

# Revolutionary Times Revisited: Students' Interpretations of the City College of New York Student Protest and Takeover of 1969

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IN THE SIXTIES, student-led protest movements transformed university and college campuses across the United States. Students attacked American college and university admission policies, curriculums, hiring practices, and stance on the Vietnam War, creating a highly charged and explosive atmosphere. Fueled by the desire to end political, social, and racial injustices, and provide equal access to a college education, student activists used marches, sit-ins, and strikes to express their opposition to what they perceived to be unjust policies. From the spring of 1968 through 1969, a series of demonstrations, sit-ins, and disruptions brought dramatic changes to American universities. At Columbia University, the Student Afro Society (SAS) in 1968 occupied a building, demanding that the university cease efforts to construct a gymnasium in a park between the campus and the Harlem community. In 1968 at San Francisco State College (now a University), students of the Black Student Union and the Third World Liberation Front led a strike from November 6, 1968 to March 21, 1969 to demand for the admittance and enrollment of more students of color, the hiring of more minority faculty members, and the creation of a School of Ethnic Studies. In 1969, the armed sit-in of black students at Cornell University introduced a curriculum in Africana Studies and established the Africana Studies and Research Center.

The 1969 takeover at the City College of New York had arguably the most far-reaching consequences of all of the protests of this period. As the flagship campus of the City University of New York system, City College had a well-known reputation for giving the city's white students a first-rate education regardless of their parents' social status. Young people of black and Puerto Rican descent, however, had less access to the school. Fed up with this unequal access, the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community (BPRSC) seized and occupied buildings on the south campus of the City College of New York from April 23 to May 5, 1969, while negotiating five demands. The first four demands involved changes to the college's curriculum: a separate school of Black and Puerto Rican Studies, a separate orientation program for Black and Puerto Rican freshmen, a voice for students in the running of this new program, including the hiring and firing of personnel, and a requirement that all education majors study Black and Puerto Rican history and learn the Spanish language. The fifth demand was that the racial composition of all entering classes reflect the Black and Puerto Rican population of New York City high schools. The strike at City College brought, among other things, the creation of programs in Black and Puerto Rican Studies, and accelerated the implementation of open admissions to the City University of New York system, a controversial change that remade the student body of the college for generations.<sup>1</sup>

Revisiting these revolutionary times, the City College Libraries commemorated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the student protest and takeover of 1969 with an exhibit in the atrium of the Morris Raphael Cohen Library in the spring of 2009. Initially, City College archivist Sydney Van Nort approached historian Adrienne Petty because twentieth-century American history was one of Petty's research specialties. Van Nort wanted a historian's analysis of the events of the spring of 1969 to be part of the exhibition. Although Petty could not commit to writing for the exhibition, she mentioned that studying the spring of 1969 at City College could be a great way to expose the students in her "Rebels and Reactionaries" class to primary source documents and address the tendency of her students to rely heavily on the writing technique of mashing up interpretations culled from Internet sources.

Quite spontaneously, Van Nort, Petty, and William Gibbons, a librarian at City College, decided to work together to bring students enrolled in Petty's class to the archives. All three professors brought distinct but complementary goals to this impromptu collaboration. As a librarian, Gibbons sought to engender information literacy and critical thinking among students while teaching them how to use and search for material evidence from the past. For Petty, the goal was to encourage students to understand that social change has historically come about through the efforts

of people, and that the thoughts and actions of both radicals and reactionaries have been essential to changing the nature of American democracy since the late nineteenth century. As an archivist, Van Nort's objective was to use original documents to understand and appreciate the past.

The collaboration with Gibbons and Van Nort helped solve two concerns that emerged after Petty's first couple of times teaching her "Rebels and Reactionaries" course, designed to teach students about progressive and conservative social movements. The first problem was a matter of historical approach. During the weeks that Petty devoted to studying "radicals," the students did not probe their motivations because, as young New Yorkers with mostly progressive political leanings, they assumed that the antebellum abolitionists, Depression-era socialists, and Vietnam-era pacifists shared their worldview. When the class studied reactionaries, on the other hand, they had the same impulse not to dig deeper, but for markedly different reasons. Students were so outraged by the inhumanity of the slaveholders, the seeming hysteria of the anti-Communists, and the racism of the segregationists, that they were loath to come to terms with them as historical figures to be examined rather than as historical pariahs to be condemned.

The second problem had to do with the students' approach to studying and critical thinking. In previous semesters, students read secondary works on the student protests of the late 1960s. They were inclined to accept or reject the analyses of the works the class read depending on whether they confirmed or conflicted with their own political leanings. Collaborating with Gibbons and Van Nort was a way to have students confront and interpret the documents themselves—to draw their own conclusions without parroting someone else's evaluations.<sup>2</sup>

Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort wanted students to start with a piece of evidence and do their own analysis: something that they have fewer and fewer opportunities to practice. A prevalent aspect of our "blogging" culture is that students are increasingly exposed to other people's opinion or "take" on news and historical events, but they often do not have the experience of evaluating facts for themselves and developing their own interpretations. Although this style of thinking and writing is increasingly common, few scholars have discussed how to stretch their students' modes of thinking given our current online culture. Even those students with experience writing history research papers in high school did not quite grasp how to approach primary sources. As historian Caroline Walker Bynum explained in an article on teaching scholarship to graduate students, "It is more common than it was several decades ago to ask high school students to write long papers, ostensibly based in 'primary sources.' But, as those who teach in colleges know well, such 'research' is all too often simply a good

deal of cutting-and-pasting from internet sources.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, a dominant trend in our culture is to favor subjective readings of facts or evidence over the facts themselves. As a recent *New York Times* article argues, a phenomenon “has been gaining hold over America for several decades, with pundits squeezing out reporters on cable news, with authors writing biographies animated by personal and ideological agendas, with tell-all memoirs, talk-show confessionals, self-dramatizing blogs and carefully tended Facebook and MySpace pages becoming almost de rigeur.”<sup>74</sup> An archive-based assignment, the professors hoped, would give students experience using raw evidence to develop their own interpretation of a historical moment and, perhaps most importantly, engender within them confidence in their own interpretation.

Focusing on the history of radicals who pushed for social change and reactionaries who resisted it, the course covered nine themes, beginning with a consideration of whether we should think of the American Revolution as a radical or conservative change, and ending with the readings on the necessity of democratic action by citizens in the age of President Obama. From week to week, discussion alternated between radical movements such as Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to reactionary movements such as the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. The class provided students the opportunity to develop proficiency in producing original written analyses of historical events using primary and secondary sources.

Petty first developed the course in response to a cynical attitude among students that she noticed after three years of teaching the U.S. history survey at the college. Many students took for granted that inequality has been and will remain inevitable in American society, and, conversely, that progress is inevitable: that things just naturally get better. By bringing students face-to-face with the actions of ordinary men and women, Petty hoped to persuade students that human effort is essential to bringing about social and political change. In addition, the class provided historical context for students to reflect upon contemporary problems and to think about approaches for transforming society.

Petty opened the course by having students consider whether the American Revolution inaugurated a radical tradition in American history. By exploring foundational documents such as Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* and slaves’ letters petitioning new states for their freedom, students were encouraged to think about whether the ideals of freedom spread during the revolutionary era created a framework for contemporaries and future generations of Americans to fight for independence. The course continued by alternating from protest movements and conservative responses to them. For instance, students learned about Afro-Caribbean

socialists and black nationalists protesting racism during the 1920s, then read about women who participated in the decade's racist and nativist Ku Klux Klan. After reading about Communists' efforts to organize sharecroppers in Alabama, students read the Twelve Southerners' anti-modernist and reactionary treatise. Several weeks later, the students explored the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, then followed with an examination of massive resistance in the South and the urban North. Petty concluded the course by having students read Frances Fox Piven's "Obama Needs a Protest Movement" in order to have them contemplate their own role in changing society.

Each week, the class alternated between discussing primary sources and secondary historical works on radical movements and conservative backlash. During the semester of the collaboration with her colleagues, the reading list included Timothy McCarthy and John McMillian's *The Radical Reader*; Kathleen Blee's *Women of the Klan*; Twelve Southerners' *I'll Take My Stand*; Nan Woodruff's *American Congo*; Joseph B. Crespino's *In Search of Another Country*; Dorothy Ray Healey and Maurice Isserman's *California Red*; and Ronald P. Formisano's *Boston Against Busing*.

Students had four main requirements: class participation, a weekly journal, a document analysis on the 1969 takeover, and a final paper. The purpose of the weekly journal was for students to record their intellectual responses to the readings, to prepare for the other writing assignments and, of course, to practice developing their own interpretation. For the final paper, students were able to examine a specific social movement, or a combination of movements in a ten- to twelve-page paper. Each student had to present a one- to two-page proposal outlining their topic, and the primary and secondary sources they planned to use.

The assignment involving the primary sources on the student takeover took place toward the middle of the semester. During their visit to the archives, the twenty-four students enrolled in the class were noticeably in awe. Even though many had passed the glass-enclosed archives, located on the fifth floor of the library, few had ventured inside. After seeing various college treasures, including special collections of the first president of the college and gifts from Japan, students checked in just as other researchers do. Then the students listened to a presentation by Van Nort and Gibbons about the collections of the City College Archives, and its role in gathering various artifacts produced during a period under study that aids the interpretation of the past by historians. Their visit allowed them to see primary source material from a hidden collection that does not have an online archival finding aid or listing in the online catalog. Van Nort and Gibbons also discussed how they selected the memos, flyers, photographs, and contemporary newspaper articles in terms of

how each item represented the event and contributed to illustrating it in the spring 2009 City College Cohen Library exhibition, "Five Demands: The Student Protest and Takeover of 1969." After the students selected seventeen documents from the collection, the City College Archives staff digitized and uploaded the documents to the class Blackboard site to facilitate twenty-four-hour access to the material and the execution of the class assignment.

Each student wrote a paper based on a single document from the collection. It was impossible for the students to come to any overarching conclusions about the 1969 CCNY takeover on the basis of one document. The students who produced the most thoughtful papers used the exercise as an opportunity to discuss the questions that the document raised and to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each document for reconstructing the history of the takeover.

Several of Petty's students chose to analyze a black and white photograph that captured two students holding up a handwritten poster of the five demands. The image evoked a range of responses and ideas from the students because of its organic and immediate quality. One student in the class was struck by how much the five demands resembled the Ten-Point Plan of the Black Panther Party both in form and substance. Like the Black Panthers, the students had a numbered list of demands and goals. He also interpreted their calls for the racial composition of the entering classes to match the population of New York City high schools as a "push towards more community voice and involvement" that mimicked the Black Panthers' modus operandi: "They were taking cues from the growing Black Power movement by demanding their own rights and services and implementing actions that subvert the status quo."

For another student, the image of the Five Demands and the students holding the sign made him wonder about the strength of the bond between black and Puerto Rican students. He noticed that all five demands were meant to address the impact of racism on both groups. However, he found it telling that there seemed to be as much division among the two groups as there was unity. "Never did they refer to themselves as 'we' or 'us,' the student observed. He wondered whether repeatedly mentioning "black" and "Puerto Rican" rather than "we" was a sign of individual pride that black and Puerto Rican people had for their respective cultural heritages or whether distinguishing between the two was an indication of the limits of their unity. He imagined conducting a textual analysis of other documents within the collection to explore this question further.

A letter written by white students who supported the black and Puerto Rican protestors prompted another student in the class to question why the white students had not been more thorough in substantiating their case.

After taking over a campus building and renaming it Huey P. Newton Hall for Political Action in honor of the Black Panthers, a group of white students wrote the administration and leveled charges of “institutional racism” and “pigheadedness” at them. In the opinion of one student, however, the students did not support their charges. “Does failing to have open admissions and a Puerto Rican Studies Department automatically qualify an administration to be institutionally racist?” she asked. “I do not belittle these students’ actions,” she wrote. “In fact, I feel like their actions were necessary and historic. However, I do think that it is important to use statements that are not driven solely by emotional rants, but rather are objectively considered beforehand.” She was clearly holding the authors of the letter to the same standards of evidence and argumentation to which Petty was holding the class.

In response to the Five Demands and other protests by the students, CCNY President Buell G. Gallagher made a point-by-point response. Designed to demonstrate his commitment to meeting the students’ demands, the letter made a case for what Gallagher was doing and why the students should believe him. He wrote that he was “completely committed” to meeting the demands and had “put his career on the line.”<sup>5</sup> Another student in the class reflected on the meaning of this document. He wrote that it “shows Gallagher to be a man that was sympathetic to the demands of the radical students but disapproving of the radical tactics that they employed. In this light, Gallagher can be seen as a reformer who was combating *radical action*.” The student ended his paper, “The document leaves the researcher with the following question: Did the radicals trust the reformer?” In addition to identifying the questions raised by this document, the student explored the recurring themes of the course. Throughout the semester, Petty pushed students to appreciate that radical and reactionary are historical concepts that are contingent on place and time. The student made a case for understanding the protestors’ actions as radical and for casting Gallagher as a reformer for his willingness to pursue some of the students’ demands, but at a slower pace and to a more limited extent than they expected.

An arresting image that appeared on the April 23, 1969 issue of *Tech News*, one of the student newspapers of CCNY, shows that Gallagher and other college administrators epitomized racism to many protestors. The image, which a student in the class titled “the fire and the fist,” showed the arm and clenched fist of a protestor cheering while watching President Gallagher burning in effigy. The caption of the photograph read: “Racism Burning: Over 1500 students watched while the figure which presumably represented Dr. Gallagher burned.” The photograph provoked the student to think about the role of the student press in documenting the

events of 1969 and the identity of the person whose arm appeared in this “mysterious” image. Of the disembodied arm, she asked, “Was that the arm of the person and the very hand involved in lighting the fire? How many people were present and was the camera man a protestor or merely an observer and visual documenter?” The student also raised important questions about the role of the student press in documenting the events of 1969. Based on the camera angle and the seeming proximity of the photographer to the person with the clenched fist, she argued that Mike Chayes, credited as the photographer, “surely sympathized.”

Gallagher eventually resigned from the presidency. Analyzing his letter of resignation, another student was able to draw firmer conclusions about the degree to which students could trust him. She wrote that the letter “is reflective of the inconsistent nature of his reactions to the takeover. His words and actions make the authenticity of his expressed sympathy difficult to gauge.” In particular, she called attention to the disparity between the sympathy Gallagher expressed in his letter and his actions in calling out police force against the students. Moreover, she found discrepancies within the letter itself. At first, Gallagher characterized the students’ protest as a well-founded and understandable response to the turbulent times: “The frustrations spawned by a society which has inverted its values and reversed its priorities, putting war ahead of human well-being and preferring privilege to justice—these frustrations have pushed the on-coming college generation into...activism.” But further into the letter, Gallagher expressed a less charitable opinion of the protest. In a self-aggrandizing manner, he wrote, “A man of peace, a reconciler, a man of compassion must stand aside for a time and await the moment when sanity returns.” In the student’s opinion, Gallagher’s letter revealed him to be a hypocrite. She recognized the potential this document holds for reconstructing the motives and beliefs of Gallagher.

Anti-war sentiment was virtually inseparable from resistance to the admission of black and Latino students and the Eurocentric curriculum. About five students in the class were drawn to an image of a man holding a sign on campus that read, “United States Get Out of Vietnam Now.” One student juxtaposed the image of a man who was “not your stereotypical student activist with long hair” against the profile of countercultural anti-war activists that dominates most people’s imaginations. He argued that “the man holding the sign appears maybe to be a teacher, judging by the briefcase that he is holding and the tucked in collared shirt and rather clean-cut appearance. This is symbolic of the collective opposition to the war across America with protests becoming more commonplace and not restricted to groups characterized as radical.” He touched upon an argument that historians have long made—that the 1968 Tet Offensive



transformed anti-war protest from countercultural resistance to mainstream movement. The student commented upon how this shift changed the very definition of collective political action. He wrote, “what is interesting about the protests...was that by the close of the war, opposition to it no longer seemed radical.”

Other students chose fascinating documents but did not subject them to close analysis. One student wrote about an editorial entitled “The Great Leap Backward” from one of the campus’ student newspapers. The writers of the editorial condemned the student strikers for advocating the establishment of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. Citing the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision, the writers of the editorial argued, “by creating these separate schools of studies, they were recreating segregation and reversing integration.” The student also observed that the editorial criticized the activists’ call for the college to admit more black and Puerto Rican students, arguing that there were “proportionately less qualified Black and Puerto Rican candidates.” In comments to this student, Petty urged her to revisit the editorial with a more critical eye. She assumed that the editorial board of the paper represented the views of only white students—a reasonable assumption on the surface. However, taking for granted that black and Puerto Rican students uniformly supported the demands—and that white students, faculty members, and administrators uniformly opposed the demands—simplifies a complex situation. Were there students who agreed with some demands but had problems with others? Were there any differences of opinion among the protestors? Asking probing questions of the document would enable her to develop a more nuanced interpretation of the takeover. She also could have analyzed the writers’ invocation of the *Brown* decision.

Similarly, another student dealt with a document that called into question the role of student journalists. In an article entitled “Five Demands at City College of New York,” Lloyd Gartner wrote an account that, in the opinion of one student, was biased and prejudicial.<sup>6</sup> She argued that the writer “did not write a historical truth of the physical events that unfolded that day. He was a reactionary that used his position to do his part. He did not just write; he used his position to overshadow the part of the story he did not support.” Petty pushed the student to consider the implications of this perceived bias for historians writing about the student takeover. Which sources were more reliable? How do historians arrive at an interpretation given the shortcomings of various sources?

After the students completed their essays, Petty had them discuss the documents as a class. They thought about how they might examine all of the documents as a whole. The exercise replicated the process historians go through when they begin sifting through and evaluating the evidence

they have collected. It also provided an opportunity for some of the more analytically astute students in the class to model their thinking process for students who were struggling with how to interpret historical sources.

As numerous excerpts from the students' writing show, the assignment captured the students' interest, resulting in beautifully written and well-argued analyses of this monumental turning point in the history of City College. Students who already showed promise as sharp thinkers and talented writers produced the most thoughtful papers. They were more confident in their interpretations of the sources, and they imagined appropriate and fascinating ways that historians could use these documents.

Several students used their document analysis as the foundation for their final papers. These were among the best-researched and most interesting papers Petty received because the students had access to a range of documents. They also made use of electronic database collections at the City College Library such as the digital *New York Times*. One student produced a nuanced paper on the anti-war movements at City College and Columbia University, arguing that students on both campuses were united in opposition to the war, but expressed their opposition in different ways because of their class backgrounds. While more well-to-do students at Columbia voiced their philosophical objections to the war, the largely working-class group of students at City College also opposed the fact that those fighting the war were disproportionately black, Latino, and poor. Another student assessed a different student movement that grew out of the push for open enrollment and ethnic studies: the gay rights movement. She argued that the emphasis on redressing discrimination and creating a more inclusive student body inspired activism among gay students on campus. An LGBT activist herself, this student found it inspiring that earlier generations had laid the groundwork for what she and other students were doing now.

This paper and many others exemplify the enormous degree to which students were able to make personal connections to the assignment because it exposed them to a turbulent period in the history of their college. The buildings in the photos were not just black and white vestiges of the past. They were sites the students visit on a regular basis to attend a chemistry lab or submit requests for transcripts. More importantly, no matter what their opinion was of the changes that the student protests brought about, all of the students in the class seemed fascinated by the ability of student activists during the 1960s to influence and achieve fundamental changes in the makeup and curriculum of the college. As one student put it: "Look at City College now, with a percentage of blacks and Hispanics forty years ago people could not have imagined. Power to the people! These young adults fought hard for something they believed could change history forever."

While some students produced exemplary papers, others devoted more space to summarizing their chosen documents than analyzing them. Because students completed the document analysis more than a month before they had to submit their final paper, Petty had enough time to help students learn how to critically analyze primary sources rather than simply sum them up. She was able to help students develop this skill by meeting with them during office hours and asking them a series of questions: What are the strengths of this document as a source for historical investigation? What are its weaknesses? Do you think the writer was biased? If so, in what way? If the writer of the document were alive today, what would you ask him or her? In other words, what questions does the document raise for you? These are the basic questions Petty urges students to answer in order to develop and trust their own interpretations.

Given the impromptu nature of the assignment, it exceeded the expectations of Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort. The experience not only enhanced students' ability to interpret historical sources, but also gave them confidence in their own original thoughts. The experience even inspired several students to use collections at the City College Archives for future assignments. Thus, the visit to the archives and process of writing a paper exposed students to a significant chapter in their college's history, and encouraged students to trade passive online reading for active engagement with and analysis of textual sources.

In the future, Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort plan to significantly expand their collaboration and the scope of the assignment. Rather than writing a short document analysis, students will devote their twelve- to fifteen-page final papers to exploring some aspect of the 1969 takeover in order to make more extensive use of the sources available at the archives. Well in advance of the semester, Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort will have a preliminary conference, which will allow for the selection of a wider range of material relevant to the course assignment, including photographs, school newspaper articles, yearbooks, and documents. Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort envision moving beyond the 1969 rebellion to expose students to other examples of student activism that have occurred at various times during the college's history. They also plan to have students visit the archives a minimum of two class sessions, and encourage them to return on an individual basis to examine documents and materials. More frequent interaction with the students will afford Gibbons and Van Nort the opportunity to identify budding archivists or librarians whom they can tap for work-study positions at the archives. Hiring motivated students would help them significantly expand their efforts to digitize parts of their collections.

Gibbons and Van Nort will continue to digitize more material from the archival collection to share with the class and the professor. In addition,

they will train support staff more extensively on the history of City College so that they are in a better position to answer students' questions. Such material can later be incorporated into a digital presentation for the general public. One set of material that has been digitized since the initial class visit is *The Campus* student newspaper, from the advent of its publication in 1907 until 1981. Coverage of demonstrations that occurred in 1969 and other years can be examined in greater detail and provide context for the photographs and documents highlighted for the class.

Using these digitized resources and other holdings of the City College Archives, students will begin a second stage of the paper: an analysis of one document they will use for their longer paper. Rather than being the main assignment related to the takeover, the document analysis will become a step on the way to a larger project. The document analysis assignment will enable Petty to gauge whether students are comfortable analyzing sources. Petty also found that some students used Internet resources such as Wikipedia to find information about the takeover, and prevailing interpretations of its impact sometimes seeped into their papers. To guard against students using the Internet as a crutch, Petty will have the students complete the first draft of the assignment in class. The goal is to show students that they can ask meaningful questions and even advance preliminary interpretations by studying the documents on their own terms rather than looking to secondary literature for validation.

The third stage will involve students working on multiple drafts of their paper. In keeping with the college's mandate for guaranteeing a student-centered education, Petty also plans to divide students into groups of four to discuss the documents so that students with strong interpretations can serve as a model for their peers. This approach will give students more experience writing and greater opportunity to hone their ability to interpret historical sources.

What began as a brief assignment to expose students to an aspect of City College's rich history, then, will become a more expansive assignment. Students will produce original research that will build their critical thinking skills, give them writing experience, and, perhaps, pique their interest in becoming a librarian, a historian, or an archivist. Most importantly, no matter what field of endeavor their students choose, Gibbons, Petty, and Van Nort aim to train students to be confident in their own interpretations and eloquent enough to express them.

## Notes

We wish to thank Daisy Dominguez, Taqiyya Haden, and Samuel Sanchez for their assistance with this article.

1. James Traub, *City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1994); Barbara J. Dunlap, Sandra Shiock Roff, and Anthony M. Cucchiara, *From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Higher Education in New York City, 1847-1997* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); Sydney C. Van Nort, *The City College of New York* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007).

2. Ting Man Tsao, "Open Admissions, Controversies, and CUNY: Digging into Social History through a First-Year Composition Course," *The History Teacher* 38, no. 4 (August 2005): 469-482.

3. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Teaching Scholarship," *Perspectives on History* 47, no. 9 (December 2009): 14-16.

4. Michiko Kakutani, "Texts Without Context: The Internet Mashes Up Everything We Know About Culture," *The New York Times*, 21 March 2010, p. AR2.

5. Buell G. Gallagher, Letter to students from Buell G. Gallagher, The Five Demands Conflict Campus Seizure Collection, Clippings April-May 1969, Box 1, The City College Archives, New York; Buell G. Gallagher, Resignation letter from Buell G. Gallagher, The Five Demands Conflict Campus Seizure Collection, Clippings April-May 1969, Box 1, The City College Archives, New York.

6. Lloyd P. Gartner, "Five Demands," *The Paper*, 22 April 1969, p. 15.

## Appendix 1: Class Syllabus

Adrienne Petty

### **Rebels and Reactionaries**

Focusing on the period from the 1920s through the protest movements of the 1970s, this course exposes students to the history of radicals who pushed for change in the United States, and reactionaries who resisted it. The goal of the course is for students to understand how the thoughts and actions of both radicals and reactionaries have influenced the nature of American democracy. Throughout the semester, students will explore a pivotal moment in the history of the City College of New York itself—the City College Student Takeover of 1969—in which students played a central role in transforming the city of New York and higher education nationwide.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- 1) Conduct research using the resources of the City College Library and City College Archives

- 2) Develop original written analyses of radical and reactionary movements based upon primary and secondary sources
- 3) Speak proficiently about radical and reactionary movements
- 4) Reflect upon contemporary problems, and evaluate current radical and reactionary trends
- 5) Produce a final paper about a pivotal era in the history of the City College of New York, and New York City

### Assignments

Students will be evaluated in four areas, all worth 20 percent each:

**Classroom Discussion:** All students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively in the discussion, drawing upon careful reading of the assigned books and articles. To facilitate discussion, everyone must submit proposed questions for discussion through Blackboard **no later than 9pm** the day before class meets.

**Weekly Journal:** Each student is expected to keep a weekly journal of intellectual responses to the readings. The journal should reflect the student's thoughts about the material, and evaluate the effectiveness of the author's argument and documentation. The purpose of the journal is to help students digest the material, practice the craft of writing, and lay a foundation for the final paper.

**Primary Source Analysis:** A short paper, 3-4 pages. You will visit the City College Archives and select a document or group of documents related to the City College student protests of 1969. Write an essay in which you analyze the source you have selected. The paper should discuss the strengths, weaknesses, biases, ambiguities, and silences of the document as a source for historical investigation.

**Proposal:** Students will write a one-page description of their proposed paper, including a bibliography that lists the primary and secondary sources they plan to use.

**Final Paper:** For the final paper, you will expand your research into the student protests of 1969, using materials from the City College archives, newspaper collections, and other primary sources. Your paper should be 10-15 pages in length.

Footnotes and a bibliography should be included and set up according to Chicago Style.

### REQUIRED READING – BOOKS

Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (University of California Press, 2012)

Joseph B. Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton University Press, 2009)

Barbara J. Fields and Karen E. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality* (Verso, 2012).

Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (W. W. Norton, 2007)

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents*

Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001)

Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*

### **REQUIRED READING – BOOK CHAPTERS AND ARTICLES**

Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*, chapter 3

Melba Joyce Boyd, "Afrocentrics, Afro-elitists, and Afro-eccentrics and the Polarization of Black Studies Since the Student Struggles of the Sixties," in Manning Marable ed., *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience*

Johanna Fernandez, "Between Social Science Reform and Revolutionary Politics: The Young Lords, Late Sixties Radicalism and Community Organizing in New York City," in Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*

Dorothy Ray Healey and Maurice Isserman, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party*, Introduction and excerpts

Winston James, *Holding Aloft Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America*, Introduction

Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillian, *The Radical Reader*, selected readings

Edmund Morgan, "The Paradox of American Slavery," *Journal of American History* 59 (June 1972): 5-29.

Francis Fox Piven, "Obama Needs a Protest Movement," *The Nation*, November 13, 2008.

Adolph Reed Jr., "Class-ifying the Hurricane"

Toure Reed, "Obama and the Legacy of the 1963 March on Washington"

Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*

Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo*

## SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSIONS AND READINGS

### **Week 1**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Origins of an American Radical Tradition?**

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

Abigail Adams, "Letter to John Adams"

"Declaration of Independence"

"Bill of Rights"

Edmund Morgan, "The Paradox of American Slavery," *Journal of American History* 59 (June 1972): 5-29.

#### **Visit to the Library**

William Gibbons and Sydney Van Nort will give students a brief tour of the library and familiarize them with resources that will aid their research, including the electronic databases.

### **Week 2**

#### **Harlem Radicals**

Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, Introduction, chapters 1, 3, and 5

Claude McKay, "If We Must Die"

Hubert H. Harrison, "Two Negro Radicalisms"

W. A. Domingo, "The New Negro—What Is He?"

Marcus Garvey, "Africa for the Africans"

#### **Visit to the Archives**

William Gibbons and Sydney Van Nort will show students selected documents from the 1969 Student Takeover collection, and allow students to choose a document to analyze for their primary source assignment.

### **Week 3**

#### **Klansmen and Klanswomen of the 1920s and Today**

Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*

#### **Document Analysis Due**

### **Week 4**

#### **Rural Rebels**

Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta*, Introduction and chapter 5

William Z. Foster, "Acceptance Speech at the National Nominating Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party of America"

Woody Guthrie, "Pastures of Plenty"



**Week 5**

**Southern Agrarians**

Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*

**Proposal Due**

**Visit to the Archives**

Adrienne Petty, William Gibbons, and Sydney Van Nort will meet individually with students to go over their preliminary bibliography and discuss other possible sources, if necessary.

**Week 6**

**The "Old Left"**

Dorothy Ray Healey and Maurice Isserman, *California Red*

**Week 7**

**Anti-communism**

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents*

**Week 8**

**Oh, Freedom**

Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign*

Toure Reed, "Obama and the Legacy of the 1963 March on Washington"

**"Negroes With Guns"**

Tim Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*

Robert F. Williams, "We Must Fight Back"

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"

Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want"

The Black Panther Party, "What We Want, What We Believe"

**Week 9**

**Massive Resistance and Beyond**

Joseph P. Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*

**Week 10**

**Student Protest**

Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*

Melba Joyce Boyd, "Afrocentrics, Afro-elitists, and Afro-eccentrics and the Polarization of Black Studies Since the Student Struggles of the Sixties"

**Week 11****Antiwar Protesters**

“Antiwar Documents”

Martin Luther King Jr., anti-Vietnam speech

**Week 12****Struggles for Equality Up North**

Johanna Fernandez, “Between Social Science Reform and Revolutionary Politics: The Young Lords, Late Sixties Radicalism and Community Organizing in New York City”

**Week 13**

Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*

**Week 14****Rebellion and Reaction in the Age of Obama**

Barbara J. Fields and Karen E. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality*

Francis Fox Piven, “Obama Needs a Protest Movement”

Adolph Reed Jr., “Class-ifying the Hurricane”

Adolph Reed, “Why Is There No Black Political Movement?”

Thomas Frank, “Why Johnny Can’t Dissent?”

**Week 15**

**PAPERS DUE**