The Black Lives Matter Movement

The purpose of this course is to trace and investigate the development of the Black Lives Matter movement. The course will explore the historical, political, social, and economic forces that gave rise to the movement. Specifically, the course will focus on racial disparities in law enforcement and institutional racism. Case studies will center on those Black individuals killed by law enforcement officials and the response of the justice system. The course will also compare and contrast the Black Lives Matter movement with the Civil Rights movement from 1954-1968. The effective use of social media and technology as tools to promote racial justice will also be analyzed.

Primary Objectives

1. Study, analyze and critique the role of the law in the Black community.

2. Explore the role of race and the law.

3. Understand methods of legal analysis and reasoning including critical race theory.

4. Understanding why diversity matters.

5. Understanding, analyzing and discussing current events including the impact of America’s first Black president.

6. The course will also explore the political, economic, religious, social, intellectual and artistic changes which led to the evolution of the Black Lives Matter movement.

7. The philosophical underpinnings of the theory of nonviolent direct mass action will be analyzed.
8. The strategies of proponents of racial justice to transform Jim Crow societies into integrated societies will be studied.

9. Major historical figures including Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Malcolm X, Earl Warren, and Thurgood Marshall will be analyzed.

10. The students will also learn of the growth of black empowerment; from rural Mississippi to Watts and Oakland, California.

Class Requirements

1. Examinations: One (1) midterm exam counts as 25% of the student’s final grade and one (1) final examination counts as 30% of the student’s final grade.

2. Class attendance and participation: failure to attend class, defined as more than six (6) absences, will result in the failure of this course. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students will debate selected topics during the semester. 20% of the student grade will be based upon class participation which includes their debate performance.

3. Prepared documents: One (1) research paper on an approved topic relating to the Black Lives Matter movement law. The paper must be at least ten (10) pages, not including the bibliography, typed, no more than 12 point, and double spaced. This paper will constitute 15% of the student’s final grade.

4. Students will give an oral presentation of their paper. This presentation will count 10% of the student’s final grade.

Undergraduate Academic Regulations:
Students are expected to comply with all rules and regulations for student conduct as described in the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin which can be found at http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html.

Students who are found guilty of plagiarism will at a minimum fail the specific assignment and, according to University guidelines, could fail the course. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person’s wording without indicating the source using quotation marks and the appropriate citation. Paraphrased or borrowed ideas are to be identified with the appropriate citation.

Required Readings


**Useful Web Sites**

Supremecourt.gov

[www.census.gov.pubinfo](http://www.census.gov/pubinfo)

Cornell Law

Oxford Press

NY Times

**WEEKLY OUTLINE**

**Week 1  8/29**

Introduction and Overview: Race, Law, and Society
A Short History of the Black Lives Matter Movement

**Week 2  9/5**

The Black Lives Matter Platform
The American Legal System
Constitutional Dilemma
Dred Scott v. Sandford
Reading: Browne – Marshall, Chapter 1, pages 1 – 17

**Week 3  9/12**

The History of Blacks in America
Reading: Browne – Marshall, Chapter 2, pages 19 – 50; Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 1
Constitutional Amendments 13, 14, and 15
Research Paper Selection

Debate topic selected

Social Media

**Week 4  9/19**
The Civil Rights Movement
Williams v Mississippi
Plessy v Ferguson
Brown v. Board of Education

Browne – Marshall, Chapter 3, pages 51 – 116; Seeing White, Chapter 1-2; Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 2

U.S. Justice Department Reports
Ferguson
Baltimore

Week 5  9/26

Leaders of the BLM movement
The Black Liberation Movement
Black Nationalism
Moore v Dempsey
Powell v Alabama
Brown – Marshall, Chapter 4, pages 117 – 176; Seeing White, Chapters 3-4

Week 6  10/3

The Use of Social Media
The American Labor Movement
Reading: Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 5

Debates

Week 7  10/10

Civil Rights Act 1964
Voting Rights Act 1965
Browne – Marshall, Chapter 5, pages 177 – 205; Seeing White, Chapters 5-6

Week 8  10/17
Equal Protection of the Laws

Cooper v Aaron
Heart of Atlanta Motel v US
Palmer v Thompson
Loving v Virginia

Reading: Seeing White, Chapter 7

Review

Week 9  10/24

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10  10/31

The Women’s Rights Movement
Papers due
Grutter v Bollinger
Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1

Reading: Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 6

Week 11  11/7

The Criminal Justice System
Brown – Marshall Chapter 6, pages 207 – 250
Assigned Reading: Alexander, Chapters 1-3

Week 12  11/14

Papers presented

Assigned Reading Alexander, Chapters 4-6

Week 13  11/21
The LGBT Movement
The Strange Career of Jim Crow revisited
Solutions to current issues in the Black community
Reading: Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 9

Week 14      11/28
Reforms
Bail/ Legal Representation
Reading: Seeing White, Chapters 8-9

Week 15      12/5
Review

Week 16      12/12
FINAL EXAM    December 16  10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. Readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned.

2. Students should attend all classes. Attendance will reflect on your final grade. Students who leave the classroom before the period is over will be considered absent for that day.

3. The classroom is an open learning environment: therefore, all students’ ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, and viewpoints must be respected.

4. Students must only talk during discussions or when asking or answering questions.

5. All cell phones and other electronic devices must be off and out of sight in the classroom unless the student has been granted permission by the instructor.