

Movement Literature

English 30693: US Multiethnic Literature | Spring 2020

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Course Overview

“Why are they showing this to us?” Ta-Nehisi Coates asked every February when his teachers wheeled in a TV from the AV department and, in honor of Black History Month, showed him and his classmates footage of white policemen beating Black people protesting the segregation of Southern schools, public transportation, and lunch counters. There had to be more to the civil rights movement, Coates suspected, than “films dedicated to the glories of being beaten on camera.”

Bayard Rustin, the Black labor leader, thought the same thing in 1965, when he declared the end of the “classical stage” of the civil rights movement—stretching from the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the movement Coates learned about in school—and looked ahead to the movement’s next stage. “At issue, after all, is not *civil rights* strictly speaking, but social and economic conditions,” he wrote. “The civil rights movement is evolving from a protest movement into a full-fledged *social movement*.”

This course is about the literature of that larger social movement, from the Black popular front of the 1930s and 1940s, in which Rustin himself participated, to the women of color feminisms of the 1970s and 1980s. Through the writing of Carlos Bulosan, Anne Moody, Huey Newton, Rodolfo Gonzales, Frank Chin, and Audre Lorde, we will explore the long, multiple, transnational social movements that so often demanded more than civil rights. The civil rights movement is, as Coates discovered in high school, a story handed down to us that may foreground some people and struggles and set aside others. This course interrogates the movement stories we tell and reconsiders the stories we don’t.

Required Texts

Bulosan, Carlos. *America Is in the Heart*. 1943. U of Washington P, 2014.
Lorde, Audre. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Crossing Press, 1982.
Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. 1968. Delta, 2004.

Readings on Course Website

“The Alcatraz Proclamation to the Great White Father and His People.” “*Takin’ It to the Streets*”: *A Sixties Reader*, edited by Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, 4th ed., Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 160–61.

- Baldwin, James. "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation." *The Fire Next Time*, Vintage, 1993.
- Bambara, Toni Cade. Preface. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, Persephone, 1981, pp. vi–viii.
- Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*. Directed by Stanley Nelson Jr. PBS, 2015.
- Bulosan, Carlos. "Freedom from Want." *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 May 1943, p. 12.
- Chin, Frank. *The Chickencoop Chinaman*. *The Chickencoop Chinaman and The Year of the Dragon*, U of Washington P, 1981, pp. 1–66.
- Chin, Frank, et al. Preface. *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, edited by Chin et al., Howard UP, 1974, pp. vii–xvi.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. "The Indian Movement." *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, Delta, 1973, pp. 3–22.
- "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán." "Takin' It to the Streets": *A Sixties Reader*, edited by Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, 4th ed., Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 151–53.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. "Coming Together: The Asian American Movement." *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, Temple UP, 1992, pp. 19–38.
- Gonzales, Rodolfo. "I Am Joaquín/Yo Soy Joaquín." *El Gallo*, 1967.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *Journal of American History*, vol. 91, no. 4, 2005, pp. 1233–63.
- hooks, bell. "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression." *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Mainstream*, South End, 1984, pp. 17–31.
- I Am Not Your Negro*. Directed by Raoul Peck. Magnolia Pictures, 2017.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics during World War II." *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, Free Press, 1994, pp. 161–82.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *Why We Can't Wait*, Signet, 1964, pp. 76–95.
- Moraga, Cherríe. "La Güerra." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, Persephone, 1981, pp. 27–34.
- Newton, Huey P. "To the Liberation Front of South Vietnam." *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton*, Vintage, 1972, pp. 178–81.
- Rustin, Bayard. "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement." *Commentary*, Feb. 1965, pp. 25–31.
- "What We Want Now! What We Believe." *Black Panther*, 15 May 1967, p. 3.
- Wright, Richard. Foreword. *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States of America*, Viking, 1941, pp. 5–6.
- . "Men in the Making." *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States of America*, Viking, 1941, pp. 141–47.
- . "Our Strange Birth." *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States of America*, Viking, 1941, pp. 9–27.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments:

Reading Quizzes	15%
Participation and Preparedness	15%
Presentation	20%
Midterm Paper	25%
Final Paper	25%

Grading Scale:

A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A-	90–92%	C-	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	63–66%
B-	80–82%	D-	60–62%
C+	77–79%	F	0–59%

Reading Schedule and Deadlines

Date	Readings	Deadlines
Week 1	The Long Movement	
Tuesday, January 14	Syllabus	
Thursday, January 16	Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement”	Presentation assigned
Week 2	The Popular Front, in Black and Brown	
Tuesday, January 21	Wright, Foreword to <i>12 Million Black Voices</i> , “Our Strange Birth,” “Men in the Making”	
Thursday, January 23	Bulosan, <i>American Is in the Heart</i> (chapters 1–10)	
Week 3		
Tuesday, January 28	Bulosan, <i>American Is in the Heart</i> (chapters 11–20)	
Thursday, January 30	Bulosan, <i>American Is in the Heart</i> (chapters 21–32)	
Week 4		
Tuesday, February 4	Bulosan, <i>American Is in the Heart</i> (chapters 33–49)	

Thursday, February 6	Bulosan, "Freedom from Want" Kelley, "The Riddle of the Zoot"	
Week 5	A Southern Movement	
Tuesday, February 11	King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail"	Midterm paper assigned
Thursday, February 13	Baldwin, "My Dungeon Shook"	Midterm paper proposal due Sunday, February 16 at 5 p.m.
Week 6		
Tuesday, February 18	Conferences	
Thursday, February 20	Conferences	
Week 7		
Tuesday, February 25	Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> (chapters 1–8)	
Thursday, February 27	Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> (chapters 9–15)	
Week 8		
Tuesday, March 3	Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> (chapters 16–22)	
Thursday, March 5	Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> (chapters 23–30)	Midterm paper due Friday, March 6 at 5 p.m.
Week 9		
Tuesday, March 10	No class (spring break)	
Thursday, March 12	No class (spring break)	
Week 10	Manifestos	
Tuesday, March 17	Rustin, "From Protest to Politics" "What We Want Now!" Newton, "To the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam"	
Thursday, March 19	<i>The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution</i>	
Week 11		
Tuesday, March 24	"The Alcatraz Proclamation to the Great White Father and His People" Deloria, "The Indian Movement"	
Thursday, March 26	"El Plan de Aztlán" Gonzales, "I Am Joaquín/Yo Soy Joaquín"	
Week 12		
Tuesday, March 31	Chin et al., Preface to <i>Aiiieeeee!</i> Espiritu, "Coming Together"	
Thursday, April 2	Chin, <i>The Chickencoop Chinaman</i>	Final paper assigned

Week 13	Sister Outsiders	
Tuesday, April 7	hooks, “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression”	
Thursday, April 9	Bambara, Foreword to <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i> Moraga, “La Güera”	
Week 14		
Tuesday, April 14	Lorde, <i>Zami</i> (prologue, chapters 1–8)	
Thursday, April 16	Lorde, <i>Zami</i> (chapters 9–17)	
Week 15		
Tuesday, April 21	Lorde, <i>Zami</i> (chapters 18–24)	
Thursday, April 23	Lorde, <i>Zami</i> (chapters 25–31, epilogue) SPOTs	
Week 16	Movement Literature Now	
Tuesday, April 28	<i>I Am Not Your Negro</i>	
Thursday, April 30	No class (study days)	Final paper due Sunday, May 3 at 5 p.m.