Course Description: This course examines the varied local and national struggles that constitute the “Black Freedom Movement.” Throughout this quarter, we will interrogate the shibboleth that the modern Civil Rights movement and the Black Freedom Movement are synonymous. This interpretation of the Black Freedom Movement is a form of presentism that conflates the Civil Rights Movement with struggles and objectives of the “Black Freedom Movement.” In order to get a better sense of this freedom movement, it is necessary to examine the social, political, and economic issues that mobilized African Americans throughout the twentieth century. More importantly, it is essential that we investigate the content of African Americans’ struggles during the Civil War when African Americans began to confront “the problem of freedom.” For freedpeople, freedom meant more than civil rights; it meant self-determination and economic independence. By examining African American history from the perspective of the majority of the African American population, we will identify and evaluate how their objectives were expressed in gender, class, and transnational/international dimensions, and engage both the interconnections and the tensions among these differing dimensions, as African Americans endeavored for “freedom.”

Format: Attendance and class participation in weekly meetings are mandatory. It is suggested that students read all articles and books chapters; articles and book chapters with the asterisk (*) are required reading. The weekly readings from the autobiography and biography, however, are always required reading. Each week students submit a brief précis. Each student will also prepare a 12-15-page paper on a theme or topic selected in consultation with the instructor; graduate students are required to write an essay 15-20 pages in length. Students must submit an outline at designated dates during the semester; the paper will be due the final week of class. Final grades will be based on the long essay (50 percent); class participation (25 percent); and weekly précis (25 percent).

Précis: A précis is an analytical review of a book, article, or other text. For this class, you are expected to explain the argument of the text, its historical significance, and relate it to your perception of the “Black Freedom Movement” during that particular historical moment in history. For example, week two covers the end of U. S. slavery and Reconstruction, so you need to explain the argument of one or more of the articles, as well as its historical significance, and how that article sheds light on that moment of the “Black Freedom Movement,” in this case, the end of U.S. slavery and Reconstruction. The précis must be at least a page and an half but no more than two pages, of that week’s
required reading; graduate students much treat at least two articles or book chapters of that week’s readings.

**Late Papers:**
*Late papers will be lowered one letter grade for every day that they are beyond the deadline unless there is a documented medical reason that warrants an extension. I reserve the right to refuse to grade papers that are handed in well past the deadline.

**Students with Disabilities:**
*If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please bring a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your approved accommodations.

**Students Conduct:**
Although it is not necessary to raise your hand during class, it is expected that you engage in discussion in a mature, reasonable, and respectful manner, and to show respect for other students and the professor at all times.

**Required texts:**

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**Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

**Week 1, April 4-Introduction to the Course:**
Coverage of syllabus, discussion of expectations, brief discussion of next week’s readings, and methods to reading scholarly texts

*Begin reading Ida B. Wells’s *Crusade for Justice*.*

**Week 2, April 11- Civil War and Reconstruction:**

*Stephanie M. Camps, “To Get Closer to Freedom: Gender, Movement, and Freedom during the Civil War,” from *Closer to Freedom*

*David S. Cecelski, Abraham H. Galloway: Wilmington’s Lost Prophet and the Rise of Black Radicalism in the American South in *Time Longer Than Rope*.

*Elsa Barkley Brown, Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom in *Time Longer Than Rope*.

Jeff Kerr-Ritchie, “Black Republicans in the Virginia Tobacco Fields” J. of Negro History (Journal of Negro History)


**Week 3, April 18- Blacks Politics during the Nadir:**

*Jane Dailey, “Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South” J. of Southern History (Journal of Southern History)*


**Week 4, April 25- World War I and the New Negro Movement:**


Complete Wells’s Crusade for Justice

Ransby, Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement, skim chapter 2
**Week 5, May 2-The Great Depression, World War II, and The Black Left:**
*Read all articles*


Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement*, chapters 3 & 4

**Week 6, May 9- Political Economies of Black America in the Post-World War II:**
*Outline Due!* *Read all book chapters. Also, to keep apace, I suggest that you read at least one chapter of Ransby’s book, though it is not required for discussion.*


**Week 7, May 16-Cold War and Civil Rights:**


Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement*, chapters 5, 6, and 7

**Week 8, May 23-Rethinking the Civil Rights Movement:**
*Adina Back, Exposing the “Whole Segregation Myth”: The Harlem Nine and New York City’s School Desegregation Battles in *Freedom North.*

*Peter B. Levy, Gloria Richardson and the Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America.*


*Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement*, chapters 8 and 9

**Week 9, May 30-Black Power Movement:**


*Peniel E. Joseph, Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement in *Black Power Movement.*


Complete Ransby’s *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement*
**Week 10, June 6-Black Feminism and Local Politics:**

*Read all*


Rhonda Y. Williams, Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power in *Black Power Movement*.


Kimberley Springer, Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism in *Black Power Movement*.

Jeanne Theoharis, “I’d Rather Go to School in the South”: How Boston’s School Desegregation Complicates the Civil Rights Paradigm in *Freedom North*.

*Final Paper due June 14th by 5:00.*