

**FYOS 1001: First Year Odyssey**  
**How a Bill Becomes a Historic Law: Passing the 1964 Civil Rights Act**  
**Fall 2015**

**Instructors**

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**Meetings**

Wednesdays 2:30 PM to 3:20 PM  
Park Hall, Room 61

**Introduction**

This course will use the 1964 Civil Rights Act to explore what it takes to pass major legislation in the United States. After examining the history of civil rights in America, we will explore the challenges that civil rights leaders and their supporters in Congress had in passing significant civil rights legislation. Only when the public, parties, and politicians all combined their efforts did political change become possible. In contrast to partisan rancor and political gridlock we see in Washington today, the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act gives us a shining example of what the U.S. political system is capable of accomplishing. Students will take the lessons learned from the 1964 Civil Rights Act and think about how to apply them to our present political challenges. Students will also be introduced to the teaching, research and outreach missions of the university.

**Readings**

The following book is required for the course and is available at the university bookstore:

Risen, Clay. 2014. *The Bill of the Century: The Epic Battle for the Civil Rights Act*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Any additional readings will be provided by the instructors.

**Requirements and Evaluation**

1. *Attendance and Participation – 20%*

All students will be required to participate in this discussion based class. Because of the importance of student participation, attendance for class meetings is mandatory. All students will be allowed a single absence. Additional absences will only be excused with prior approval from the instructors.

2. *Short Assignments – 20%*

There will be a number of short assignments given throughout the semester. These will include written reactions to readings and presentations, and written responses to research questions.

3. *Major Legislation Proposal and Analysis – 60%*

Students will explore a policy area of interest to them and propose new legislation to address that policy area. Students will use the lessons of the 1964 Voting Rights Act to assess the key players needed for successful passage of the proposed bill. Students will also identify the key obstacles to bill passage. Students will ultimately assess their bill's chances of success. Research to justify your conclusions will be required.

This assignment has been broken into four sections, with different sections due throughout the semester. Students will present the results of their projects in the final two weeks of class. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late. After one week, late assignments will no longer be accepted.

- *Rough Draft of Legislation Proposal – 15%*
- *Rough Draft of Legislative Analysis – 15%*
- *Class Presentation of Project – 10%*
- *Final Draft of Complete Project – 20%*

## **Other Issues**

1. *Disabilities:* Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services Office will be accommodated according to university policy. Contact Disabilities Services for more information.
2. *Instructor Availability:* We are available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend posted office hours. Please email to schedule a meeting.
3. *Technology in the Classroom:* Technology, used correctly, has the potential to greatly improve the quality of our lives. Technology, used incorrectly, has the potential of making the instructors very angry. Turn off your cell phone while in class (some exceptions may apply - e.g., you are a transplant surgeon anxiously awaiting the arrival of a donor heart). Laptops may be used to take notes in class. Texting is never appropriate in class, unless it is to give your friends an update on Richard Russell's latest strategy to foil Hubert Humphrey's pro-civil rights agenda. While live tweeting of class lectures is encouraged, many of the concepts we will cover may be difficult to explain in 140 characters.

4. *Cheating and Plagiarism*: All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia's Student Honor Code. See the Academic Honesty Policy for details on what is expected of you (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/sites/default/files/uga-academic-honesty-policy-may-07.pdf>).

### **Course Schedule**

The schedule of the course will be something of a work in progress. We hope to feature various guest speakers and in-class activities that will require us to remain flexible in terms of scheduling. All reading and writing assignments will be kept up-to-date on Prof. Lynch's website ([http://spia.uga.edu/faculty\\_pages/mlynch/teaching.php](http://spia.uga.edu/faculty_pages/mlynch/teaching.php)).