64 at 50:  
The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Course Description

This course serves as a supplement to the events organized at Columbia Law School to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Each reading group will be co-led by a student participant and professor.

The reading group will explore several aspects of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, including (1) the pre-Act history of civil rights legislation and activism; (2) the philosophical underpinnings of the Act; (3) the grassroots activism and cultural underpinnings that helped to mobilize support for the Act; (4) the role of lawyers in transforming these popular movements and philosophical ideologies into legislation; and (5) the development of antidiscrimination law since this seminal statute. Our study of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 will inform our understanding of the potential for large-scale transformative legislation in today’s world.

Meeting Times

The classes will start on the week of September 22. Our usual meeting time will be Thursdays, at 6:20 p.m., but we may move some meetings to Tuesday at 6:20 p.m. to accommodate the faculty presenter.

Course Materials

The readings listed below are tentative assignments. The students and professors leading each class are encouraged to add or subtract readings to help develop the discussion. Readings will be finalized a week before each class, and readings that are not easily found on the internet will be posted to Courseweb.

Expectations

Each student will be assigned as a co-leader for at least one class. For the class you are assigned as the co-leader, you are expected to work with the professor to finalize the reading materials by Thursday at midnight the week before the class, post discussion questions on Courseweb, and assist the professor in leading the classroom discussion. Active classroom participation is essential. The class is Pass / No Pass.

Suggested Assignments

Class 1 (Thursday, 9/25): Legal and Political History of the CRA (Professors Olati Johnson)
- Previous Federal Civil Rights Legislation
- The New Deal and Civil Rights
- Early State Laws:

- International Influences:


Class 2 (Tuesday, 09/30): Social History of the CRA (Professor Kendall Thomas)
- Taylor Branch - The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement

Class 3 (Tuesday, 10/14): CRA and Employment Discrimination (Professors Dorian Warren)
- Text of Title VII & Implementing regulations

Class 4 (Thursday, 10/23): CRA and Education (Professor Olati Johnson)
- Text of Title VI & Implementing regulations
- Dept. of Justice Title VI Legal Manual (pg 1-5 & skim the rest)

Class 5 (Tuesday, 10/28): CRA and Voting Rights (Myrna Perez)
- Shelby County v. Holder, 570 U.S. ___ (2013)

Class 6 (Thursday, 11/06): CRA and Gender (TBD)

Class 7 (Thursday, 11/13): CRA and Immigration (Professor Elora Mukherjee)

**Class 8 (Thursday, 11/20): The CRA as a Constitutional Moment (Professor Jamal Greene)**
- Bruce Ackerman, *We the People*, Volume 3: The Civil Rights Revolution, “Introduction.”

**Class 9 (Tuesday, 11/25): Reflections on the Civil Rights Act (Professors Susan Sturm)**