

## **Social Justice Movements in Newark (Research Seminar)**

Rutgers-Newark Spring 2019

21:510:490, sec. Q2

Wednesdays, 6-9pm

Hill 215

Professor: Whitney Strub

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Office hours: 1:30-2:30pm and 4-5pm Wednesdays (plus available by appointment most afternoons, just email in advance!)

NOTE: I'll be in the Women's & Gender Studies office, 243 Conklin, and NOT my History office on the third floor!

How do we write the history of social justice movements in Newark? In this course, we will first examine that history, looking at the labor movement, the African American civil rights movement, Black Power, feminism, LGBTQ rights, environmental activism, immigrant rights, and more, and then we'll think critically about how we know those histories. What are their sources? Where are the archives? What is documented, what remains hidden, and how do historians do their work? Ultimately, our goal will be to understand these histories, but even more, to get firsthand experience in the historical methods that give us knowledge of the past.

For historians, Newark is a place of challenge and opportunity: challenge because it has not been as well documented and heavily written about as other cities; opportunity because that means we have more fresh ground to cover than someone writing about, say, the more familiar New York City. In this course we will grapple with both aspects—hopefully by the end, you'll see the challenges *as* opportunities!

This is a writing intensive course. You'll be writing frequently. Most of it is deliberately open-ended in topic, so that you can pursue subjects that interest you.

A note on terminology: "social justice" is a phrase with many differing definitions. We'll discuss that, but as a starting point, the framework for this class will center on socially marginalized groups and their struggles for rights, dignity, and equality. One useful way to consider this framework is through the social-scientific concept of *life chances*, or the statistical probabilities for individual outcomes that can be assessed through socioeconomic position (among other factors). Most of the movements we'll examine centered on groups with disproportionately low life chances, who fought to raise them.

### **Learning Goals:**

\*Historical: students will come away with a deeper, richer understanding of the various movements for justice that have characterized Newark's political and social history, and develop their analytical capacities to assess broader themes that recur through these movements;

\*Methodological: students will learn through firsthand experience how the historical process works, by identifying archives, becoming familiar with primary-source research, differentiating primary sources from secondary sources, and putting documents into conversation with existing scholarship to generate new historical knowledge;

\*Critical thinking: more broadly, this course will develop students' research and writing abilities through drafts, peer reviews, and revisions.

### **Readings**

There are no books assigned for this course. Instead, we will read an assortment of scholarly journal articles, essays from anthologies, and primary source documents.

These will be available either on Blackboard under Course Documents (marked as BB on the syllabus) or the Rutgers University Library website databases (<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>). The easiest way to access them is to do a search directly from the search bar on the main page, which is automatically set to "articles." Another way is to search under Journals for the journal name. If you have trouble with one method, try the other. If both fail, email me right away. "I couldn't find the article" is not a legitimate excuse.

**Note:** This will be a **laptops-down** seminar. You must print the articles or bring them on a flat-surface reader, to minimize the distraction that is empirically shown to accompany open laptops.

### **Course Requirements:**

**Attendance and Punctuality:** You are expected to attend every class, from start to finish. Attendance is mandatory. Your overall course grade will be lowered by one letter-notation for each unexcused absence beginning with the third one. More than four absences for any reason will result in a loss of credit for the course. Only *documented* emergencies and medical occasions, or officially school-sanctioned activities, will qualify as excused absences. If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

**Class Participation.** All students are required to participate in the discussions during class. As a result, you must arrive at class having completed that day's reading assignment and prepared to talk about it. A valuable part of discussions is the posing of questions; no one is expected to grasp perfectly the significance of all the readings. Engaged questions are just as important as comments. Your participation grade will reflect both the frequency of your participation (too *much* talking that runs the risk of dominating class time is not an asset) and the quality of your comments and questions. Note that participation also includes active *listening*; sleeping, texting, side conversations, and other forms of non-listening will be met with punitive measures on the participation front.

## Grading/Assignments

Course grades will be based on four components:

### 1. Participation (20%)

The goal here is quality, not quantity, of comments: be thoughtful, engage in dialogue, don't dominate but do weigh in. Conscious and attentive *listening* is also a form of participation—texting or other distracted/distracting behavior will be considered an offense against the classroom community.

### 2. Weekly Blackboard comments on readings (10%)

Every week you must post one short (1-2 paragraph reflection) on the readings, and one comment on someone else's post. These should never be summaries, but can be any sort of response—something that stood out, something that upset you, something that you agreed with, etc.

There will be weekly forums set up in the Discussion Board of Blackboard for you to post in.

3. Weekly discussion questions (5%): you will turn in 2 written discussion questions to me at the start of each class. This will also be how I take attendance. Late submissions will be marked as late.

### 4. Short critical assessment paper (10%)

This will be an evaluation of the methodological approach of one of our scholarly readings, **due in class Feb. 20**, approx. 4 pages. Formal prompt to come.

### 5. Archival reflection (15%)

This will be a lead-in to your final research paper: a 5-page overview of the archives you plan to use, how and why you chose them, and what secondary sources they engage with. **Due on March 27**, formal prompt to come.

### 6. Research paper (40%)

This will be your major effort, an original contribution to historical scholarship, based on primary and secondary sources, on a relevant topic of your choice. Approx. 15 pages, **due Wednesday, May 15, 5pm**. Formal prompt to be distributed.

## **Grading Guidelines for written work**

**A:** work of exceptional quality, showing profound and meaningful engagement with a rich selection of source material, thoughtful and comparative analysis, superior writing—and most importantly, containing a clear, inventive, and persuasive thesis.

**B:** work that is above average—shows knowledge and/or contains a thesis, but does not develop it as strongly as it could; sources strong but incomplete.

**C:** adequate work that fulfills the assignment—often based on summarizing rather than thesis or analysis.

**D:** subpar work that falls short of fulfilling the assignment but deserves some credit.

**F:** work that fails to earn credit for the assignment, including plagiarism.

Late assignments will not be accepted. Extensions may be negotiated under extenuating circumstances (which do *not* include computer-related issues—always back up your work!), with some grade deductions, *before* the due date.

**No incompletes** will be granted unless the matter has been discussed with me in advance.

### **Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)**

You are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy, available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. **All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge.**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any use of the ideas or words of another person without proper acknowledgment of credit will result in penalties up to and including a course grade of F and referral to the academic integrity board. I aspire to be your ally and supporter in all possible ways, but on matters of plagiarism, expect no sympathy. Cases will be handled in a draconian manner, and excuses will not be entertained.

Note that the uncited usage of uncopyrighted material such as Wikipedia entries still constitutes plagiarism.

### **Students with Disabilities notice:**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus' disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at 973-353-5375 or by email at [odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu).

### **Policy on Classroom Conduct**

Video or audio recording of the instructor or other students is not permitted, and constitutes a violation of the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct.

Do not bring food, active cell phones, or other communications devices into the classroom. If you mistakenly do bring an active phone and it rings, silence it immediately; answering will constitute an egregious violation of this course's basic social contract. Texting in class will also result in drastic penalties to your total course grade.

In class discussions, I expect universally respectful interactions. In examining our texts, there may be differing perspectives, disagreements, and debates. This is fine; through such dialogue comes greater understanding. When challenging someone else's perspective, though, refrain from personal attacks or blistering scorn. If someone makes what you consider an offensive or disrespectful comment, note that this does not absolve you of adhering to the iron-clad rule of respect in responding to it. If the instructor tells you to stop speaking, you must stop speaking.

Failure to abide by these rules, or other interference with the classroom learning environment, will result in a lowered course grade, or removal from the classroom.

### **Policy on Office Hours**

My office hours are for you. Stop by with any questions you have about assignments, readings, classroom discussions, other pertinent topics, or just drop by to say hello. The only thing I discourage is visiting to cover material from a missed class; for that, consult fellow classmates. All else is warmly welcomed. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually agreeable time.

### **Content notice**

Some of the material in this course will deal with charged issues of race and sexuality, and some material might include coarse language, scenes of violence, and depictions of sexuality. I will try to alert you to anything that might be potentially upsetting in advance, but know that throughout, the course features adult content. If you are concerned about specific triggers, please speak with me early, and I will work with you.

### **Tentative syllabus of readings (subject to change, with advance notice)**

#### **Week 1 (Jan. 23)**

Intros, syllabus, library database tutorial, primary-source exercise

#### **Week 2 (Jan. 30): Early Newark Activism**

Susan Hirsch, "Ethnic Politics and Craft Unionism," in *Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860* (1978) (on Blackboard)

Bruce Levine, "Immigrant Workers, 'Equal Rights,' and Anti-Slavery: The Germans of Newark, New Jersey," *Labor History* 25.1 (1984): 26-52 (obtain through Rutgers Library website)

Warren Grover, "The New Minutemen," *Nazis in Newark* (2003) (on BB)

#### **Week 3 (Feb. 6): Combustible Newark/Mounting Tensions**

Kevin Mumford, "Double V in New Jersey: African-American Civic Culture and Rising Consciousness Against Jim Crow, 1938-1966" *New Jersey History* 119 (Fall/Winter 2001), 33-56 (on BB)

Kevin Mumford, "The Limits of Interracial Activism," *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (2007) (on BB)

Cynthia S'themble West, "Revisiting Female Activism in the 1960s: The Newark Branch Nation of Islam." *The Black Scholar* 26.3-4 (1996): 41-48 (Rutgers Library)

*With No One to Help Us* (Eugene and Carol Marner, 1967), 22-minute film available at <https://archive.org/details/WithNoOneToH>

*We Got to Live Here/Troublemakers* (Robert Machover and Norm Fruchter, 1965/1966) (we will watch in-class)

#### **Week 4 (Feb 13): Black Power**

LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, "Newark-Before Black Men Conquered" (1967), in *Raise Race Raze Raze* (BB)

Robert Curvin, "The Arrival of Black Power," *Inside Newark* (2014) (BB)

Nicole Torres, "Newark's 1974 Puerto Rican Riots Through Oral Histories," *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4.2 (2018): 212-229 (online)

Lauren O'Brien "¡Venceremos! Harambee!: A Black & Puerto Rican Union?" *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4.1 (2018): 130-146 (online)

\*in-class archival exercise: where to find sources?

#### **Week 5 (Feb 20): Housing, Environment, Archives**

**NOTE: We will meet at Newark Public Library, Charles Cummings Information Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

<http://npl.org/collections-services/charles-f-cummings-new-jersey-information-center/>

**Assignment:** Research on the Charles Cummings Information Center and selection of possible archive to explore, **DUE ON BLACKBOARD MONDAY FEB 18 BY 5PM!**

Julia Rabig, "Fixers for the 1970s? The Stella Wright Rent Strike and the Transformation of Public Housing," *The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990* (2016) (BB)

Matthew Immergut and Laurel D. Kearns. "When Nature Is Rats and Roaches: Religious Eco-Justice Activism in Newark, NJ," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 6.2 (2012): 176-95 (Rutgers Library)

Time-permitting: scenes from *Janie's Janie* (1972) in class

**\*Short critical assessment paper due in class**

## **Week 6 (Feb 27): Queer Newark**

Zenzele Isoke, "Can't I be seen? Can't I be heard? Black women queering politics in Newark," *Gender, Place & Culture* 21.3 (2014): 353-369 (Rutgers Library)

Darnell Moore, Beryl Satter, Timothy Stewart-Winter, and Whitney Strub, "A Community's Response to the Problem of Invisibility: The Queer Newark Oral History Project," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.2 (2014): 1-14 (Rutgers Library)

Yamil Avivi, "Queering Political Economy in Neoliberal Ironbound Newark: Subjectivity and Spacemaking among Brazilian Queer Immigrant Men." *Diálogo* 18.2 (2015): 105-118 (BB)

Renata Hill oral history, listen at <http://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/interviews/renata-hill>

## **Week 7 (March 6): Neoliberal Newark / Policing the Police**

Jonathan Wharton, *A Post-Racial Change is Gonna Come: Newark, Cory Booker, and the Transformation of Urban America* (2013), selection (BB)

Andra Gillespie, *The New Black Politician: Cory Booker, Newark, and Post-Racial America* (2012), selection (BB)

Alecia McGregor, "Politics, police accountability, and public health: civilian review in Newark, New Jersey." *Journal of Urban Health* 93.1 (2016): 141-153 (Rutgers Library)

Anthony Pate, et al., "Reducing the 'Signs of Crime': The Newark Experience," Executive Summary, National Institute of Justice (1985)

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/102306NCJRS.pdf>

Mark Di Ionno, "Newark Cops Flex Muscle at Broad and Market," *Star-Ledger*, June 12, 2016: [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2016/06/newark\\_cops\\_flex\\_muscle\\_at\\_broad\\_and\\_market\\_dion.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2016/06/newark_cops_flex_muscle_at_broad_and_market_dion.html)

## **Week 8 (March 13): Archival Expedition Reports**

For this week, you will visit archives and report back on Blackboard. Blackboard posts of approximately two paragraphs due by Thursday March 14.

## **Week of March 20: Spring Break**

After spring break, individual research will replace weekly meetings most weeks, but we will reconvene collectively for peer review sessions; schedule to be determined with class input.

Important dates:

March 27: archival paper due

May 15: final research paper due