The American Civil Rights Movement
HI 280
1 credit
Dawson Community College
Fall 2002
TTh 4-5:30 (5 weeks, Sept. 3 – Oct. 3)
Student Center TV Lounge

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Course Description
The American Civil Rights Movement (1954-1985) profoundly altered the basic social structure of the United States. Throughout the nation – not only in the South – Americans were finally forced to confront a history of racial discrimination and social inequality they had tolerated since the nation’s founding. The aftermath and current ramifications of these events continue to affect the basic structure of American life today.

This course will make extensive use of the PBS film series Eyes on the Prize. This documentary series provides a thorough survey of the American Civil Rights movement and its various political, social, cultural, philosophical, and religious aspects.

In addition to viewing the film series with the students, the instructors will lead classroom discussions about the events portrayed in the film and will help students critique the diverse ideological perspectives presented in the film. The instructors may also bring supplemental materials to class including readings, musical selections, and photographs.

Audience and Transferability
This course is available to all DCC students with an interest in the field. There are no prerequisites.

This course may transfer as history credit to many colleges and universities; students should consult their advisors about their transfer options.

Course Objectives and Philosophy
This course will expose students to the social, political, cultural, racial, and historical realities of the American Civil Rights Movement. Concentrating on the period between 1954 and the 1985, the course will introduce students to key concepts in the struggle for civil rights such as equal treatment under the law; desegregation and desegregation; voting rights enforcement; nonviolent resistance; grass-roots political leadership; religion as a catalyst for social change; and cultural diversity as a product of race, ethnicity, religion, and region. In addition, we will introduce and consider important historical figures including Martin Luther King, Jr.; Coretta Scott King; Malcolm X; Rosa Parks; Bull Connor; Fannie Lou Hamer; Ralph Abernathy; Orval Faubus; George Wallace; James Meredith; Stokely Carmichael; and many others.

The historical material presented in this course will help students develop their appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity in the United States and in the world. It will demonstrate to students the hardships that African Americans have faced in their attempt to achieve basic equal rights in the United States and will suggest to them that civil rights and racial equality are ongoing goals rather than
accomplished facts. This course should provide students with a basis for understanding racial, ethnic and political issues in contemporary American and global society.

In addition, students will have the benefit of viewing a masterful work of documentary film, helping them understand and critique the sources and methods that contribute to the creation of historical narratives.

**Texts**
There is no assigned text for this course. Students are required to view *Eyes on the Prize* in its entirety during regular class sessions.

**Assignments**
**Attendance** at class meetings and **participation** in discussions will be mandatory.

Students will be required to keep a **response journal** throughout the course in which they will record their impressions of the films and capsule summaries of class discussions. Any questions they wish to raise in class or with the instructor may also be recorded in the journals.

In addition to the journal, each student will prepare a 4-5 page written **research paper** on a topic of his or her choice relating to American civil rights and will make a brief presentation to the class describing the paper. More detailed information about this assignment will be provided later. Both the journal and the final paper/presentation are due at the last class meeting.

**Grading**
Grading will be based on a combination of written work, attendance, and participation in discussion.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response journal</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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Class Meeting Schedule
Fall 2002

T Sept. 3  The Beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement
           Brown v. the Board; Montgomery Bus Boycott and Martin Luther King, Jr.; Little Rock Central High School

Th Sept. 5  Nonviolent Resistance
           James Meredith and the integration of Ole Miss; nonviolent resistance training in Memphis

T Sept. 10  Protests and Marches
           Freedom Rides; Birmingham marches and Bull Connor; the March on Washington

Th Sept. 12  Mississippi and Alabama
           Freedom Summer; march from Selma to Montgomery

T Sept. 17  Black Pride
           Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam; March Against Fear; the Black Panther Party

Th Sept. 19  Communities and Poverty
           Community control of public schools; War on Poverty and the Poor People’s Campaign; Assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy

T Sept. 24  Nation Time
           Muhammed Ali; the National Black Political Convention; Attica prison takeover

Th Sept. 26  Keys to the Kingdom
           Boston busing crisis; Affirmative Action; “Reverse Discrimination” and the Bakke decision

T Oct. 1  Crises and Triumphs of the 1980s
           Urban renewal and rioting in Miami; election of Harold Washington as mayor of Chicago

Th Oct. 3  Now and Tomorrow?
           Class Presentations

Due: Research papers and response journals