

Student Activism in the 1960s and Today

A Social Studies Lesson for University and College Students

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Materials

**Primary documents regarding the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project housed in the Western College Memorial Archives are available in the

Freedom Summer Digital Collection

<http://digital.lib.muohio.edu/fs/>

Western College Memorial Archives

<http://westernarchives.lib.muohio.edu/index.php>

Student Activism in the 1960s and Today

Objectives:

Students will:

- Gain an understanding of the goals of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project through primary documents.
 - Examine primary documents to ascertain the variety of Miami alumni recollections of the 1964 Freedom Summer training at Western College in Oxford, Ohio.
 - Consider the methods used by those in support of, and in opposition to, the Freedom Summer Project to accomplish their goals.
 - Examine local student and/or community groups, determining the groups' goals, strategies, organization and barriers to membership.
 - Develop skills related to gathering information about current activities on their own campus and/or in their wider community.
 - Present information gathered about a single group to their peers and gain insight about becoming more involved on their campus and/or in their wider community.
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**Documents listed in order by box and folder according to the Archive

“The Mood of Miami”, Jane Marie Jordan Senior Honors Thesis, 1993 (Box 2, Folder 6, Item 1). Letters from: Bernstein (p. 6), Campbell (p. 7), Cobb (p. 10-11), Karg (p. 21), Korte (p. 24), Miller (p. 29), Perkins (p. 30-32), Sawtelle (p. 37-41), Swann (p. 42-50), Unsigned pages 60, 63-64, 66-69.

“A Long, Hot Summer in Mississippi,” The Antiochian, November 196? (Box 3, Folder 6, Item 6)

“Mississippi Invasion Army,” Columbia, S.C. Record, June 25, 1964 (Box 4, Folder 2, Item 28)

“Young Rights Trainees Scared, Dedicated,” Austin Texas, date unknown (Box 4, Folder 2, Item 61)

“Inter-Collegiate Conference on Community Action in Race Relations,” Oxford, Ohio, March 25-30, 1961 Informational Brochure (Box 6, Folder 1, Item 1)

“Mississippi Freedom Summer” Brochure from the Council of Federated Organizations (Box 6, Folder4, Item 3)

Other resources:

“June 21, 1964” episode of *10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America* History Channel, 2006 (45 minutes).

10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus: A Response Guide for College Activists, Southern Poverty Law Center. <http://www.tolerance.org/campus/>

Introduction:

Students will read the materials listed above from the Western College Memorial Archives, either as homework or in class (with the exception of the “Inter-Collegiate Conference” brochure from 1961). The teacher will lead a class discussion about the following:

1. Why did students volunteer for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project?
2. Were Miami students aware of what was going on at Western College and in the nation as a whole regarding civil rights? Which alum do you imagine you would be?
3. How do student groups accomplish their goals?
4. What kinds of activism are students involved in on your campus? How can you find out? (Campus newspaper, social networking sites, student government, student organizations, word of mouth, peers).
5. What issues are you aware of that are of local, national or international concern?
6. Students may be broken into groups of 3 or 4 to share what organizations they are members of, if time permits.

Assignment:

Students will identify and learn about student ‘activist’ organizations. First they will read Pages 4-5 of the “Inter-Collegiate Conference” brochure to gain an understanding of strategies groups may use to accomplish their goals. If appropriate, they can also be assigned *10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus*. Next they will choose an ‘activist’ organization on their campus, or within their wider community if the assignment needs to be expanded. An organization will be considered ‘activist’ if the members are working toward identifiable social goals. Athletic teams and Greek organizations should not be included.

By an assigned date, each student will identify one ‘activist’ organization to study. The student should not be a member of the organization prior to the assignment. In class, they will submit an information sheet about the organization to the instructor (see **Local Activist Group/Organization Worksheet**, p 4).

Class Activity:

Depending on class size, students will share the name of the organization they investigated and its goals with their peers either as single presenters to the entire class or in small groups.

Class Activity:

After having turned in their organization assignments, Students will watch “June 21, 1964” and identify the strategies used by ‘activist’ organizations in pursuit of their goals. The students will be asked to identify the different activist groups in support of, and opposition to, the goals of the Freedom Summer Project. They will record the differences in goals and strategies of the various groups in the chart below. While viewing, the students will fill out the **10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America, Viewing Guide** (p. 5).

Final Discussion

Following the movie viewing, the teacher will lead a class discussion about the following:

1. How did students get involved in the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project?
 2. What were the goals? Were they accomplished?
 3. What strategies were used to accomplish the goals?
 4. What did the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project accomplish?
 5. What issues would you be willing to work on today? How can you get involved?
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Local Activist Group/Organization

Name of Student:

1. Name of Group/Organization (how do they identify themselves?):
 2. Social goals of Group/Organization:
 3. How did you determine these goals?
 4. Organization and Strategies used in pursuit of goals:
 5. How to become involved in this group/organization:
 6. Barriers to involvement
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10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America, Viewing Guide

Name:

Organization	Goals	Strategies
