I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:

A study of the American Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s to the present. (3)

II. Interdisciplinary Nature of the Course:

“The Civil Rights Movement” will integrate subject matter and approaches to Perspective on Human Institutions from the areas of “development of a major civilization,” and “social systems” by having students examine American society and its development in the later part of the twentieth century and how the Civil Rights Movement interacted with and changed the major political and social systems of this country. (See Section IX, Objective 5, Content for specific examples.) This course will also integrate material from Perspective on Individual Expression by examining the ways in which artistic and literary expressions have been instrumental in furthering the goals of the Civil Rights Movement. (See Section IX, Objective 4, Content for specific examples.) By taking this interdisciplinary approach to the Civil Rights Movement, students will develop an enhanced understanding not only of the expansion of civil rights in this country, in itself a major development in our American civilization and an important change in our social system, but of the important role of the arts and individual expression in fostering change in American society.

III. Prerequisites:

Completion of courses in University Studies categories: Development of a Major Civilization, Social Systems, and Artistic Expression.

IV. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:

A. To introduce students to the nature of the American Civil Rights Movement both as background to contemporary events and as a major force in the development of American culture. (4, 5, 6, 7)

B. To place the struggle for African American civil rights within a general historical context in order to provide students with a perspective of the African American experience in the United States and the general expansion of rights which has taken place in this country. (4, 5, 6, 9)
C. To foster an understanding of the interplay of politics, economics and cultural changes by observing the manner in which alterations in one bring on changes in the others. (2, 4, 7, 9)

D. To teach the historical method as a means of critical thinking, including the evaluation of conflicting testimony in assessing historical fact and assisting the student in applying this historical perspective to the major trends examined. (2, 4, 5, 6, 9)

E. To assist students in making connections and drawing together disparate materials and experiences with reference to the University Studies objectives. (2)

F. To foster the development of oral and written communication through class discussions, written projects, and internet assignments. (1, 3)

G. To promote technological literacy through the use of on-line conference room, and internet research. (1, 2, 3)

V. Expectations of Students:

A. Attend class regularly.
B. Participate in class discussion.
C. Read all materials assigned.
D. Complete all assignments in a timely manner.
E. Complete a research project.
E. Demonstrate mastery of course content on examinations and/or in analytical response papers.

VI. Course Outline:

I. 19th and Early 20th Century Antecedents 3 hours
   A. Abolition
   B. Disfranchisement
   C. Anti-lynching law
   (University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

II. A Critical Analysis of the Civil Rights Movement 6 hours
   A. Brown versus the Board of Education 2 hours
   B. Montgomery Bus Boycott 2 hours
   C. Rise of Martin Luther King, Jr. 2 hours
   D. The Sit-In Movement and the Creation of SNCC 3 hours
   E. Alternate Voices 6 hours
      1. Malcolm X and the Black Muslims
2. Huey Newton and the Black Panthers
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9)

III. Ordinary and Extraordinary People in the Civil Rights Movement
A. The role of women in the Civil Rights Movement 6 hours
B. The arts, music and theatre as the voice of the movement 6 hours
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

IV. Civil Rights in America Today
A. Consolidating Gains in the 1970s and 80s: Politics as the Movement 4 hours
B. Affirmative Action and Reaction 5 hours
C. Women, Native Americans, Latinos, the Disabled and Gays 6 hours
   1. Rights expansion as a theme in modern America
   2. Arts expressions as one vehicle of the contemporary Civil Rights Movement
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

VII. Textbooks:


VIII. Basis of Student Evaluation:

A. Class Participation. (20%)
B. Essay Examinations/Analytical Papers. (50%)
C. Research Project. (30%)
IX. Justification for Inclusion in University Studies Program

A. Objective 1  Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

Emphasis  Significant

Content  For historians and social scientists, the locating and gathering of information and drawing conclusions from the findings is essential. Both primary and secondary sources, including oral histories, documents, newspaper accounts, letters, and census data on issues under consideration will be used to demonstrate (1) methods of location and (2) the variety of conclusions which might be reached from source material. Topical material will include information on various forms of individual expression, including dance, music and literature.

Teaching Strategies  The process of information gathering is learned through demonstration of the tools and resources available and then through repetition to make the skill functional. The initial steps in the process will be handled through in-class demonstrations using conventional sources as well as computerized bibliographic and database materials followed by group discussions on research techniques.

Student Assignments  Students will be expected to continue their research throughout the semester to contribute to class discussions, prepare the assigned bibliography, and present a research project. The most significant assignment related to the objective will revolve around the research project, but in several of the issue discussions students will be expected to locate and gather information related to the subject.

Evaluation of Student Performance  Assessment of student skills in the location and gathering of information is an important component in the research project. For historians, the gathering of information is as essential as the analysis, organization, and communication of the research. There is a wide range of sources that might be employed depending on the subject under analysis, ranging from oral interviews, folk tales, diaries, letters, contemporary periodicals, and secondary works.

B. Objective 2  Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.

Emphasis  Significant

Content  The development of critical thinking skills will be integrated into all elements of the course. The nature of the theme chosen will provide a background for issue analysis of conflicting interpretations and evidence. Students will not only have to deal with their values and assumptions, but those of people in different circumstances. An example involves focusing on one of the outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement--Affirmative Action. By examining the debate and the “proof” used to bolster the various
positions and events, students will develop an appreciation for the complexities surrounding significant issues.

**Teaching Strategies** Discussions focused upon specific problems faced by the American people in the course of the struggle for civil rights will be used to stimulate critical thinking about a wide range of problems. In a group setting, for example, students will examine issues and try to posit as many options as possible. It is an important strategy to demonstrate that there are always alternatives and that simply because a decision was made there were other options available.

**Student Assignments** Students will be expected to display critical thinking skills as they progress in their research and discussion. An important focus of the research project lies in moving beyond information gathering to independent conclusions. Throughout the semester students will be given discussion assignments related to information analysis and critical thinking.

**Student Evaluation** The ability to demonstrate critical and analytical skill will be a factor in the evaluation of the research project, essay exams, and the cogency of the arguments used in class discussions. These will be evaluated on the depth of analysis exhibited and the logic of the arguments used.

**C. Objective 3** **Demonstrate Effective Communication Skills**

**Emphasis** Significant

**Content** The content of the course will provide the material students will use to develop their communication skills. For example, students will read material related to the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement, and verbally discuss this material with the professor and their peers. Students will also engage material in a variety of mediums, including readings and videos, about the power of music to shape the movement, and they will subsequently use that material to communicate, both orally and in writing, their own views about the role of music in the Civil Rights Movement.

**Teaching Strategies** To assist student verbal communication skills, various problem-oriented questions will be posed for discussion and interaction. Spontaneous in-class writing exercises will help develop student written communication skills.

**Student Assignments** Students will be expected to communicate to the class in discussions and in the presentation of their research. Written communication will be expected in the research project, and an oral presentation of the project will be required. For example, if the research project a student conducted research on the Little Freedom Ride in Missouri, he or she would be expected to write clearly and concisely about it in a written research paper, and speak clearly and concisely about it to his or her student colleagues in the classroom. Electronic communication and multimedia visual communication skills will also be a component of some student presentations.
**Evaluation** Students will be evaluated on the clarity and precision of their expression as well as their ability to communicate an integrated understanding of the material. Essay examinations and the research project will emphasize written and visual communication as well as content. Verbal communication in class discussions will also be a factor in the final grade.

**D. Objective 4** Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

**Emphasis** Significant

**Content** Since the African American struggle for equality in America encompasses such a wide diversity of people and experiences, the ability to understand the broad range of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present is an essential component of the course. The present as well as the past will be under constant focus. Topics for consideration were carefully selected so they would relate to this objective and promote a clearer understanding of the problems faced by Americans today. One example demonstrating this objective relates to examining social and economic discrimination and the various ways human beings are able to respond to it. Music and song have long been used as tools to resist oppression. Discussing the ways in which music was crucial in the African American struggle for equal rights will help students identify the ways in which music today is used to comment on perceived social and economic inequalities.

**Teaching Strategies** Numerous audio-visual aids including slides, feature films, documentaries and film clips will be employed to help meet this objective. Using material from lectures and student research, discussions will aid students in understanding human experiences and how they shape societal patterns.

**Student Assignments** Various short readings will be assigned throughout the semester relating to the objective. While some of the readings will be literature in nature, others will be a series of primary readings. Assigned readings will range from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" to Jesse Jackson's speech on the Rainbow Coalition. Readings will cover not only the experience of major leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer and Malcolm X, but also little known heroes of the movement such as the Montgomery Improvement Association, Bernice Reagan (of Sweet Honey & the Rock fame), and the founders of the Free Theater. Assignments will make clear the role individual expression in the arts can play in the larger dynamic of social change.

**Evaluation of Student Performance** The issues under discussion in the course cannot be discussed or evaluated in a vacuum. To make the issues come alive and become relevant, students will be expected to demonstrate an awareness of how the issues have affected the present. One example of this expectation would involve understanding the shift in emphasis in the movement away from segregation and voting rights to housing
and economic justice. In an essay regarding the idea, students would be expected to
discuss how many of these issues remain unresolved today and provide the impetus for
continuing conflict in both the political and social arena.

E. Objective 5 Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their
interrelationships.

Emphasis Considerable

Content Course materials will be carefully chosen so that students will be forced to deal
with various cultures by stepping outside their cultural bias. By fostering the idea that
other cultures have to be examined from a neutral position, the course will enhance the
University Studies objectives. For example, the struggle for equal rights is an issue that
concerns not just African Americans, but gays, lesbians, Latinos, Asians and others as
well. In many ways, the struggle for civil rights by African Americans is part of the
broader tradition of rights expansion in America, which continues today.

Teaching Strategies Through readings, musical selections, plays, documentary films,
lectures, and discussion, America’s cultural diversity will be explored and explained.

Student Assignments The readings and course materials will reinforce student
understanding of the interrelationship between minority and majority cultures in America,
particularly as they come into conflict over the issue of expanding human rights in this
country.

F. Objective 6 Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity
of knowledge and experience.

Emphasis Significant

Content Given the broad interdisciplinary nature of American history and the arts,
material covering a wide range of knowledge will be presented. Through the semester,
students will be encouraged to analyze the dynamic of the civil rights movement, in all of
its manifestations, including politics, economics and the arts. By exploring the diverse
range of the movement, students will be able to see how the struggle for equality cuts
across many aspects of American life, and the role that individual artistic expression
played in furthering the movement.

Teaching Strategies In lectures and discussions it will be essential to expand the topic to
its larger dimensions. For example, students will be challenged to ponder the larger
implications of the participation of women in the movement. Why did women get
involved in the movement, early on and in disproportionate numbers to men, particularly
in rural areas? Although there are a lot of possibilities, kin networks explain much of the
dynamic. These results will not be “spoon-fed” in a lecture, but “discovered” by students
through the prompting of well-crafted, well thought-out questions. In all the formal
lectures there will be attempts to place the material under discussion into a broader framework by using various audio-visual materials, popular literature, and scholarly works.

**Student Assignments** The breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience will be reinforced through the assigned readings. These will range from scholarly works to novels. One element in all the assigned readings will be the problem of perspective. For example, there will be several readings related to the nature of the contributions of the black panthers. Some analysts perceive the group as a radical threat to American values and institutions whereas others see it as an attempt by African Americans to claim those same values for their own.

**Student Evaluation** In both the research project and essay exams, students will be evaluated on the extent to which they demonstrate knowledge of the interactions implicit in American history and culture. In a question dealing with the arts and the civil rights movement for example, students would be expected to discuss how organizations like the Free Theatre or groups like Sweet Honey and the Rock originated and developed as expressions of the core values of the movement, and the effect they had on both the movement and the larger society.

G. Objective 7 **Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.**

**Emphasis** Significant

**Content** Value dilemmas will be a major focus of the course. During the civil rights movement in America, people of all races and political persuasions were confronted with the need to make choices based on their values. From the ordinary African American women who risked their livelihoods to provide civil rights marchers with dinner and a place to stay to the Mayor of Nashville who had to decide on the legitimacy of that city's segregation ordinances, the movement forced Americans to choose. The content of the course will also explore how individual artists could choose forms of expression that contributed to the movement, or not.

**Teaching Strategies** Throughout the semester, discussions devoted to examining the movement and the people involved will have a direct goal of exploring the valuing process of both the student and those people under consideration.

**Student Assignments** Readings, videos and class discussions will help students explore the dilemma all Americans faced as they struggled to make decisions about participation in or resistance to the civil rights movement based upon their own value systems.

**Evaluation of Student Performance** Class discussion and essay exams will provide students the opportunity to reflect on the value decisions of others, as well as their own responses to the various situations presented.
H. Objective 8  Demonstrate the ability to make informed, sensitive aesthetic responses.

Emphasis  Considerable

Content  Though understanding America's aesthetic past is not the major objective of this course, exploring the richness of America's artistic heritage and its role in promoting change, particularly in the area of civil rights is key. The objective will be demonstrated in the readings, discussions and other course material.

Teaching Strategies  Class discussions will be devoted to exploring the ways in which art can be perceived as both aesthetic and political. The emphasis of this course will be on the political aspects of art and music, although aesthetics will also be addressed. To be successful in motivating political or social change, art must be good as well as message laden. Exploring this dimension will help students make more informed aesthetic responses to art as politics.

Student Assignments  Readings, acoustic recordings, and videos will be assigned to give students the opportunity to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the arts employed in the service of the movement, and thereby make more informed aesthetic responses to such material in the future.

H. Objective 9  Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one's natural, social, and political environment.

Emphasis  Significant

Content  If one accepts the premise that learning how people in the past have dealt with their natural, social, and political environments one can more effectively deal with those same problems today History of the American Civil Rights Movement deals with this objective significantly. During the American civil rights movement, all Americans, North and South, black and white, male and female, rich and poor, had to confront the juxtaposition between their own beliefs about freedom and equality and society’s treatment of African Americans. By exploring the range of choices individuals made during this time, from George Wallace’s declaration of “segregation now, segregation forever,” to the Methodist white women in a North Carolina town who persuaded city leaders, many of whom were spouses, to accept school desegregation without incident, this course will demonstrate that individual actions have consequences, and that every individual, regardless of status, participates in the creation of social and political systems. By examining the reasons why these and other events happened, the course will foster an understanding of how the interplay of politics, economics, and culture really work and that even minor changes in one set of assumptions can change the direction of the society.
Teaching Strategies  In class discussions students could be divided into groups when dealing with important natural social and political problems. Each group will be expected to debate the issues based on their research and class presentations. The issues will be further focused through slides and films on subjects related to the objective.

Student Assignments  Discussions related to readings and videos will ask students to evaluate how people in the past functioned in their social and political environments in regard to the civil rights movement. Class discussions will reflect on how individual actions take place within a larger societal context, and that individual actions have larger societal consequences.

Evaluation of Student Performance  Students will be expected to display an understanding of cultural and political issues and be able to relate them to similar problems they face today as Americans. This objective will be directly evaluated on the research project and essay examinations.

X.  Background:

Teaching this course requires an extensive background and knowledge of African American and American history and culture.

XI.  Class Size

The optimum size for this course is 20 in order to allow for more meaningful discussion.