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**NEH: “The Most Southern Place on Earth”**

**June 2015**

**Lesson Plan**

Fannie Lou Hamer and the Civil Rights Movement

Themes:

1. Jim Crow and terrorism
2. How to challenge a caste system
3. The power of ordinary individuals to make a difference

Procedures:

1. Jim Crow and terrorism

* 1. Listen to NPR interview with Bryan Stevenson. <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/02/10/385263536/new-report-examines-lynchings-and-their-legacy-in-the-united-states>
  2. Discuss the following questions after listening to the interview:
     1. What does Bryan Stevenson mean when he says that the evil of slavery was the narrative of white supremacy? Do you agree with him?
     2. Has the U.S. come to terms with its complicated history with race? Explain your answer.
     3. What does Bryan Stevenson mean when he says that lynchings were a way to traumatize and terrorize the black population into submission? Do you agree with him?
     4. Will putting up markers in places where lynchings happen help or hurt the process of racial healing in the United States? Explain.
  3. Read excerpts from Isabel Wilkerson’s *The Warmth of Other Suns* (pp. 125-127, 148-149) out loud as a class.
  4. Have students get in groups to come up with discussion questions for the excerpts. (Examples: What would you have done if you were George? What does this story teach us about the caste system? Did you see any evidence of Bryan Stevenson’s claims in this writing?)

2. How to challenge a caste system - brief lecture on the Civil Rights Movement (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10qbABF63ScAKzga6UhoLuGlJIOUwIOMaUVjAAhVV4n8/edit?usp=sharing>)

3. The power of ordinary individuals to make a difference

1. Watch excerpt of American Experience *Freedom Summer* on Fannie Lou Hamer’s testimony at the 1964 Democratic Convention (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07PwNVCZCcY>)
2. Read pp. 242-244 of James C. Cobb’s *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*
3. Read Fannie Lou Hamer’s full testimony here: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/flhamer.html>
4. Discussion: How did Fannie Lou Hamer challenge the caste system? Why was she unafraid to challenge the caste system? Why was her testimony so powerful? Why do you think Fannie Lou Hamer repeated the refrain, “Is this America?”

4. Writing assignment

The U.S. History team at my high school requires each student to write a paper on a person or event from the Civil Rights Movement. Please see the assignment below.

**Civil Rights Writing Assignment**

**“We must never ever forget about the power of ordinary people to stand in the fire for the cause of human dignity.” MLK, JR.**

The story of the Civil Rights Movement is the story of people who decided to “stand in the fire for the cause of human dignity.”  Your task is to go to the Civil Rights libguide,, and choose a person whose story inspires you.  Read the articles that have been provided on the libguide and complete the writing task below.

**Paragraph one:** Summarize the event.  Make sure that your summary is ***thorough and accurate***.  Do not generalize from the top of your head. It is important to refer to the text, films shown in class, and articles from the libguide.

**Paragraph two**: Discuss one main character from this event and describe how they “stood in the fire.”  Describe what it is that makes you admire them.  Be specific and use examples.

**Paragraph three:** Analyze why and how this event helped to further the Civil Rights Movement.  How did it change the way people felt / lived?  Discuss this event’s long-term impact.  Has it made a difference today?  How do we know?  Where do we see it?  (You will need to research this aspect as well)

**Civil Rights Events:**

·   **The Lynching of Emmett Till**

·   **Ella Baker**

·   **Rosa Park and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**

·   **A School Year Like No Other:  The Little Rock Nine**

·   **Daisy Lee Bates**

·   **Diane Nash**

·   **John Lewis**

·   **Medgar Evers**

·   **Freedom Riders**

·   **James Meredith**

·   **Fannie Lou Hammer & The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party**

·   **Malcolm X**

·   **Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and the 1968 Olympics**

·   ***Contemporary topics are an option based on teacher approval***

**Worth: 40 points**

**Due:**

**Papers must be submitted to turnitin.com**