

University of the Fraser Valley, History Department
HISTORY 370 -- THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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Tuesday, 8:30-12:10 p.m. (CRN: 91769) Abbotsford Campus A360

CONTENT: This course will examine African-Americans' struggle for racial justice in the United States from the 1930s to the late 1960s. In addition to familiarizing ourselves with the major events and participants in this struggle, we will examine historiographical debates relevant to the topic. When did "the movement" begin and end? What distinguishes the period from 1954 to 1965 from earlier and later struggles for racial justice? What role did various actors—national civil rights organizations, local grassroots activists, women, white allies, and the federal government—play in bringing about social change? What were the reactions of white southerners and northerners to this concerted challenge to the status quo? Other topics that we will investigate include: the role of religion in the struggle for integration; the effectiveness of legal action as a strategy of social change, especially in the case of school integration; the philosophy and use of nonviolence and its co-existence with armed self-defense; the impact of the Cold War on civil rights debates; the differences between southern and northern racism, and the struggle for racial equality in the North. Finally, we will pay special attention to popular representations of the movement in the mass media and through public commemorative events.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Précis and question (4 x 5%)	20%
Journal	20%
Film Review	15%
Paper (proposal & annotated bibliography; 10 pp)	25%
Final Exam	20%

TEXTS:

- Adam Fairclough. *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000*. Reprint edition. (Penguin, 2002).
- Thomas J. Sugrue. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Paperback edition (Random House, 2009).
- Select articles (available electronically).

FILMS:

- Ethnic Notions: Black People in White Minds* (1987)
- Goin' to Chicago* (1994)
- Eyes on the Prize* (PBS Series, 1987)
- A Raisin in the Sun* (1961)
- Nashville: "We Were Warriors"* (2000)
- Freedom on my Mind* (1994)
- At the River I Stand* (1993)