History Research Seminar: Black Power
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Thursdays, 2:30-5:20pm
Conklin 352

Instructor Information:
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Description:
The Black Power movement of the mid-twentieth century was one of the most impactful civil rights movements in US history. This course examines its meaning and history. What did Black Power mean for the people involved in it? How did it change the US? What impacts did it have on education, arts and culture, and politics? In this course, students will engage with important primary and secondary sources in the history of Black Power to prepare them to conduct their own research using local and digital archives. Because Newark, NJ was a center of Black Power activism, we will hopefully be able to incorporate visits to local museums, archives and special collections as part of our class.

Expectations:

- This course will expect you to engage deeply with the historiography of Black Power. Come to class having read the materials and prepared to discuss them.
- You are not expected to have any specific knowledge before coming to this class. You are expected to be an independent learner who will attempt to figure out complex issues, work collegially with your classmates, and come to me with questions and problems as they arise.
- You will be expected to respond to emails from me in a timely manner. Because we only meet once per week, it will be necessary for me to communicate with you by email outside of class. I recommend strongly that you link your Rutgers email account (which is what is connected to our course site) to your personal email so that you are sure to get all the emails that I send.
- While the Covid-19 pandemic has receded, it’s impossible to predict what will happen in terms of public health over the next semester. I will be flexible to accommodate issues that arise that may impact your ability to turn in assignments on time or may cause you to miss class. I also hope that you will be flexible with me if circumstances outside my control impact my accessibility. Ideally, this class will be a caring, collaborative space to work through ideas.
Learning Objectives:

- Gain knowledge about the Black Power era in American history, including its major figures, events, and intellectual tenets;
- Strengthen skills in argumentation, primary source analysis, and synthesis of secondary sources;
- Conduct original historical research on a topic related to Black Power that incorporates primary and secondary sources;
- Sharpen writing skills through a scaffolded process that results in an original research paper.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

I strictly follow the University’s rules regarding plagiarism and other academic irregularities. Please consult me if you have any questions about what is and is not appropriate regarding the use of sources or citation.

Course Assignments:

More detailed instructions are available on Canvas

- Participation: 10%
- Attendance: includes attending one-on-one meetings with me or TA. Not scheduling a meeting or missing our appointment without a valid excuse will count as missing class. 10%
- THOMAS Analysis of selected readings: 10%
- Short Comparative Paper: 4-5 page paper comparing two readings from class. 10%
- Research Paper Topic Ideas: paragraph discussing what topics you’d like to pursue for your research paper, why you are interested in that topic and what sources you think you could use. Due 5%
- Paper proposal including topic description, research questions, primary and secondary sources that you’re likely to include. Due 10%
- Rough draft: 15%
- Final research paper: 12-15 pages. 30%

Grading Scale:

- A = 90-100
- B+ = 85-89
- B = 80-84
- C+ = 75-79
- C = 70-74
- D = 59-69
- F = 0-58
Late Assignments:
I expect assignments to be completed on the day they are due. If there are circumstances that prevent you from doing so, please contact me as soon as possible. Knowing when to expect papers to be submitted allows me to manage my time and be responsive to you.

Attendance and Participation:
Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. Attendance will be taken at the start of class.

You will be expected to attend class having completed readings and assignments and be prepared to actively participate. Reading is more than just running your eyes over the pages. It means thinking about what the author is trying to say. Taking time to engage with the readings will make your class experience more fruitful. If you cannot attend class, please let me know at least 24 hours before class (except in the case of emergencies).

Participation can take several forms. Asking thoughtful questions is as important as making an analytical point about a reading. We are not here to prove to each other how smart we are, but to learn together.

Required Texts:
There are no books required for this class. All readings will be available on our Canvas site. To access Canvas, go to: https://canvas.rutgers.edu/. If you have any problems, please contact Canvas help at help@canvas.rutgers.edu.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1—Jan. 18: Introduction to Class

Week 2—Sept. 25: Roots and Routes of Black Power

  Pay attention to Young’s argument about the relationship between leftist activists in the US and the Cuban revolution, how she structures this chapter, and the sources she uses.

  DUE: THOMAS Analysis

Week 3—Feb. 1: Malcolm X

- Organization Of Afro-American Unity, Statement of Basic Aims and Objectives: Culture.
- Malcolm X, Message to the Grassroots (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a59Kwp35Z80&t=49s)
DUE: THOMAS Analysis of Felber article

Week 4—Feb. 8: Black Panther Party and Revolutionary Nationalism

• Black Panther/Off The Pig https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_r1HIROECo

DUE: THOMAS Analysis of Farmer chapter

Week 5—Feb. 15: Cultural Nationalism

• “Get Pregnant Today,” Chicory

Additional reading:

DUE: THOMAS Analysis of Farmer chapter

Week 6—Feb. 22: Black Power Politics in Newark

• Komozi Woodard, A Nation Within A Nation, p. 140-155

In-class: Visit Newark Public Library New Jersey Information Center

DUE: THOMAS Analysis of either reading

Week 7—Feb. 29: College Student Activism

• Donna Murch, “A Campus Where Black Power Won,” from Living for the City.

Additional reading:
• Donna Murch, “Early Black Student Activism in the Bay Area,” From Living for the City.

In-class: Visit Newark Archives at Dana Library

DUE: THOMAS Analysis of either reading

DUE: Final Paper Topic Ideas on Canvas
Week 8—March 7: Black Arts Movement

- Larry Neal, excerpt from “The Black Arts Movement,” *The Drama Review* (Summer 1968)
- Sonia Sanchez, “A/Coltrane/Poem.”

Additional reading:
- John H. Bracey, Jr., Sonia Sanchez, and James Smethurst, “Editors’ Introduction,” *SOS—Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader*.

In-class: Visit Institute for Jazz Studies at Dana Library

DUE: Comparative Paper

NO CLASS MARCH 14—SPRING BREAK

Week 9—March 21: Rutgers Research Resources and In-Class Research Lab

DUE: Final Paper Proposal on Canvas

Week 10—March 28: Individual Meetings on Research/Writing Plans

- I will schedule a one-on-one meeting with each of you to create a research/writing plan. Meetings can be by Zoom or in-person. Missing or not scheduling a meeting counts as an absence.

Week 11—April 4: Individual Research Time

- No class meeting; time for individual research.

Week 12—April 11: In-Class Writing and Research Lab: How to Make a Historical Argument

Week 13—April 18: One-on-One Paper Conference

- I will schedule a one-on-one meeting with each of you to discuss progress on your research/writing to prepare you to submit a draft the final week of class. Meetings can be by Zoom or in-person. Missing or not scheduling a meeting counts as an absence.

Week 14—April 25: In-Class Workshop

DUE: Rough draft of final research paper due by noon on April 23

Final Research Paper DUE May 8 (may be changed) on Canvas