

Macalester College
History 235-01/American Studies 310-01
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COMPARATIVE FREEDOM MOVEMENTS:
THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOUTH AFRICAN ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENTS

This course explores two of the most important movements to challenge institutional racism in the second half of the 20th century. While we will use a comparative framework, we will also be attentive to the transnational dimensions of both movements and their connections with each other. Our approach, of course, will be primarily *historical* – attentive to change over time and aware of the *contexts* within which the movements evolved. Our investigations will be focused around specific *elements* of the movements: the nature of institutional racism, structures, ideologies, and identities in both societies; the leadership produced by both movements; the functioning of both movements at a grassroots level; the demographics of both movements and the roles played by particular *cohorts* – women, workers, young people – in each movement; internal tensions, conflicts, and *diversity* of ideologies and strategies within each movement; the uses of *culture* – music, theater, poetry, visual art, etc. – within each movement; and the ultimate *consequences* of each movement, both in impacting social, political, and economic structures and in transforming its participants. 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.

This is an advanced level course which assumes that you are highly motivated to engage this material and are willing to take considerable responsibility for your own learning. This is especially important because we will meet only once a week and because this will be a large class, both inducements to letting work slide. If you take this course, I assume this means you are committed to *not* letting slide your reading, your writing, your thinking, and your preparation for and participation in class discussions. While I do not assume that you have prior knowledge of either U.S. or South African history (and, therefore, I invite and welcome questions in and out of class about *more* context), I do assume that you have some experience with the study of *racial formations*, racism, and anti-racism. Lastly, I assume that you have some experience weighing historical arguments, interpreting primary documents, and writing analytical papers that present an argument/hypothesis and supporting it with historical evidence.

This course is intended to provide a substantial learning experience, and you should take it only if you are prepared to make a substantial commitment to it. The reading load is heavy, although I am not averse to your developing your *skimming* skills. Meeting once a week for three hours in a sitting frees us up to engage in complex discussions and to leverage multiple learning strategies, but it also means that missing a single class means missing an entire week's work. On two occasions, on the eve of Fall Break and the Thanksgiving holiday, I ask that we meet on Tuesday nights in place of Wednesday. I do expect that significant learning will take place in class, and it is therefore important that you be *present*, be ready to *participate* (by doing the reading), and be *attentive* to your classmates' contributions. Most nights, we will watch and discuss a film as part of class. There will also be rotating responsibilities to summarize

supplementary readings, raise questions, and lead discussions. Your performance in class will have a significant impact on your grade. We will also rely on email for additional readings, conversations between class sessions, questions to consider while reading, and news of out of class learning opportunities. Each week, I will send out a set of questions to consider while you are engaging the core reading. Therefore, I expect you to pay attention to your emails for this class.

Beyond class participation, your grade will depend on two 3-5 page papers during the course and a 4-6 page final due at the end. The in-course papers will ask you to pull together readings and films and offer your own arguments. The final paper will ask you to integrate the course for yourself. None will require outside readings. You will also be expected to lead, as part of a small group of students, the discussion of one or more sets of readings, including providing a summary and posing discussion questions.

At times, we will be dealing with difficult material and it is imperative that we maintain a classroom environment in which we speak thoughtfully, listen respectfully, and treat each other as colleagues. I am determined to maintain our classroom as a space in which we all feel safe. We may not always feel comfortable, however, and I am confident that some of our best learning takes place at times and in spaces in which we feel *uncomfortable*.

The following books will be available at the college bookstore, on reserve at the library, or via electronic format:

Fredrickson, WHITE SUPREMACY
Roberts and Klibanoff, THE RACE BEAT
Marable, MALCOLM X: A LIFE OF REINVENTION
Steve Biko, I WRITE WHAT I LIKE
Payne, I'VE GOT THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM
Mayekiso, TOWNSHIP POLITICS
Robnett, HOW LONG? HOW LONG?
Walker, WOMEN AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA
Gerhart, BLACK POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA

Other readings and materials will be made available electronically or will be handed out in class. I have also asked you, over the summer, to read and prepare for our first class, Sept. 7:

Garrow, BEARING THE CROSS
or
Carson, ed., THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

and

Mandela, A LONG WALK TOWARD FREEDOM
or
Lodge, NELSON MANDELA: A CRITICAL LIFE

WEEKLY SYLLABUS (CAUTION: SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- 9/7 Introduction to the course
The nature of leadership within the movements: King and Mandela
**Hand out essay assignment, due 9/26
- 9/14 Institutional racism
Read: Fredrickson, WHITE SUPREMACY, chapters I – IV
Supplementary readings:
Bhana, “Culture, Politics, & Identity: Indians in South Africa, 1880s-1914”
Film: LAST GRAVE AT DIMBAZA
- 9/21 Institutional racism
Read: WHITE SUPREMACY, chapters V - VI
Supplementary readings:
Marable, HOW CAPITALISM UNDERDEVELOPED BLACK AMERICA
Woodruff, “A War Within a War,” in AMERICAN CONGO: THE AFRICAN
AMERICAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN THE DELTA
Wolpe, “Capitalism and Cheap Labor Power in South Africa”
Bonner, Delius, and Posel, “The Shaping of Apartheid: Contradiction, Continuity,
and Popular Struggle,” in APARTHEID’S GENESIS
Thompson, “The Apartheid Era, 1945-1978” and “Apartheid in Crisis, 1978-1989,”
in HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA
Film: NOTHING BUT A MAN
- 9/26 Essay assignment #1 due today, Noon
- 9/28 Freedom Movements
Read: Roberts and Klibanoff, THE RACE BEAT
Film: EYES ON THE PRIZE, I: AWAKENINGS
**Hand out essay assignment #2, due 10/24 Noon
- 10/5 Freedom Movements
Read: Gerhart, BLACK POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA
Supplementary readings:
Legassick, “Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa”
Film: MAPANTSULA
- 10/12 Black Power
Read: Marable, MALCOLM X: A LIFE OF REINVENTION
Supplementary readings:
Woodard, “Groundwork,” in A NATION WITHIN A NATION: AMIRI BARAKA
AND BLACK POWER POLITICS
Hill, “Not Selma,” in THE DEACONS FOR DEFENSE: ARMED RESISTANCE
AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
Film: NEGROES WITH GUNS

10/19 Black Power

Read: Biko, I WRITE WHAT I LIKE

Supplementary readings:

Gibson, "Black Consciousness 1977-1987: The Dialectics of Liberation in SA"

Film: HAVE YOU SEEN DRUM RECENTLY?

10/25 (NOTE: This is a Tuesday evening.) The Movement at the Grassroots

Read: Mayekiso, TOWNSHIP POLITICS

Film: BOPHA!

11/2 The Movement at the Grassroots

Read: Payne, I'VE GOT THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM

Film: FREEDOM ON MY MIND

11/9 Women in the Movement

Read: Robnett, HOW LONG? HOW LONG?

Supplementary readings:

Kuuma, "'You've Struck a Rock': Comparing Gender, Social Movements, and Transformation in the United States and South Africa"

Film: FUNDI: THE STORY OF ELLA BAKER

**Hand out essay assignment #3, due 12/13, Noon

11/16 Women in the Movement

Read: Walker, WOMEN AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Supplementary readings:

Hassim, "The Limits of Popular Democracy: Women's Organisations, Feminism, and the UDF"

Fatima Meer, PRISON DIARY (excerpts)

Emma Mashinini, STRIKES HAVE FOLLOWED ME ALL MY LIFE (excerpts)

Suttner, "Women in the ANC-led Underground Organisation Against Apartheid"

Hiralal, "'We Shall Resist': The Role of Indian Women in the Passive Resistance Campaign, 1946-1948"

Film: YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK

11/22 (NOTE: This is a Tuesday evening.) Young People in the Movements

Read: Johnson, "'The Soldiers of Luthuli': Youth in the Politics of Resistance in South Africa"

Pohlandt-McCormick, "'I Saw a Nightmare...': Violence and the Construction of Memory, Soweto, Junr 16, 1976"

Proudfoot, DIARY OF A SIT-IN (excerpts)

Crosby, A LITTLE TASTE OF FREEDOM (excerpts)

Film: SARAFINA

11/30 Labor in the Movements

Read: Van Niekerk, "The Trade Union Movement in the Politics of Resistance in South Africa"

Sitas, "The Sweat Was Black: Working for Dunlop"

Kerson, "The Emergence of Powerful Black Unions"

Maree, "Trade Unions and the State: The Question of Legality"

Hinshaw, "The Politics of Steel in the US and South Africa"

Huntley and Montgomery, BLACK WORKERS' STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN BIRMINGHAM (excerpts)

Korstad, "It Wasn't Just Wages We Wanted, But Freedom," in CIVIL RIGHTS UNIONISM

Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South"

White, "Nixon Was the One: Edgar Daniel Nixon, the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Bus Boycott"

POLAROID AND SOUTH AFRICA

Film: AT THE RIVER I STAND

12/7 The Role(s) of Culture in the Movements

Read: EAR TO THE GROUND

Von Kotze, ORGANISE AND ACT: THE NATAL WORKERS' THEATRE MOVEMENT, 1983-1987

Sitas, "Traditions of Poetry in Natal"

Mason, "'Mannenbergr': Notes on the Making of an Icon and Anthem"

"The Free Southern Theater on the Free Southern Theater"

DAY OF ABSENCE

Film: AMANDLA!

12/13 **Essay assignment #3 due today, Noon

12/14 (an extra class) Lessons and Legacies of Freedom Movements

Film: TSOTSI