I. OVERVIEW

The life of Malcolm X represents an extraordinary personal and political evolution that has moved millions around the world. The man born Malcolm Little was at different points in his life described as a foster child, shoeshine boy, street hustler, convicted criminal, Muslim minister, black separatist, revolutionary nationalist and human rights activist. His words and worldview offer meaningful insight into compelling and contradictory aspects of power, politics and possibilities for social change in America.

The call for revolution in the United States dates back from the fight against genocide, slavery and the British empire during the colonial era, to movements for civil rights, women's liberation, black power, human rights and environmental justice continuing to this day. Though assassinated the same day he was prepared to reveal the charter of his own organization, the complexity and constant growth of Malcolm X's ideas have been matched by few in American politics. Decades after the social upheavals of the 1960s, the United States remains a site of rampant poverty and unemployment, underfunded public education and health care and expanding military and prison industrial complexes.

In this course, we will critically examine the institutional, ideological and cultural forces – the poetry, policies, political movements and sociological contexts, that shaped the path Malcolm Little took to become Detroit Red, Malcolm X, and finally El Hajj Malik El Shabazz. Our research, writings and weekly reflections on the enduring impact of his influential narrative, will enable us to develop a greater understanding of politics on a national and global scale. Our focus on Malcolm will expose the contradictory impulses of a nation that both demonizes and deifies X as it has countless leaders and movements committed to revolutionize praxis. Within a collaborative learning environment, we will analyze, engage, discuss, debate and document critical perspectives on race, class, gender, religion, government, and the state in American politics by evaluating this nation through the words of one of its harshest critics and most uncompromising revolutionaries.

How do we think about politics? What are the consequences of failing to engage political institutions or ignoring social movements? The answers to these questions depend on how we define "power." For some, power comes from objects. For others, it springs from social relations. There is a world of difference between these conceptions of power. We will explore this difference as it relates to current events, historically marginalized communities, and your own life. In classroom discussions and debates, we will critically examine conflicting ideas on the nature of power and the possibility of revolutionary politics. In reflections on the course readings, you will provide evidence
from newspaper stories, music, television, etc.) each week to assess the different conceptions of power found in the opposition between Malcolm and mainstream American politics. Participation in class discussions and activities, weekly reflections and quizzes, and the final exam will all be opportunities to report on the research you gather during the semester and the reasons underlying your perspective on the nature of power and politics.

II. GOALS

A. To critically interrogate how power is obtained, distributed and utilized by examining the life, words and impact of one of the 20th century’s most influential revolutionaries;
B. To better understand the power of citizens, the state, social and political movements;
C. To cultivate the ability to analyze, develop arguments, identify evidence & persuade;
E. To build the capacity for working with and respectfully critiquing the work of others;
F. To improve the ability to research, write, debate, discuss and deliver presentations.
G. To develop a thesis on power and revolutionary politics in America.

III. REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading- All of It! Do not fall behind. Key issues will be tested on the final exam…
B. Final Exam- on central issues in the readings, reflections and class discussions (20%);
C. Participation- using creativity and a good sense of humor are both encouraged (20%);
D. Presentations- student pairs must select two (2) topics for class presentations (20%);
E. Reflections/Quizzes- a 1-2 page reflection on the reading is due every other week. On alternating weeks, when a reflection is not due, a quiz on the readings to date will be given at the beginning of class. Reflections and quizzes will be used to assess your engagement of the readings. Each reflection can be an essay, poem or dramatic monologue/scene addressing issues in the reading. 3-5 citations are expected. (20%);
F. Grade Sheet- to encourage collective work and responsibility, you are asked to grade your own course work, as well as the work of their peers and professor, at the end of the semester. Grade sheets are due in class on the last day. Be community minded! (20%).

*Attendance*

Your presence is required. You are expected to attend every class meeting this semester.
If you must miss a class, notify me beforehand and ask a classmate for notes.
It is your responsibility to secure any work you miss from a colleague.
Two (2) unexplained absences will lower your final grade.

A. Reading
All readings are either in the Course Reader or The Autobiography of Malcolm X.
Students are expected to come to class having read ALL of the readings assigned for that day, and submit a one (1) page essay reflecting on - and critically analyzing - key issues of each. Discussion questions will be considered for the final exam.
B. Reflections
Reflections must be typed, brought to class AND submitted via email no later than 6pm the day before each class to: brb200@nyu.edu. Students are encouraged to be creative and expected to email reflections on time. *Late reflections will not be accepted.*

C. Final Exam
The final exam will be given on the last day of class. Students will be asked to reflect on and analyze material covered in during discussions and in the course readings throughout the semester. Topics of great interest in class discussions and reflections on the course readings will be the primary focus of the exam. Any student interested in writing a 10-15 page research paper in lieu of the exam should consult with the professor and submit a proposal of no more than 1-2 pages -- with 5-7 sources to be used -- by October 15.

D. Participation
Active participation in class discussions and other weekly activities will be graded along with each of the requirements below. One excused absence or lateness will be allowed before a student's grade is affected. A letter must be written to the professor and received at least one day prior to an absence for it to be considered excused. You are responsible for obtaining notes from a peer on any material covered during a class you miss.

E. Presentations
All students are required to make at least two (2) group presentations (2-3 students per group max.) during the semester. All presentations must be accompanied by a one (1) page lesson plan for an interactive workshop to be facilitated *collaboratively* by the presentation team in class for no more than 60 minutes. Lesson plans must be submitted via email one (1) week before each presentation, with a 3-5 page essay, written *collaboratively*, analyzing the themes for the week selected by the group. Creativity methods and the effective use of multimedia are very strongly encouraged.

 selection
By the beginning of the second class meeting, students will be asked to submit their top five preferences in order of priority (with “1” being the highest and “5” the lowest) for the dates on which they would like to present. Groups and presentation dates will be assigned by the following class meeting. Students will be responsible for arranging regular meeting times OUTSIDE OF CLASS to conduct their research, writing, and to plan their presentation. Students are strongly encouraged to supplement the assigned readings during their research for the Group Presentation - since the assigned readings are meant to provide an illustrative rather than an exhaustive list of the available information on the topics covered in class.

preparation
Each group is expected to coordinate and attend a strategy session with each other at least two (2) weeks before their presentation to refine their research, discuss effective methods of facilitation, and explore the incorporation of multimedia and other methods of facilitating a creative, engaging, informative and participatory presentation.
Each group is then expected to arrange and attend a follow-up meeting with the professor at least one (1) week before their presentation to present their research and discuss the scope of their project and activities. Preliminary research and preparation prior to these meetings has generally yielded better results in the past, and will have a positive impact on your overall grade for the presentation and ultimately for the course.

F. Grade Sheet
By the last class, each student will submit a grade sheet assigning a letter grade to the participation of each member of the course, along with a brief explanation for each.

G. Course Schedule

WEEK 1

What is Power? The Role of Social Relations

Sept. 3 Introductions and "The Great Game of Power"
A. Brothers, "Power Trip Quiz," Power & Politics, Pg. 3
C. Kelly, "Recognizing Arguments," Power & Politics, Pg. 131-132
*Debate: Who has Power? The People vs. the Police: from NYC to Ferguson

WEEK 2

How is Power Obtained? Relations vs. Possessions

Sept. 10

Required:
A. "Origins of the UNIA" Black Power and the Garvey Movement, Pg. 75-89
B. "Message to the Grassroots," Malcolm X Speaks, Pg. 3-17

Recommended:
Patterson, "Politics: The Resolution of Conflict," Pg. 16-24
*Guest Speakers: Cory Greene and Kyla Searle, Incarceration to Education Coalition

WEEK 3

What is the Source of Personal and Political Power?
Sept. 17

Required:
B. Garvey, "Principles of the UNIA," Great Speeches by African Americans, Pg. 102-108
C. "White Power: The Colonial Situation," Ture and Hamilton, Pg. 2-33

Recommended:
Patterson, "Before the Constitution: Colonial and Revolutionary..." Pg. 40-45
and "Political Power: The Control of Policy," Pg. 25-35

WEEK 4

How Does Social Power Relate to the State?

Sept. 24

Required:
A. Ch. 3-4: Homeboy-Laura, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Pg. 41-72
B. Ture and Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance," Pg. 34-57

Recommended:
Patterson, "Equal Rights: Struggling Toward Fairness," Pg. 153-173

WEEK 5

How is Power Played in Conflict and Cooperation?

Oct. 1

Required:
A. Ch. 5-6: Harlemite-Detroit Red, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Pg. 73-110
B. "The Ballot or the Bullet," Malcolm X Speaks, Pg. 23-44

Recommended:
Harris, “Was There Life Before Chiefs?” Our Kind: The Evolution…”, Pg. 112-130
Sanchez, "The Cigar Makers' Strike: An Economic Power...," Pg. 53-95

WEEK 6

Public Opinion and Participation: How do People Relate to the State?
Oct. 8

**Required:**
A. Ch. 7-8: Hustler-Trapped, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Pg. 111-136  
B. Sanchez, "Introduction," Boricua Power, Pg. 1-13  

**Recommended:**  
Kristof, Robbins, Steele, Kammen, P&P, Pg. 133b, 134-137, 168  

**WEEK 7**

**Land of the Free, Home of the Slaves: What does the State Give & Take?**

Oct. 15

**Required:**
A. Ch. 9-10: Caught-Satan, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Pg. 137-171  
B. Muhammad, "Original Man," Message to the Black Man..., Pg. 31-43  
C. The Black Revolution," Malcolm X Speaks, Pg. 45-58  

**Recommended:**  
Iverem-Farrakhan, Nasheed, P&P, Pg. 140-144, 209  

**WEEK 8**

**Mathematics as Ideology: How does the Economy Relate to the State?**

Oct. 22

**Required:**
A. Ch. 11-12: Saved-Savior, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Pg. 172-214  
B. The House Negro and the Field Negro," Final Speeches, Pg. 26-30  

**Recommended:**  
Patterson, "The Interest Group System," Pg. 301-311  
Rose, "Hidden Politics...," Black Noise, P&P, Pg. 146-148  

**WEEK 9**

**The Power to Govern: How does the State Organize Power?**
Oct. 29

Required:
B. "Educate Our People in the Science of Politics," Final Speeches, Pg. 81-119

Recommended:
Patterson, "Inside Lobbying" and "Outside Lobbying," Pg. 312-321
and "Party Competition... The History of US Parties," Pg. 259-267

---

WEEK 10

What Power Functions Between States?

Nov. 5

Required:
B. Fanon, "Violence in the International Context," *Wretched of the Earth*, Pg. 95-106

Recommended:
Patterson, "Foreign and Defense Policy: Protecting the American Way," Pg. 592-607

---

WEEK 11

What Power Functions Beyond States?

Nov. 12

Required:
B. Shabazz, "There's a Worldwide Revolution Going On," Final Speeches, Pg. 120-161
C. Marable, Excerpt from *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*
*Final Presentations and Theater Games*

---

WEEK 12

Nov. 19

Required:
B. Shabazz, "We Are Fighting... as Human Beings," Final Speeches, Pg. 278-288
C. Marable, Excerpt from *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*
**Final Presentations/Theater Games**

**WEEK 13**

**Nov. 26**

**Required:**
A. Newton, "Founding of the Black Panther Party," Revolutionary Suicide, Pg. 115-119
B. Patterson, "Unconventional Activism: Social Movements...," Pg. 247-254
C. Unpublished excerpts by Malcolm X

*Final Exam Review/Theater Games*

**WEEK 14**

**Dec. 3**

**FINAL EXAM**
ADDITIONAL POLICIES

1. Attendance
The attendance policy in all Lang writing classes is as follows: Students will lose a half grade (EG A to A-, A- to B+, and B+ to B) for each unexcused absence up to three and will automatically fail the class at four unexcused absences. Excused absences are defined as those covered by a doctor's note, a letter from the office of disability, or those absences excused by the instructor in consultation with the chair. Consistent lateness should be counted as absence. Students may not be excused from attendance by any other office within the college. Please keep a written attendance record.

2. Students at Risk
A student who has accrued two unexcused absences or is at risk for any other reason must be referred to the departmental chair. All correspondence with the advising office must include the department chair. In the event of a student having failed the class due to attendance or other reasons, part time faculty should refer the student to the chair for enforcement of the policy. The student will be given a chance to withdraw from the class or, in the event of real extenuating circumstances -- and given the instructor's agreement - - to remediate the faults leading to failure.

3. Grading
A grade of B or better is required for a student to progress within the major from an introductory class in any genre to an intermediate class. A grade of B+ or better is required for a student to progress within the major from an intermediate class to an advanced class. Grading standards will be discussed in the Part Time Faculty meetings.

4. Public Events
All students are required to attend and write a brief report on two public literary events per semester. Students taking several writing classes can use the same events for each. Failure to fill this requirement should be reflected in the course grade.

5. Double Submissions
All work to be done in all writing classes must be original and can not have been previously submitted in any other writing class unless specific arrangements have been made with the instructor. Submission of previously submitted work will be grounds for failure in the class.