

CIVIL RIGHTS RHETORICS

English 150B2, Communications Bldg. Rm 214
Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-1:45

Professor Tom Miller

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“The women’s revolt: why and where to?”

Course Materials

You will not have to buy any books. All the readings and course materials will be on [our course page](#).

- To access copyrighted readings, you will use the password **rights** to open the files.
- You will only use [our D2L course page](#) to submit your assignments to the [Assignments page](#), and you will submit drafts of papers to the [Discussion page](#).

Course Description

We will examine the strategies that activists have used to mobilize people to claim their rights. We will reflect on our unconscious biases, and we will follow up to explore how the attitudes of older people differ from those of Generation Z (those born after 1997). We will discuss the rhetorical strategies that have been used to mobilize social movements ranging from the civil rights era of the 1960s to current movements such as Black Lives Matter. We will consider how our country came to imprison a higher percentage of our population than any country in the world, including a highly disproportionate number of people of color. This course meets the general education diversity requirement by using feminist, critical-race theories, and other diverse frameworks to analyze how women, African Americans, gays and lesbians, and immigrants have organized themselves to demand their rights.

Major Units of the Course

1. Civil Rights Movements: In the first four weeks of the class, we will review the civil rights movement and consider its current impact on racial attitudes in America, including our own unconscious assumptions.
2. Women’s Rights Movements: In this three-week unit, we will discuss the movements that have focused on raising awareness of sexism and prejudice against GLBTQ people.
3. Mass Incarceration—the New Jim Crow? In the four weeks after spring break, we will build on our discussions of racial and gender biases to consider how our country came to imprison so many people, including many for minor drug charges that have recently been decriminalized.
4. Immigrant Rights, Me Too, and Other Socially Networked Movements: In our last three weeks, we will consider the impact of the internet on the movements people have organized to claim their rights.

Major Course Assignments

A draft and revision of a short reflection (15%): In the first unit, you will write a five-paragraph reflection on how race, gender, ethnicity, or class has affected some experience or domain of experience. You can focus either on your own personal experiences, or you can examine an incident or event such as those we will be discussing in class. The rough draft is due 2/1, and your revision is due 2/7.

A draft and revision of an interview-based essay (20%): For your second paper, you will interview two older and younger friends, family members, or acquaintances to explore how different generations view issues related to gender, sexual orientation, class, race, and national origin. You will draw on our discussions of the civil rights and women’s movements to provide a broader context for your analysis. Draft 3/3, revision 3/6.

A collaboratively authored website (20%): For the third assignment, you will work with a small group to create a website that examines aspects of mass incarceration. You can choose to focus on the impact of race, gender, or other aspects of mass incarceration such as the influence of poverty, abuse, mental illness, and other factors. Draft 4/11, 4/17.

A PowerPoint presentation on an assigned reading (10%): In the last three weeks, you and a partner will lead the discussion of an assigned reading, and you will create a few PowerPoint slides to review related topics from previous classes.

Homework assignments (20%): You will write varied short assignments, including anonymous surveys of your interests and attitudes to shape the course, one-page analyses of readings, reports on your progress on major papers and group projects, and a description of a reading or forum. You will also write responses to your peer essays and projects.

In-class writings and quizzes (15%): You will complete about eight individual and group reading quizzes and in-class writings to help shape our class discussions and help you improve your close reading skills.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to

- analyze the types of rhetorical strategies that activists use to mobilize people to take action,
- draft and revise essays that effectively frame your claims to persuade your readers,
- work in teams to offer constructive feedback on your classmates' writing,
- consider how unconscious biases affect our social interactions and our perceptions of others,
- identify how marginalized writers and speakers appeal to minoritized audiences in ways that may not be heard by those who have not experienced systemic inequities,
- account for how so many Americans have been imprisoned and denied their rights, and
- assess how social movements have succeeded and failed to advance reforms by making effective use of the media, particularly television and the internet.

Course Policies

Grading Scale and Policies: We will follow the [university policy regarding grades](#) and grading systems. We will use the following grading scale: A 90% and above, B 89.5-80%, C 79.5-70%, 69.5-60%, and E 59.5% and below. Late work will be downgraded one full letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Absence and Class Participation Policy: If you have more than two absences, they will affect your final course grade. If you have medical or personal problems, notify me so that we can talk about how I can help you succeed in your courses.

- [The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops](#) is on line.
- [The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice](#) will be accommodated where reasonable.
- [Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students](#) (or Dean Designee) will be honored.
- To request a disability-related accommodation to this attendance policy, please contact the Disability Resource Center at (520) 621-3268 or drc-info@.arizona.edu.
- If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful. The Dean of Students Office is located in the Nugent Building, room 100, or call 520-621-7057.

Code of Academic Integrity: Students are encouraged to share views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. The University Libraries have some excellent [tips for avoiding plagiarism](#), and I will be happy to talk with you about how to avoid plagiarism. All your essays will be reviewed TurnItIn when you submit them.

Classroom Behavior Policy: We will be discussing controversial issues in this course. We have a shared responsibility to respect other viewpoints. We will work together to preserve a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where you feel comfortable and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. If you speak disrespectfully or disrupt class, I will talk with you about how you can improve your behavior. If you continue to disrupt class, you may be asked to leave and may be reported to the Dean of Students. Also, everyone will be expected to engage in the discussions, so you should not be texting or surfing the web in class.

Additional Course Policies are on the course website, including the policy for taking this course for Honors credit.