

WRITING AND REMEMBERING SOCIAL CHANGE

EN 6/4990 - Fall 2020 - T/R 12:30-1:45

“I like a little rebellion now and then.”
-Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams

Course Description

In this course, we will consider how writing initiates and creates social change, and the relationship between social change in the past and social change in the present. Here, we will investigate and explore theories of writing as social action; as reform, resistance, and protest; and as self and world making. In class conversations we will consider, what does it mean to *compose* social action? What does it mean to *remember* social change? What is the relationship among these two rhetorical practices? Our pursuit of these questions will center on one particular moment in social change history, the movement for black freedom in the U. S. South, and how it has—and has not—been written into the landscapes, material, and digital worlds around us. Our readings will include a range of genres including memoirs, speeches, essays, petitions, novels, songs, and poetry. Course projects will center on analyzing and experimenting with writing’s capacity for social and memorial action. Ultimately, we will try to understand how writing functioned to change the South and the nation, and the commemorative work that presents this rhetorical legacy in ways that inflect our present and future.

Questions: Contact Professor Elizabeth Miller at eae47@msstate.edu

