



AFRAM 405

freedom summer: rethinking the civil rights movement

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The 1964 Mississippi Project: one of the most radical moments in civil rights history.

Widely known as “Freedom Summer,” this civil rights campaign organized a multi-faceted program that challenged white supremacy and racial terror through the establishment of Freedom Schools, voter registration drives, and an alternative political party called the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Even more, Freedom Summer called on Black women and men from the community, many of whom were poor and uneducated, to lead their own movement.

It was during the Freedom Summer campaign that activists debated the merits of non-violence vs. self-defense; the limits of charismatic male leadership; and the role of white allies in the struggle for Black freedom. In the face of extraordinary violence and economic deprivation, Black Mississippians waged one of the most powerful, yet understudied, movements in civil rights history, and they modeled the maxim that “ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things.”

Using primary sources, music, film, and scholarly texts, students will explore the 1964 Freedom Summer Project in order to understand diverse struggles, leadership styles, and competing interpretations of what it means to be free. Borrowing directly from the original Freedom School curriculum, students will contemplate the “myths of society” as well as theoretical and conceptual frameworks necessary for the creation of a just society. Students will situate Freedom Summer in the larger context of the Black Freedom Movement in the United States, the Cold War, independence and human rights struggles.

T-TH 10:30AM - 12:20PM | SLN: 21318 | DIV AND I&S | 5 CREDITS

