

University of Texas at El Paso
Department of History
Directed Individual Study
Black Resistance Past and Present; a Historiographical Examination
Course Number: HIST 5345

I. Professor's Information

Name: Dr. Michael Vinson Williams

Session: Spring (2022)

Course Location: **Liberal Arts Room 401**

Office hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

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II. Course Description:

This course critically examines the history of Black resistance and the ways in which it manifested in local communities, organizations, the political and religious arenas and during seminal periods in American history. In addition, the course analyzes the antecedents behind Black resistance and the myriad of ways people resisted and the reasons for that resistance. It was Malcolm X who announced without reservation that we, as Black people, “declare our right on this earth to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.” In response, this readings course pays specific attention to what was deemed “necessary” and thus the various resistance tactics/strategies that African Americans implemented during this period of study and the role/reaction of federal, state agents and white supremacist organizations.

By the end of the course, students should have a sound grasp of the social, cultural, and political impact and meaning of Black resistance strategies from a historiographical perspective and thus how scholars and participants have written about the subject. Students will also engage in critical analysis regarding significant historical issues associated with Black resistance and its impact upon African Americans’ social, economic and political struggles.

Academic Objectives:

- a.) Gain basic knowledge of the time period and the life experiences of those involved.
- b.) Enhance critical thinking skills and its application towards dissecting and understanding the significance and impact of historical issues.

III. Required Readings:

Students must acquire the required readings before the start of the semester to avoid difficulties resulting from availability issues. Any student who has trouble locating the material must notify the professor immediately. **Lack of a book, however, does not equal a legitimate excuse for incomplete work nor the inability to participate fully in course discussions.**

Required Readings:

Calvin White, Jr., *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (2012)

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (1994)

Françoise N. Hamlin, *Crossroads at Clarksdale: The Black Freedom Struggle in the Mississippi Delta After World War II* (2012)

Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr* (2011)

Elizabeth Hinton, *America on Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s* (2021)

Kerry Pimblott, *Faith in Black Power: Religion, Race, and Resistance in Cairo, Illinois* (2019)

Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (2007)

Robin D. G. Kelly, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class* (1996)

Toure F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950* (The University of North Carolina Press; New edition (September 1, 2008))

Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (2010)

Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (2013)

Joan Singler, Jean Durning, Bettylou (Burleigh) Valentine, Maid Adams, *Seattle in Black and White: The Congress of Racial Equality and the Fight for Equal Opportunity* (2011)

Paula J. Giddings, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching* (2009)

Kerri K. Greenidge, *Black Radical: The Life and Times of William Monroe Trotter* (2021)

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2020)

Cornelius L. Bynum, A. *Philip Randolph and the Struggle for Civil Rights* University of Illinois Press; 1st edition (2010)

****All weekly article readings are available on JSTOR ****

Course Requirements: Students are required to attend each scheduled class meeting and read all assignments with a critical eye and complete all written work when given. Students can expect absences to negatively affect their overall grade. If a student **has** to miss a scheduled meeting, she or he must present the professor with an official document of excuse; all excuses will be filed away and reexamined at the end of the semester. For a graduate course, and particularly an independent studies course, it is important that students avoid missing any classes. The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students with disabilities, **verified through The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS)**, should notify the professor immediately of any required accommodations. See, [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#)

Graded Assignments:

Book Reviews: Students will complete one 500-750 word book review over the course of the **Spring Term**. Works selected for review must come from the assigned readings. The review will be due on the day that we discuss the book. Regarding the book review, it would be helpful to consult the format and style of book reviews published in major historical journals such as the *Journal of African American History*, *The Journal of American History* or the *Journal of Southern History* for guidance.

Book Review Requirements:

The book review for this course must do more than inform the reader as to what the book is about. Truly effective book reviews provide a critical analysis of the author's core argument and the ideological structure of the book. In the review that you will write for this course, you must provide a clear and well-written analysis of the presented work. The review should clearly define the author's argument, discuss strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide commentary on the overall presentation and effectiveness of the work and its value to our understanding of civil rights struggle. I do not simply want you to regurgitate what the author has written nor do I want

you to merely summarize the books; each review should showcase your ability to critically analyze historical arguments, identify suppositions and dissect points of view. Both reviews should also discuss the relevancy of the arguments and solutions the authors present for the problems of their time to those same problems today or whether you believe the issues discussed continue to be problematic.

Presentations: At the beginning of each class, student(s) will provide a brief 4-5 minute discussion of the assigned reading where you and the professor will engage in a larger discussion. The presentation should address the core issues of the reading and its contributions to the discussion and understanding of civil rights scholarship. You must come to each class meeting **FULLY** prepared to discuss the works thoroughly and to be able to judge their importance and, when applicable, their weakness in the realm of historical understanding and clarity of points regarding the Civil Rights Era.

Preliminary Paper Proposal and Bibliography: As a means of helping to narrow the focus of the final paper and thus avoid research problems later during this somewhat short term, you are required to turn in a paper proposal and brief bibliography no later than June 10th. You must schedule a meeting with the professor to discuss your topic idea much earlier to ascertain the feasibility of the project. It is imperative that you began the final paper project as soon as possible to get ahead of the research process and thus be better prepared to adjust to any problems that may arise.

Final Paper: Each student will write a 15-20 page historiographical essay (excluding coversheet and reference pages) regarding the works discussed in this class. The paper will require that you critically analyze the way the scholars selected for this course have examined Black resistance. You are expected to present a well-integrated critical analysis of these scholars' methods and interpretation of the subject. This will be an opportunity for you to add to the historical understanding of the views and approaches these authors present on the topic of Black resistance and Civil Rights struggle. Prior to the end of the course, you will schedule a meeting with the professor to provide a brief presentation of your completed research paper.

Grade Point Breakdown:

Book Review	10%
Annotated Bibliography	20%
Class Participation	30%
Final Essay.	40%
Total Available Points	100

The grading scale used for this course reflects the standard A through F scale: 100-90= A; 89-80= B; 79-70= C; 69-60= D; 59 and below = **F**. To calculate your final grade I will add the total number of points scored on all assignments and divide that number by the total number of points possible. I will not percentage anything as everything is weighted the same.

Assignment Makeup Policy:

Although I do not anticipate missed assignments at this academic level, if you miss a scheduled project deadline because of a legitimate excuse (**supported by documentation**) you must contact the professor immediately to schedule a makeup. Students have a one-day window after the day of the missed assignment to make it up, after that he or she will earn a zero unless an extended rescheduling period has been agreed upon. **If a student has a problem with an earned grade on an assignment, she or he must wait 24 hours before contacting the professor to discuss it.**

IV. Class Behavior:

Cheating:

University of Texas at El PASO has an approved Academic Integrity Policy that applies to all students. The policy states: “Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* (HOP) [[Scholastic Dishonesty](#)], can result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing a grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or expulsion, among others.

Under no circumstance will cheating of any kind be tolerated. Cheating on an assignment will result in an automatic **F** and may result in university actions, so refrain from engaging in any unethical behavior as your work will be monitored. For further information regarding UTEP’S Academic Integrity policy. Again, please see [UTEP’s Handbook of Operating Procedures](#). Students please be aware that **ALL** suspected violations of academic integrity will be addressed and may also be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#).

Copyright and Fair Use:

Regarding research and written work, students must avoid infringing upon the rights of others by violating the use and presentation of copyrighted materials. Please view the following from Stanford University Libraries regarding issues of Copyright and Fair Use to avoid plagiarism:

[Copyright and Fair Use](#)

COVID-19 Protocols:

Any student who contracts COVID-19, or who must care for someone who has contracted the COVID-19 virus, must let me know immediately so that I can plan with the impacted student regarding the class and coursework. As a means of protecting your privacy, and that of your family, please do not email me any health-related information. Instead, I am asking that students send me an email with a viable phone number and a request that I call you back.

You must STAY AT HOME and let your Professor know if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID- 19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. UTEP also requires that any student who reports a positive COVID-19 test must report this via covidaction@utep.edu. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations.

Discussion of Course Topics:

Due to the nature and limited number of students permitted in this Directed Independent Studies course, student participation is paramount. As a result, each class meeting is structured to initiate student participation and to provide opportunities to engage in meaningful dialog regarding specific historical circumstances and events related to Black Resistance and the struggle for Civil and Human rights. Although I will lead many of the discussions, the overall objective is to create an environment conducive to the expansion of ideas, arguments, and subjects introduced in readings and to the development of individual perspectives regarding the periods and subject matter outlined. Thus, I require active participation in course discussions.

Important Dates:

Book Review # 1.....	February 28, 2022
Annotated Bibliography.....	April 14, 2022
Historiographical Paper.....	April 21, 2022
Paper Presentation.....	May 4, 2022

V. Class Schedule for Required Readings and Assignments: (Syllabus/Schedule subject to changes.) The following outlines the completion dates for each reading assignment so that students are prepared to participate in class discussions and follow the course of the discussion

Week I: January 25: Course introduction/parameters and an open discussion of the meaning and many manifestations of Black Resistance

Week III: February 9: **Local Studies: The Power of the Common Band of Man and Woman**

Common Readings:

- Françoise N. Hamlin, *Crossroads at Clarksdale: The Black Freedom Struggle in the Mississippi Delta After World War II* (2012)
- Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr* (2011)

Week V: February 23: **Religion as Resistance**

Common Readings:

- Calvin White, Jr., *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (2012)

- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (1994)

Week VII: March 9: **Resistance on the Organizational Level and the Dawning of a Youth Movement:**

Common Readings:

- Toure F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950* (2008)
- Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* The New Press; Reprint edition (September 14, 2010)
- Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (2013)
- Joan Singler, Jean Durning, Bettylou (Burleigh) Valentine, Maid Adams, *Seattle in Black and White: The Congress of Racial Equality and the Fight for Equal Opportunity* (2011)

Week IX: March 23: **Journalism, Radicalism and Resistance**

Common Readings:

- Paula J. Giddings, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching* (2009) <https://www.c-span.org/video/?205838-3/ida-sword-lions&event=205838&playEvent>
- Kerri K. Greenidge, *Black Radical: The Life and Times of William Monroe Trotter* Liveright (2021) <https://www.c-span.org/video/?466008-1/black-radical>

Week XI: April 6: **Carefully Placing One Foot in Front of the Other: Migration as Resistance**

Common Readings:

- Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* Penguin (August 4, 2020)

Week XIII: April 13: **Labor Activism**

Common Readings:

- Cornelius L. Bynum, A. *Philip Randolph and the Struggle for Civil Rights* University of Illinois Press; 1st edition (December 13, 2010)

Week XV: April 27: **Research Presentation**

Week XVI: May 4: **Final Class Meeting**

Historiographical Paper Assignment: Due April 21, 2022

You will be required to write a 15-20 page historiographical essay addressing the ways the selected scholars for this course have approached the subject of Black Resistance. The paper must not only summarize the arguments presented but provide a critical analysis of the changing arguments and interpretations of the historical topic of Black resistance and the struggle for civil rights. Therefore, students are expected to produce a paper containing a strong level of critical analyses bolstered by a clear and supported thesis. At all costs, one must avoid simple summations of these works or a cavalier approach to dissecting and critiquing methodologies and arguments and change over time. All papers must be typed double-spaced, clearly written, and use **12 point font and Times New Roman Script**. Grammatical errors, misspelled words, awkward sentence and paragraph structure, and cluttered prose will hurt your overall grade. Be sure to look over your work and correct any mistakes before turning in the completed draft. **I also encourage students to take advantage of the services offered by the writing center regarding this assignment.**

Plagiarism and Citation: In this course, you will be required to cite sources for any material you quote or paraphrase in any written work or assignment. Please use either the Chicago or Turabian style manuals for citations. **Again, this course operates under an established and enforced Honor Code system.** Please feel free to contact the professor if you have any questions.