THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN TEXAS
HIST 4261.004 and HIST 5100.001
Thursdays 12:30-3:20pm | Matthews 112 | Spring 2015

Instructors:
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Course Overview:
This combined course is a capstone for undergraduate history majors and a seminar for graduate students. Students will immerse themselves in readings and discussion on the creation of “Jim Crow” and “Juan Crow” segregation regimes and efforts to dismantle them, including anti-segregation legal fights, direct-action campaigns, and community organizing efforts. Each student will gain hands-on research experience in primary-source archives and produce original scholarship, in the form of research papers, oral histories, and digital projects that will result in an online exhibit created by the class as a whole.

As African Americans and Mexican Americans in Texas fought to dismantle state-sanctioned segregation, many white Texans fought back. Perhaps the most dramatic event in this larger story was the crisis that erupted in 1956, when Mansfield High School became the first public school in North Texas ordered to desegregate. The result was a protracted fight by local white residents to stop integration, which – with support from the Texas governor and other state officials – eventually succeeded in defying the federal court order to admit black students at Mansfield High, and efforts to desegregate Texas schools more generally.

Together, we will explore the history of the civil rights movement throughout the state. The heart of the class, however, will revolve around investigating and understanding the background, news coverage, and consequences of the Mansfield Crisis. We will combine our research and insights to collectively build an online “museum” about the events at Mansfield.

The Mansfield Project:
The end goal of our course will be to design, build, and launch an online “museum” about the Mansfield Crisis, which will pull together your original research and insights into a digital exhibit that will be publicly available online.

That means this class will be different from most history courses you have taken. In a nutshell, instead of just consuming information in this course, you will create it. This will be a project-based class, as teams of undergraduates and grad students collaborate to research, design, and create our online museum. What that online exhibit will look like, what it will include, and how we will put together the story of the events of 1956, will be for us to debate and determine as a class. That means that each of you will do what professional historians do: find and interpret evidence, and then decide what our research has revealed and how best to tell that story.
Please note that you are NOT expected to have any previous skills or knowledge about building a digital project. While you will have the opportunity to learn new digital skills, your job in the course will be to do historical research and analysis, and then help us decide as a class what it all means.

Communication:
Because collaboration will be such a central part of the course, we want to be as accessible to you as we possibly can be. We will hold regular office hours throughout the semester on a first come-first served basis, but we are also happy to schedule an appointment with you outside of normal office hours.

We will also make periodic announcements (including, if necessary, changes to the course schedule) through the course’s Blackboard site, which you can access at learn.unt.edu. If we ever need to contact you directly, we will send an email to your @my.unt.edu account.

Please note: It is your responsibility to check that account regularly (or set it to forward to an account that you do check regularly) and to monitor the Blackboard site. If you need to contact us, call the numbers above or email the addresses above. Please don’t send an email through Blackboard, because it might not reach us.

Required Readings:
• Brian D. Behnken, Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas (University of North Carolina Press, 2011)

• Dwonna Goldstone, Integrating the 40 Acres: The Fifty-Year Struggle for Racial Equality at the University of Texas (University of Georgia Press, 2012)

• Robyn Duff Ladino, Desegregating Texas Schools: Eisenhower, Shivers, and the Crisis at Mansfield High (University of Texas Press, 1996). Note: this book is also available in a free electronic version via the UNT Library.

• In addition, we will upload articles, chapters, and primary source documents to the course’s Blackboard page, as noted in the following course schedule. These are also required readings.

Grading:
• In-class discussions of required readings (25%)
  o A seminar class is unlike the kind of lecture-heavy format you may be used to from your other History courses. In this format, you are required to complete the reading assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them in great detail. From time to time, you will be called upon to lead discussion on some topic in the readings or on group work.
• **Writing assignments (25%)**
  o You will write four short papers on the assigned books. Each assignment will differ slightly from the others, in hopes that they will help you sharpen a variety of writing skills. (Please note that your first assignment will be due next week.)

• **Research reports (25%)**
  o We will break into small groups throughout the semester to research various aspects of our final project. Each week your group will be responsible for reporting findings back to the class. (To be clear, what you’ll be doing here is somewhat similar to -- but separate from -- your discussion of required readings.)

• **Contribution to final project (25%)**
  o Our final project will be an online exhibit on the Mansfield Crisis. It will combine all of our research and will involve considerable individual and group effort.

**Our Expectations:**
To be clear at the outset, you will almost certainly have to work harder and in different ways in this class than you are used to working. Unlike almost any other history course offered at this university, our class will be doing original research and publishing our findings online.

To that end, here is what we do – and do not – expect of you in the class:

• Because the class places a premium on collaboration and teamwork, we expect you to be an active and supportive participant in class discussions.
• Similarly, we – and your classmates – will expect you to be fully prepared for class discussions. That means completing and thinking about the class readings well in advance, preparing your research reports fully, and so on.
• Because we want you to begin thinking about the Mansfield Crisis in depth, we will ask you to dive into studying the event and return to it again and again throughout the semester. As a result, we will approach the history of the civil rights movement in Texas in a thematic, rather than a chronological, way (and thus we’ll do a lot of jumping back and forth in between historical eras).
• We do not have an official attendance policy, but missing one meeting of this course is the equivalent of missing an entire week in a course that meets two or three times a week. What does that mean? It means that you cannot expect to do well in this course if you miss class more than once, or if you make a habit of arriving to class late.
• We do NOT expect any of you to already be an expert in any subject – whether it be the civil rights era, historical research methods, contributing to a digital online exhibit, or the like. Everyone in the class will begin on the same page, and we will provide the resources and guidance needed to complete the course work.
• As such, you should ALWAYS come talk to us (and your classmates) if you have questions, concerns, or need help with anything.
• We expect everyone to be professional at all times, come prepared, and treat each other with respect and civility.
Over the course of the semester, we expect that you will develop and refine particular skills and abilities. Indeed, by the end of the class you’ll be able to:

- Identify, explain, and contextualize key figures, events, and trends in the civil rights movements in Texas.
- Place the evolution of the civil rights movement in Texas within the larger context of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s in the history of the United States.
- Conduct original research in historical archives.
- Develop new skills in various methods of historical research.
- Write an effective analytical essay.
- Develop new skills in conducting and executing a collaborative research project.

The end result, we believe, will be a high-quality digital history project that will last long after the course is completed.

**Statement Regarding Academic Dishonesty:**
Please familiarize yourself with the University’s policies on academic integrity and academic dishonesty found in the *Student Code of Conduct* (http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf). The content of the *Student Code* applies to this course, and we refer all cases of cheating and plagiarism to the Provost’s office. If you do choose to cheat or plagiarize on an assignment you will earn a 0 for it, which means you will almost surely fail the course.

**Disability Statement:**
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. **Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment.** Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.
Course Schedule | History 4261.004/5100.001
(Subject to change on short notice)

January 22: Introductions
- No reading.

January 29: The Mansfield Crisis
- **Reading:** Ladino, *Desegregating Texas Schools*
- **Due:** Ladino paper

February 5: The construction of Jim Crow regimes and the lynching era
- **Reading:** Dailey, “The Age of Jim Crow,” and selected primary sources (Electronic copies available on Blackboard)

February 12: Visit to UNT Special Collections
- Meet at Willis 443.
- **Due:** Mansfield research assignment

February 19: The struggle to integrate Texas educational institutions
- **Reading:** Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres*; Marcello, “Reluctance versus Reality: The Desegregation of North Texas State College.” (Electronic copy available on Blackboard)
- **Due:** Goldstone review

February 26: Black and brown coalition building
- **Reading:** Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles*
- **Due:** Behnken reaction paper

March 5: Fighting “Juan Crow”
- **Due:** Research reports

March 12: Texas’s changing political landscape during the New Deal and WW2
- **Reading:** Thomas A. Guglielmo, “Fighting for Caucasian Rights: Mexican Americans, and the Transnational Struggle for Civil Rights in World War II Texas” and Lisa Y. Ramos, “Not Similar Enough: Mexican American and African American Civil Rights Struggles in the 1940s,” and selected primary sources (Electronic copies available on Blackboard)
- **Due:** Research reports
March 19: Spring Break – No Class!

March 26: The NAACP’s legal strategy
  • **Reading:** Gillette, “The Rise of the NAACP in Texas” and Hine, “The Elusive Ballot.” (Electronic copies available on Blackboard)
  • **Due:** Research reports

April 2: Desegregation and the Dallas Movement
  • **Due:** Research reports

April 9: Project Team Reports
  • **Reading:** TBA

March 26: Project Team Reports
  • **Reading:** TBA

March 26: Project Team Reports
  • **Reading:** TBA

April 30: Assessing the movement’s accomplishments and failures
  • **Reading:** TBA

May 7: Wrap-up
  • **Due:** Final Projects

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