FREEDOM SUMMER
A Study Tour of the Civil Rights Movement: On Location in the South

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's literally transformed life in the South. If not so dramatically, it also deeply altered the relationship which all Americans had with their government and raised expectations for continued advancement among traditionally disadvantaged groups in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

In returning to the classroom after almost twenty years in administration, I decided to develop an additional new area of teaching expertise which would focus upon the origins, fulfillment, and impact of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. I have a strong teaching and research background in U.S., African American, and Southern History which will be brought to bear on this new field of concentration.

In the past ten years there have been both a new wave of scholarship on the Movement and a recognition in most Southern States that the Movement is a part of their history worth preserving and understanding. While on sabbatical in 1998-99, I have read widely in the memoirs, monographs, and scholarly literature devoted to this subject. I will be focusing a special senior research seminar on the Civil Rights Movement in the Fall of 1999, and I will be revising significantly that portion of my African American History II course (to be taught in the Spring of 2000) which covers the Movement.

As I have read widely and talked with colleagues at professional meetings this Fall, it has become clear to me that it would be possible, within the context of an intensive course, to visit a significant core of sites in the South, giving first hand familiarity with both the place and spirit of the Movement. Several cities, including Memphis, Montgomery, Birmingham, Selma and Atlanta, have formal museums or study centers devoted to events occurring there. The basic concept of the proposed new course is similar to "study abroad", and for many, if not most of the students, it will have the desirable impact of broadening their cultural understanding even while remaining within the United States. Major milestone events of 1956, 1963 and even 1968 occurred years before most of IUSB's students were born, and even those who are "mature" students rarely seem to have traveled widely in the South. While it may not be a "foreign country", it is likely a region of their own country which they know only by stereotype or reputation. There should be a valuable range of benefits and appeals for students who pursue academic study within this proposed new context. The course will be offered as H225/H425, Special Topics in History.
While born in the South, educated in the South, and a first hand observer of a small part of the actions associated with the Movement, I have actually visited only a few of the key historical sites. While attending the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Birmingham recently, however, I did explore the feasibility of a student visit to that important city. With its "civil rights district", the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, it clearly retains a strong Movement "presence". It will be a definite stop on our itinerary.

Before leading such a study tour, however, I must explore other sites, investigate low-price lodging, restaurants which will give a cultural flavor and/or were also centers of civil rights activities themselves, and talk with local figures who will be able to meet with or address our study group. There are, for example, a number of key figures in the Movement still living in the cities to which they gave leadership in the 1950's and 1960's. I will speak with them discussing discussions with IUSB students on the tour. Finally, I will evaluate the information that I have personally gathered and put together an itinerary which maximizes the opportunities for learning within a two week study tour.

I cannot resist ending this brief proposal with a quotation from the recent book about the Civil Rights Movement, *THE CHILDREN*, by David Halberstam: "Any experienced reporter who has covered social conflict over what is now five decades takes a kind of private sustenance, I think, from certain things. In my own case that sustenance comes from, for lack of a better phrase, the courage and nobility of ordinary people in times of stress. If you believe in that concept, I think, you are inclined to believe in democracy, despite endless examples of its weaknesses and flaws. I can think of no occasion in recent postwar American history when there has been so shining an example of democracy at work because of the courage and nobility of ordinary people — people hardly favored at the time of birth by their circumstances — than what happened in those days in the South."(726-727)
Summary of Course Goals:

1. Provide and confirm a general understanding of the factual narrative of the Civil Rights Movement.
2. Imprint upon this general understanding a visual and tactile feel for what occurred during the highlights of the Movement and where it occurred: walking in the footsteps, listening to the voices, and touching the living artifacts of the Movement.
3. Provide an expectation of student reflection upon the Movement in a way which picks up some of the spirit of the time and a feel for the motivations of parties involved in key events.
4. Assess the level of understanding and extent of reflection by each student. (The specific assessment techniques will not be determined until after the itinerary and syllabus are finalized.)

Summary of Grant Goals:

1. Visit sites in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and perhaps Florida where significant activity occurred during the key years of the Civil Rights Movement.
2. Evaluate these sites and their museums and memorial repositories in terms of academic content and practical viability for inclusion in a two week study tour.
3. Meet and talk with individuals in these Southern cities who may be expected to talk with students on the proposed study tour.
4. Identify lodging and eating facilities compatible with student budgets and course goals and build a realistic estimate of costs for the study tour.

Proposed Itinerary for Travel Under the Grant:

a. Memphis, TN
b. Several Mississippi sites to be determined
c. Montgomery, AL
d. Selma, AL
e. Birmingham, AL
f. Albany, GA
g. St. Augustine, FL (if time would permit)
h. Atlanta, GA
i. Nashville, TN
Proposed Budget for Curriculum Development Grant

Traveling in the United States is not inexpensive. Driving approximately 2,500 miles, spending 14 days in travel accommodations, and buying 42 meals on the road will be prohibitively expensive for students unless ways are found to economize. In making this preliminary trip, I intend to travel cheaply, learning from experience how best to organize the tour for the following summer. As I will be doing legwork and learning as I travel, it will take me longer than 14 days of investigation.

**Itemized Budget Proposal:**

Travel (by personal car during June and/or July 1999) : 500 miles @ $.28 per mile and 1900 miles @ $.14 per mile = $406

Lodging (during June and/or July 1999) : 20 nights @ $65 per night = $1300

Per diem (during June and/or July 1999) : 21 days @ $32 per day = $672

Materials purchase (museum publications, visitor maps, audio materials to use with the class while on tour): $250

**TOTAL GRANT REQUEST: $2,628**

**Departmental Support:**

Long Distance Telephone (contacting people and places in advance): $150