

HIST 492 The Road to Freedom: America's Civil Rights Movement

Summer 2019

Faculty-Led Program

Faculty Instructors: Dr. Laura Renée Chandler and Dr. Sara Lampert

The Center for Diversity and Community (CDC) is here to serve the diversity and inclusiveness needs of the USD student body and in particular, support communities that have historically been marginalized. The CDC utilizes a broad and inclusive definition of diversity that includes disability gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, race/ethnicity, nationality, veteran status and other social identities that are part of the campus community.

The Center offers a wide variety of services and programming to meet the needs of our students:

- Cultural, social and retention support programming
- Student leadership engagement, development and training
- Advisement and support for student organizations
- Celebration, education and recruitment activities to support diversity
- Educational opportunities to enrich and support the USD academic mission

In order for us to further expand on our service to provide educational opportunities we are planning on a faculty-led cultural tour of the Southern states of America to explore the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Students will visit historical sites, museums, and centers that give us information on the civil rights struggle.

Course Description

The Civil Rights Movement was the culmination of a revolution many centuries in the making for African Americans. It radically transformed the legal and social status of African Americans and would become the model for countless movements dedicated to social justice throughout the world. This course will cover major events, organizations, and people who defined the movement at its height (1940s-1960s) as well as examine the systemic oppression of African Americans in the decades leading up to the movement. The course will begin with a long historical view of civil rights activism and a consideration of how activists borrowed strategies from older traditions of protest in African American history.

This course will explore the Civil Rights Movement through various methods including discussions, community engagement, lectures, presentations, and visitations. Students will be able to describe the ultimate aim of the movement (fulfilling the democratic principal of equal rights for all people)

and, they will also gain insight into the continuing relevance of the civil rights struggle today. The course is designed to accommodate undergraduate students.

Rationale

Inspiring and leading through inclusive excellence in education is the shared vision of University of South Dakota (USD) and the Center of Diversity and Community (CDC) for all of its programs. The underlying intent of the vision requires that students be exposed to learning experiences that will enhance their ability to engage in lifelong learning and leadership roles anchored in excellence and cultural competence. Furthermore, the University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected.

Course Outcome

As a result of this course, students will:

1. Deepen their understanding of diverse cultural traditions;
2. Critically and comparatively examine the historical, social, economic, and political issues of the modern Civil Rights Movement
3. Be able to illustrate the interplay between tradition and history in the context of 21st century society.
4. Be able to answer the following questions:
 - *What were the origins, actions, and implications of the Civil Rights Movement?*
 - *How did the Civil Rights Movement transform American society both during the twentieth century and today?*
 - *How is the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina the failed government response indicative of African Americans continued struggles for equality and relevance?*

At the conclusion of the course, students will produce an analytical paper incorporating first-hand observations of the sites visited, discussions, lectures, and presentations attended throughout the tour.

Course Location

This course will take place in three southern states: Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana.

Learning Methods and Activities

The core activities listed below will form the basis of Continuous Assessment (CA) for the course.

- MLK Tour (Visitor Center, International World Peace Rose Garden, Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, King Center, Birth home (ranger led tours), Fire Station No. 6, Gandhi Square).
- Herndon Home
- Airmen Historical Site
- Tuskegee University
- Alabama State Capitol
- Civil Rights Memorial
- Rosa Parks Museum
- Dexter Parsonage
- Equal Justice Initiative
- Footprints to Freedom tour
- Lowndes Interpretive Center
- Viola Luizzo site
- Birmingham Civil Rights
- Sixteenth Street Baptist Church
- Kelly Ingram Park
- Hurricane Katrina Tour and volunteer
- Treme Walking tour
- New Orleans African American Museum
- Scavenger Hunt

Required Course Texts

Don Brown, *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans* (2017)

Jeanne Theoharis, *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (2018).

Pre-Departure

Students will watch the film *Trouble the Water* (2008) and portions of *Eyes on the Prize* (2012)

Assessments

- 1. Participation & Community Learning: Weighting = 35%** In order to fulfill this requirement of the course, students must participate actively in ALL pre- departure activities on campus and course activities at the various locations. This section covers two important aspects of the course, namely:
 - a. Students must take part in all face-to-face faculty-led pre-travel discussions (2-3), and two documentary sessions, the pre-departure orientation to be provided by the Center of Diversity and Community, and the post-travel reflective dialogues on D2L on return.
 - b. Community- Based Learning. This is the Service Learning component of the course. Students will be expected to volunteer 2-3 hours at the Hurricane Katrina sites. The service-learning component also includes all visitations, dialogues, observation, reflection sessions, guest lectures, and all other activities on the USD Faculty Led Program.
- 2. Journal of Lifelong Learning = 40%** There are two documents to be submitted within this requirement. The Journal of Lifelong Learning (JLL) will be in two parts.
 - a. The first part (25% for undergraduates and 15% for graduates) of the JLL will comprise of daily written entries on the activities of the course. These daily entries should be short and precise (about 100 words) and be related to history, culture, the environment/geography or any other issue that is of importance to each student.
 - b. The second part (15% for undergraduates and 25% for graduate students) should be a succinct summary of the entire learning journey that paints a clear picture of each student's perspective on the lifelong learning significance of the course especially in relation to the learning outcomes of the course. This document should be a minimum of 600 words.
- 3. Perspective Paper Weighting = 25%** This is a summative paper that derives from the JLL, the readings, and the entire trip. This paper gives the student the opportunity to establish her/his perspective on any of the fundamental issues of the course. This document should be a minimum of 1000 words.

Grading Scale:

Final grades will be determined by a compilation of continuous assessment (CA) efforts based on the course requirements. The course Grading Scale is as follows:

A = 100 – 90

B = 89 – 80

C = 79 – 70

D = 69 – 60

F = < 60

Possible films and documentaries:

"Eyes on the Prize." (no rating) the six episodes of this documentary series chronicle the important events of the civil rights movement. Primary source footage, interviews, and first-person accounts bring these events to life.

"Four Little Girls" (no rating). This documentary examines the 1963 church bombing that killed four girls in Birmingham, Alabama. Director Spike Lee uses inter views, photographs, and primary source accounts to give the viewer a picture of what life was like in this highly segregated city.

"Freedom Song" (no rating) Based on eyewitness accounts of civil rights activists, this film is set in a fictional town in Mississippi. It tells the story of African- American teenagers who work with civil rights activists to change segregation laws in their town. Several scenes show the power of music during the civil rights movement.

"The Long Walk Home" (PG) This 1990 film dramatizes the events of the Montgomery Bus Boycott through the eyes of fictional characters: a maid and her employer. Whoopi Goldberg plays the maid, who participates in the boycott even though she faces incredible challenges to get to work. Sissy Spacek plays the white employer, who risks the wrath of her family and her community to help support the boycott.

When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (2006): Spike Lee may be, first and foremost, a cinematic dramatist, but he more than proved his non-fiction brilliance with this Emmy-winning two-parter, which premiered stateside on HBO one year after Katrina hit. Given that it was shot more or less immediately after Katrina struck, Lee's film has a raw immediacy that's never less than bracing, be it in his interviews with hosts of locals — including politicians, journalists, engineers and everyday citizens — or in his sorrowful vistas of the devastated city itself. Lee plumbs the reasons behind the levees' failure while maintaining a moving focus on those residents – such as Wilhelmina Blanchard, mother of the soundtrack's composer Terence, who

visits the rubble that once was her home – left to rebuild (or leave for parts unknown) and providing a historical overview of New Orleans in order to truly capture what was demolished by Katrina. Poignant and infuriating in equal measure, it continues to be the defining work about the Hurricane.

Available to stream via HBO GO, Amazon and YouTube, and available to rent via Netflix.

Trouble the Water (2008): Outraged at TV news footage, directors Tia Lessin and Carl Deal set out to New Orleans during Katrina with the idea of making a documentary – only to almost immediately come into contact with Ninth Ward residents Kim and Scott Roberts, who not only endured the maelstrom first-hand, but recorded their experiences on a personal camcorder. That footage is nothing short of astonishing, though *Trouble the Water* soon becomes less about Kim and Scott's tribulations during Katrina, and more about the nightmare that followed. Following the couple as the Roberts struggle to receive FEMA payments — and, later, find a residence — the film uses the couple's ordeal to touch upon virtually every aspect of the Katrina crisis: the inadequacy of local, state and federal government efforts, the racial and socio-economic issues it brought to the fore, and the individual and communal selflessness shown by many. It's a heartrending example of capturing a disaster's sweeping tragedy through the perspective of one small-scale story.

Available to stream via Amazon and Hulu, and available to rent via Netflix.

Kamp Katrina (2007): Sscheduling a wider investigation of Katrina in favor of concentrating on one of New Orleans' many post-storm stories, Ashley Sabin and David Redmon's *Kamp Katrina* details the efforts of Upper Ninth Ward resident David Cross (a home-repair business owner) and his Native American wife Ms. Pearl to aid those in dire straits. To do so, they allowed locals to live in their backyard, so long as those new guests agreed to look for jobs (and not cause a ruckus). Netflix rental.