

**21:510:315**

## **Perspectives in History: The Newark Uprising**

**Spring 2017**

Wednesday 6:00pm-9:00pm  
Engelhard 203

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### **Course Description**

Something as complicated and dynamic and tragic as mass racial violence demands an accounting. Soon after the end of five days of violent rebellion and often-vicious suppression – what many now know as the 1967 Newark riots – the investigations began. What exactly happened? Who or what was responsible? Who took part? What could have been done to prevent it? What was this thing anyway? Was it a rebellion? A riot? A revolution? And, perhaps most importantly, what do we need to do to make sure it never happens again? These questions plagued Americans of all walks of life throughout the 1960s.

In this class, we will take those questions up again, examining a wide range of primary source material from the Newark riots (if that's what we want to call it) – including newspaper accounts, photographs, first-person testimony, archival documents, and government reports – thinking through their possibilities, limitations, and biases. We will not only learn about this crucial chapter in Newark's and the nation's history, but we will think through and practice the art of history: pulling together a large body of often-discordant evidence into coherent accounts of what happened and why.

### **Learning Objectives**

In this *writing intensive course*, students will be given the opportunity to learn and practice the following skills:

- Distinguishing between second and primary sources and between historical contexts and objects
- Identifying and analyzing different types of evidence using critical thinking skills
- Constructing a historical argument using secondary and primary sources
- Writing (which involves drafting and revising) a college-level academic essay that is original, persuasive, and based on thoroughly analyzed evidence

*All readings will be distributed via Blackboard. There is nothing you need to buy.*

## Course Requirements

The writing assignments for this writing-intensive course will consist of two main forms: three short essays and a series of nine shorter assignments that will directly feed into those essays. Please see the class schedule below for due dates. More detailed instructions on each writing assignment – including the essays – will be distributed during the semester. *All writing must be typed and double-spaced.*

For the preparedness and participation grade, students are expected to read the assigned texts before each class session. Simple attendance in class is not factored into the participation grade. Students are required to come to class ready with questions or observations about the readings and to take part in the discussion to earn a good participation grade. We will devote much of our class time to interpreting the primary source readings. This in-depth analysis will compose the participation grade. *Students **must** print out the readings from Blackboard for each session and bring them to class.*

Essay #1	10%
Essay #2	15%
Essay #3	20%
Shorter writing assignments	5% each (top 8 of the 9 assignments)
Preparedness and participation	10%
Annotated tweets	5%

### *Submitting assignments:*

- Each of the three essays must be submitted in two forms: a paper copy handed in at the beginning of class and an electronic copy submitted via Turnitin on Blackboard. The two copies must be identical.
- Each of the nine short writing assignments must be submitted in paper form during the appropriate class.
- All students must put the Rutgers Honors Code Pledge, with their signature, on the paper copies of all assignments. Place your signature after the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

## Grading Rubric

A	Outstanding
A-	Outstanding, with one or two areas of improvement
B+	Very good
B	Good
B-	Good overall, with some significant weaknesses
C+	Satisfactory, with some potential for improvement
C	Satisfactory, but needs significant development
C-	Barely satisfactory
D	Poor; overwhelming flaws
F	Failing; doesn't complete assignment

Please note that an “F” is worth 50%, not 0%. You thus receive credit for doing an assignment even if you receive a failing grade.

The grades are applied to your work in the class: at the college level, this means the final product of your work – what you hand in to me – not the amount of effort you put into the work. In other words, students don't get an “A for effort” at the college level.

## Class Rules

Studying history is often a politically and personally charged pursuit, maybe especially when exploring questions of power, inequality, and violence. Such questions are at the forefront of the study of the urban uprisings of the 1960s, and we will not shy away from them. They may take on specially charged meaning in our current historical moment, and we need not steer our conversations away from making connections between the past and today. But I expect that all of us – myself included – will behave in a manner that assumes and shows respect for others’ needs and desires to learn. By all means, disagree with me and with each other. But do so in a civil way that will promote, rather than hinder, learning. *Any behavior that in any way intimidates others from participating in class will be addressed and may count against your participation grade.*

Similarly, any behavior that distracts from class discussion will also be addressed and may count against your participation grade. In concrete terms, this means that in class there will be:

- No talking in private conversations, even in whispers
- No cell phone use of any sort, including texting
- No use of computers or laptops
- No working on homework or other course work
- No late arrivals except in emergency situations

Attendance is required. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If you arrive late, after I have taken attendance, I will give you half credit for being in class. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. After four unexcused absences, your overall course grade will be lowered by a partial grade (from B+ to B, for example) for every further unexcused absence. *Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.*

*Excused vs. Unexcused absences:* The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog ([http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug\\_current/pg576.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_current/pg576.html)) states: “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” *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.*

Late assignments will not be accepted except in cases of proven emergency. The short writing assignments are designed to help you keep up with the readings, prompt participation in class discussion, and build toward the essay assignments. For these reasons, they cannot be handed in later than the class for which they are assigned. If you know that you will be absent on a particular day, plan ahead and email the assignment to me early.

Unless you have express permission from me, discussed with me in advance, and based on an acknowledged reason, late essays will have their grades lowered one partial grade every day that they are late.

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

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.

You may only use the texts assigned in this syllabus to complete the work in this class. If I find that you have used other people's ideas (ex: Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

### Disabilities

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's 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 Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

## **Class Schedule**

January 18: Introduction to the class, to historical knowledge, and to history as practice

### **Contexts**

January 25: “The Literature”

Readings (5 total): Eric Hobsbawm, “The City Mob” (1959); E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” pages 76-79, 115-136 (1971); Robert Curvin and Bruce Porter, “Looting Theory” (1979); Janet L. Abu-Lughod, “Explaining Differences: Predicting Convergence?” (2007); Philip Meyer, “Riot Theory is Relative (2011)

Writing assignment: #1 (paraphrasing exercise)

February 1: The Historical Context – Newark at Midcentury

Readings: Robert Curvin, selection from *Inside Newark* (2014); Mark Krasovic, selection from *The Newark Frontier*

Writing assignment: #2 (predictive exercise)

### **Five Days: The First Draft of History**

February 8: Newspapers

Readings: local coverage in Newark and New York newspapers

Writing assignment: #3 (identifying voices and biases in evidence)

February 15: Mass media

Readings: selections from national magazines and television news programs

Writing assignment: First essay

### **Investigations**

February 22: Riot investigative commissions

Readings: primary source evidence from riot commissions

Writing assignment: #4 (identifying interests and intents in sources)

March 1: First-person testimony

Readings: transcripts from hearings of the Governor’s Selection Commission on Civil Disorder

Writing assignment: #5 (comparing, weighing, and accounting for different perspectives)

March 8: Commission exhibits

Readings: exhibits submitted by witnesses to the Governor’s Commission

Writing assignment: #6 (making strong claims from evidence)

**March 15: SPRING BREAK**

March 22: The McClellan Committee and backlash

Readings: transcripts and exhibits from hearings of the McClellan Committee

Writing assignment: #7 (Using evidence to support, refute, or revise claims)

## **Interpreting the Interpreters**

March 29: Radical

Readings: Tom Hayden, "The Occupation of Newark" (1967); LeRoi Jones and Saul Gottlieb, "They Think You're an Airplane and You're Really a Bird: An Interview with LeRoi Jones after the Newark Riots" (1967); Amiri Baraka, "Newark Seven Years Later: ¡Unidad Y Lucha!" (1975)

Writing assignment: Second essay

April 5: Liberal

Readings: Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder*, summary (1968); GSCCD, *Report for Action*, selections (1968)

Writing assignment: #8 (Identifying and assessing sources, part 1)

April 12: Conservative

Readings: New Jersey State PBA, *The Road to Anarchy* (selections; 1968)

Writing assignment: #9 (Identifying and assessing sources, part 2)

## **The Uprising and Historical Memory**

April 19: Memory and documentation

Readings: Amiri Baraka, "Home" from *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka* (1984); Tom Hayden, "The Fire Next Time: July 1967" (1988); Robert Curvin, "The Rebellion and City Politics," pages 100-112 (2014); Junius Williams, "The Newark Rebellion" (2014); Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno, *Revolution '67* (film; 2007)

Writing assignment: Third essay

April 26: The "riots" as public history

Readings: TBD

Writing assignment: annotated tweets from one historical character