The Sweat Was Black: Working for Dunlop"
Maree, ed., THE INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS, 1974-1984: TEN YEARS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR BULLETIN: "Trade Unions and the State: The Question of Legality"; "Overview: Trade Unions and Politics"; and "The Workers' Struggle: What Does FOSATU Stand For?"
Van Niekirk, "The Trade Union Movement in the Politics of Resistance in South Africa"
Hinshaw, "The Politics of Steel in the United States and South Africa"
Kerson, "The Emergence of Powerful Black Unions"

T 4/18 or W 4/19 7PM Screening (H402): *Compelling Freedom* (60 minutes)

M 4/24 Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics
Readings in electronic course folder:
Von Kotze, ORGANIZE AND ACT: THE NATAL WORKERS THEATER MOVEMENT, ch.1: "The Dunlop Play"
Sitas, "Traditions of Poetry in Natal," in Gunner, ed., POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE: THEATRE, POETRY, AND SONG IN SOUTH AFRICA
EAR TO THE GROUND: CONTEMPORARY WORKER POETS
Kivnick, WHERE IS THE WAY: SONG AND STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA
Nixon, HOMELANDS, HARLEM, AND HOLLYWOOD, ch.1: "Harlem, Hollywood, and the Sophiatown Renaissance"
THE FREE SOUTHERN THEATER BY THE FREE SOUTHERN THEATER, selected documents
Cohen-Cruz, "Comforting the Afflicted and Afflicting the Comfortable: The Legacy of the Free Southern Theatre"
Woodard, A NATION WITHIN A NATION: AMIRI BARAKA AND BLACK POWER POLITICS, ch.1: "Groundwork: The Impact of Fidel Castro, Patrice Lumumba, Robert Williams, and Malcolm X on Amiri Baraka and the Black Arts Movement"
We will read and discuss in class:
Negro Ensemble Company, DAY OF ABSENCE (electronic course folder)

T 4/25 or W 4/26 7PM Screening (H402): *Amandla!* (110 minutes)

W 4/26 Paper #3 due at Noon

M 5/2 Limits of the Transformation
Readings in electronic course folder:
Sitas, "The Durban Strikes Thirty Years Later"
There will be additional readings.
Screen and discuss in class: *Ubu and the Truth Commission*