

## ACTIVISM & DISSENT IN MODERN AMERICA

History 3098  
Fall 2017  
UConn-Hartford

Professor Melanie Newport  
Tuesdays, 4:00PM - 6:30PM  
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Strikes. Protests. Lobbying. Protest Songs. Buttons. Letter writing campaigns. Riots. Rebellions. What did it mean to participate in political protest in the 20th century United States? How has democracy been shaped through freedom of speech, thought, and association? How can historical studies of dissent inform organizing today?

### Required Texts

- Yohuru Williams, *Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement*
- Michael Stewart Foley, *Front Porch Politics: The Forgotten Heyday of American Activism in the 1970s and 1980s*
- Readings posted under the “Course Content” tab of HuskyCT. Subject to change.

### Expectations

This class meets once a week. You are responsible for coming to class prepared for discussion. You will turn in assignments on time.

### Course Objectives

Collegiate history is about learning to work with the tools of the historian— attention to complexity, change over time, context, contingency, and causality— to understand how people in the past made choices and why those choices and their impact were important. As such, our focus is on the connections between people, events, institutions, and policies and why they are significant. If you are worried about your performance in this class based on high school history class, feel free to let that go. What we do here is fundamentally different as we focus less on memorization and more on developing critical reading and writing skills that will serve you well as you pursue your major.

### After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the relationships between dissenting ideas and context in modern American history.
- Evaluate how ideology, strategy, tactics, and organizational structures shaped the development and influence of social movements.
- Interpret the impact of individuals and social movements on society.
- Practice historical methods through research and writing.
- Assess connections between past events and our current context.

## **Of vital importance:**

**Face to face communication is best;** it allows me to put a name with a face and to get to know you. You may meet with me before or after class or during office hours. You are required to make one visit to office hours but you are not limited to it. I do not discuss grades over email. I will respond to most emails within 24 hours. Check the syllabus before emailing. If you are new to emailing professors, check out this guide: <http://tinyurl.com/hvlggab>. Brevity and formality go a long way.

**Assignments:** You must turn in assignments on time. Assignments are due on HuskyCT by 11:59pm on the due date. If you require an extension for a catastrophic reason, you must contact the professor at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. Set up a meeting with the professor if you fall behind. The end of the semester is not the time to address struggles that interfered with your work during the semester.

**Extra Credit:** There isn't any. Don't ask

## **Grade Distribution**

- Response Paper 5%
- Reverse Outline Assignment 10%
- Research Paper on Individual 25%
- Research Paper on Social Movement 25%
- Final: 25%
- Participation: 10%

## **Assignments**

### Response Paper

Write a brief, informal 2-3 page essay responding to any or all of the following questions. The degree to which you respond to these questions is up to you; demonstrate that you are engaging with the material from Weeks 1 and 2. Due 9/12.

- What is the relationship between dissent, social movements, and activism? How would you define these terms?
- As a historical actor living in 2017, what most interests you about studying activism and dissent? Do you have any concerns, topics, or questions you'd like addressed in this course?
- Is there anything you'd like the professor to know about you as a learner?

### Reverse Outline Assignment

Choose one of the articles about the Ku Klux Klan. With as much detail as possible, create a reverse outline of the article. Consider components such as introduction, historiography, thesis, subsections, topic sentences, evidence, counterarguments and conclusion. At the end of your outline, write an informal reflection paragraph on how strong organization can make a research paper better, including any relevant examples from the article you outlined. Due 9/26.

## Research Papers

The primary writing assignments in this course provide an opportunity for you to undertake in-depth research on individuals and movements of interest to you. Each paper will be 5-6 pages long. You are required to use at least 4 peer reviewed journal articles and 2 books in addition to any course texts you use. Books or articles do not necessarily have to focus on the individual or movement; they may explore the broader context. You should privilege sources written by academic historians. You may also use primary sources as you see fit.

Each paper should have a clear argument about the individual or movement supported by an introduction, footnoted evidence, and a conclusion. In both papers, avoid hagiography. You are expected to write a critical assessment that takes into account successes as well as failures and contradictions.

### Research Paper 1: Individual

In this paper, you will consider the question: What impact do the lives and experience of individual activists have on social change? As you address this question, you might consider (but are not limited to) the following factors:

- biography
- ideology
- relationship to movement actors
- impact on the movement
- central events
- accomplishments and legacy
- key writings
- critiques of their approach, actions, or worldview from scholars or contemporaries
- impact of context on what they could do or how they did it

You do not need to consider each and every one of these factors. Due 10/10.

### Research Paper 2: Social Movement

In this paper, you will consider the question: What impact did the collective ideologies and tactics of this social movement have on social change? As you address this question, you might consider (but are not limited to) the following factors:

- how the movement drew from lessons of history
- tactics
- organization
- demographics of members and why they joined
- why they succeeded or failed
- single issue or multi-issue
- protest image
- timing and reception
- ideology

- key writings
- central events
- accomplishments and legacy
- critiques of their approach, actions, or worldview from scholars or contemporaries
- impact of context on what they could do or how they did it

You do not need to consider each and every one of these factors. Due 11/28.

### Final

You will write a 3-5 page essay in response to a question. Your response should show that you have done the reading all semester, can connect different readings and think about them thematically, and can write an interpretive essay that is critical, well-argued, and well-supported by specific evidence. The question will be posted on HuskyCT on the last day of class. The final will be due by 11:59pm, 12/12.

### Participation

The In-Class Participation Rubric is posted on HuskyCT. Another way to participate is to come to office hours. Students find this time most useful for talking about their experience of the class, mentoring about majors and career paths, and for getting feedback on assignment drafts. You can also create and respond to threads on the HuskyCT discussion board.

## **UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES**

**Grade information:** <http://catalog.uconn.edu/academic-regulations/grade-information/>

**Grade conversion:** A 93-100, 4.0; A- 90-92, 3.7; B+ 87-89, 3.3; B 83-86, 3.0; B- 80-82, 2.7; C+ 77-79, 2.3; C 73-76, 2.0; C- 70-72, 1.7; D+ 67-69, 1.3; D 63-66, 1.0; D- 60-62, 0.7; F <60, 0.0.

**Academic integrity:** I expect that you will turn in original work. I will prepare you to act in accordance with the Guidelines for Academic Integrity at the University of Connecticut by teaching you proper methods of citation. You will contact me if you have questions before submitting assignments. **YOU WILL NOT PLAGIARIZE, COPY, STEAL, CHEAT, LIFT, SUBMIT WORK FROM OTHER CLASSES, OR FAIL TO CITE; IF YOU DO SO, YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE.** To learn about the onerous process accompanying “academic misconduct”: <http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-appendix-a/>. If you decide to cheat or plagiarize, keep in mind that you are committing to costing yourself, the professor, and a number of people across the University countless hours of their valuable time. Don’t do it.

Students with disabilities: This course follows principles of “universal design” and should be accessible to all students. The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at UConn provides accommodations and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability for which you wish to request academic accommodations and have not contacted the CSD, please do so as soon as possible. The CSD is located in Wilbur Cross, Room 204 and can be reached at (860) 486-2020 or at [csd@uconn.edu](mailto:csd@uconn.edu). Detailed information regarding the accommodations process is also available on their website at [www.csd.uconn.edu](http://www.csd.uconn.edu)

**Academic freedom:** To quote the UConn Student Code, “The ‘spirit of inquiry’ lies at the heart of our community. It is the realization that the act of learning is essential to personal growth. The

desire to know and the willingness to explore require the strength to resist the false promises of shortcuts and substitutes in the process of learning. The spirit of inquiry is the passion and the patience to commit oneself to a continual journey toward understanding. Incorporating the spirit of inquiry into one's life as a student is not easy. It calls for curiosity, stamina, vulnerability, honesty, grace, courage, and integrity. A student needs to look beyond comfortable assumptions in search of new perspectives and seek the very information that might change his or her mind. ...The spirit of inquiry can only flourish in an environment of mutual trust and respect.”  
<http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/>

**Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence:** The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. More information is available at [equity.uconn.edu](http://equity.uconn.edu) and [titleix.uconn.edu](http://titleix.uconn.edu)

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**Technology:** Devices may be used in class for note-taking or accessing course documents only. However, be mindful that studies show that people who take handwritten notes usually do better (see <http://tinyurl.com/jmjc7yd>). Unapproved uses such as texting or social media will lead to a semester-long ban on all devices for all members of the class.

**All other materials are on HuskyCT: [learn.uconn.edu](http://learn.uconn.edu)  
Readings and Assignments Schedule  
History 3098**

## Fall 2017

Other than *Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement* and *Front Porch Politics*, all texts are available on HuskyCT under “Course Content.”

You should aim to do *most* of the reading. There is a large volume of work represented here so that you might have some options according to your interests. Engage deeply with what you read; take notes so that you will be prepared for class. As we meet only once a week, it is imperative that you are reading throughout the week.

### Unit 1: Methods

Week 1, 8/29: Syllabus

Week 2, 9/5 : Introduction to Course Topics & Thinking Like a Historian

Introduction, Goldberg, *Grassroots Resistance*

Parts 1 & 2, Hoffer, *The True Believer*

“Why Protest” zine

“What Does it Mean to Think Historically?”

### Unit 2: Progressive Era

Week 3, 9/12:

Jones, “Equity and Justice for All,” in *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*

Wells, *Southern Horrors*

Response Paper due

Week 4, 9/19:

Burns, “The Soul of Socialism: Christianity, Civilization, and Citizenship in the Thought of Eugene Debs.”

Enstad, “Fashioning Political Identities: Cultural Studies and the Historical Construction of Political Subjects.”

Lebsock, “Woman Suffrage and White Supremacy: A Virginia Case Study.”

Hernandez, *City of Inmates*, chapter 4

Week 5, 9/26:

Gordon, “What Do We Mean by Populism? The “Second” Klan as a Case Study”

Goldberg, “Invisible Empire: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan,” in *Grassroots Resistance*

Pick 2:

Rhomberg, “White Nativism and Urban Politics: The 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Oakland, California.”

Goldberg, “Unmasking the Ku Klux Klan: The Northern Movement against the KKK, 1920-1925.”

Trollinger, “Hearing the Silence: The University of Dayton, the Ku Klux Klan, and Catholic Universities and Colleges in the 1920s.”

Laats, “Red Schoolhouse, Burning Cross: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and Educational Reform.”

Reverse Outline due

### **Unit 3: Civil Rights**

Week 6, 10/3:

Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past."

McGuire, "'It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped': Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle."

*Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapters 1.

Week 7, 10/10:

Carson, "The Unfinished Dialogue of Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X."

*Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement*, chapter 2.

Selections from Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*

Paper 1 due

Week 8, 10/17:

Murch, "The Campus and the Street: Race, Migration, and the Origins of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, CA."

Gellman, "In the Driver's Seat: Chicago's Bus Drivers and Labor Insurgency in the Era of Black Power."

Tyson, "Robert F. Williams, 'Black Power,' and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle."

Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California."

*Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement*, chapter 3.

Week 9, 10/24:

Rodriguez, "A Movement Made of 'Young Mexican Americans Seeking Change': Critical Citizenship, Migration, and the Chicano Movement in Texas and Wisconsin, 1960-1975."

Ogbar, "Yellow Power: The Formation of Asian-American Nationalism in the Age of Black Power, 1966-1975."

"The Combahee River Collective Statement."

Losier, "Against 'law and order' lockup: the 1970 NYC jail rebellions."

*Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement*, chapters 4 & 5.

### **Unit 4: Front Porch Politics**

Week 10, 10/31:

Enke, "Smuggling Sex Through the Gates- Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of Space in Second Wave Feminism."

Nelson, "'Abortions under Community Control': Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction among New York City's Young Lords."

Young, "'The ERA Is a Moral Issue': The Mormon Church, LDS Women, and the Defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment."

*Front Porch Politics*, introduction and part 1.

Week 11, 11/7:  
*Front Porch Politics*, part 2.  
chapters 11 & 13, *Seeing Nature through Gender*

Week 12, 11/14:  
Stein, "This Nation Has Never Honestly Dealt with the Question of a Peacetime Economy  
Coretta Scott King and the Struggle for a Nonviolent Economy in the 1970s."  
Stewart-Winter, "The Law and Order Origins of Gay Politics."  
*Front Porch Politics*, part 3 & 4.

### **Unit 5: Roots of Present Movements**

Week 13, 11/21:  
Thanksgiving Break- No class

Week 14, 11/28:  
TBD  
Paper 2 Due

Week 15, 12/5:  
TBD

**Final Exam: Take-home essay due by 11:59, December 12**