HIST 2353 Civil Rights vs. Human Rights in the Black Freedom Struggle

(crosslisted with ASRC 2353 and AMST 2353)

This course explores the changing meaning of American freedom and citizenship in the context of the long struggle for black liberation. Relying on social and political history, it confronts the promise, possibilities, and limitations of civil rights and human rights in the twentieth century. We examine various "rights" discourses and their role in reconfiguring our legal landscape and cultural mores, molding national and group identity, bestowing social and moral legitimacy, shaping and containing political dissent, reinvigorating and redefining the egalitarian creed, and challenging as well as justifying the distribution of wealth and power in the U.S. We examine the attempts of subjugated groups to transcend narrow social definitions of freedom, and we confront the question of formal political rights versus broader notions of economic justice in a national and international context.

Spring 2016  Tues-Thurs 1:25-2:40pm  Professor Rickford