Dear Vassar Travelers and Friends,

Join us on a carefully designed program which focuses on understanding the Civil Rights Movement, perhaps the most significant movement to shape American history. Our program traces the deep history of this struggle, one which has its roots as far back as the abolition movement, as a profound commitment to achieve racial equality through grassroots organizing, non-violence, legislative and courtroom victories, strategic litigation, brilliant leadership and collaboration, and the sheer courage and determination of hundreds of thousands of participants. As a master social movement, the Civil Rights Movement paved the way for many subsequent U.S. civil rights movements, from the women’s rights movement, to movements for the rights of Native Americans, Americans of Latin American and Asian descent, the Movement for Black Lives, disabilities rights, and the rights of the LGBTQ community. In addition to focusing on history, we will also consider and explore the legacies of the Movement and civil rights and social justice issues that continue unresolved. It is an exciting time to travel to the south today, where we are witnessing unprecedented efforts to try to come to terms with the past, joining similar initiatives around the country and even the globe.

In this tour, we will travel to the historic sites of the Movement - from Selma to the Little Rock High School - and meet with many of the figures who were involved. We will visit the museums of memory and memorials in Jackson, Birmingham, Memphis, and Montgomery that help us understand the connections of the past to the present. Framed within the civil rights story are also the histories of the music and cuisine of the South. Some of the most powerful and inspired creations of both southern sound and southern cuisine were born out of hardship and poverty and continue to evolve in exciting ways. For those interested in social justice today, there are great lessons to be learned from earlier struggles. Better understanding the civil rights movement will help us face twenty-first century challenges such as police brutality, mass incarceration, disenfranchisement, racism and inequality. In the words of Martin Luther King: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

We encourage you to join us on this historic trip. Please make your reservation today!

Warmest regards,

Katherine Hite
Professor of Political Science on the Frederick Ferris Thompson Chair
Taneisha Means
Assistant Professor of Political Science on the Class of 1951 Chair
Itinerary

March 10, Tuesday: Jackson D

Independent arrivals into Jackson. Transfer to the Westin Jackson.

This afternoon, visit the newly opened Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. This museum provides an honest and painful account of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi beginning with the back story to the civil rights period – the European slave trade. The museum timeline moves through the Civil War, the birth of Jim Crow and World War II, with a harrowing room focusing on the abduction and murder Emmett Till.

This evening enjoy a lovely welcome reception and dinner at the hotel.

March 11, Wednesday: Jackson B,L,D

Our morning begins at the Medgar Evers Home Museum, where Evers lived and was later assassinated in 1963. Walk through the home, which has been restored to the way it looked in 1963. Here we will have the opportunity to meet with the home’s curator, Minnie White Watson.

From here drive to Malaco Records, an American independent record label based in Jackson, that has been the home of various major blues and gospel acts. It was the unexpected success of Z.Z. Hill’s LP Down Home in 1982-83 that launched Malaco on a trajectory to become the dominant label in its field.

Drive past the former Greyhound Bus station, a site that played a prominent role in the 1961 Freedom Rides against segregation.

Continue on to Farish Street where we will be met by local business owner Daniel Dillon, who is trying to revitalize the area. In 2009 he opened Frank Jones Corner, the only restaurant and live music venue on a nearly empty street. Walk from the Frank Jones Corner, passing by the Collins Funeral Home. On June 15, 1963, more than 4,000 mourners marched from the Masonic Temple to the Collins Funeral Home, where Medgar Evers’ body was prepared for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Stop by the Big Apple Inn, where we will meet with the owner, Geno Lee, whose unique delicacy, the Pig’s Ear Sandwich, has attracted quite a few celebrities, including BB King and even President Barack Obama.

Enjoy lunch at Johnny T’s Bistro and Blues.

After lunch, visit COFO Civil Rights Education Center, where we will meet with Dr. Robert Luckett, Director of the Margaret Walker Center.

End the afternoon meeting with Dr. Charles Beady, who runs the Mississippi Food Network (MFN). MFN’s vision is to eliminate poverty-related hunger in Mississippi.

Enjoy a special dinner at Frank Jones Corner, followed by a private performance by a local Blues musician.

March 12, Thursday: Little Rock B,L,D

Depart Jackson this morning for Little Rock driving through the beautiful flatlands of the Mississippi Delta.

Stop by the BB King Museum to experience and learn about blues music, which was founded here in the Mississippi Delta. Explore the museum and soak in the sounds that transformed the history of music in America.

Afterwards, continue on to Greenwood and the Museum of the Mississippi Delta. The museum was founded in 1969 at the crossroads of Delta history and art. The extensive collection includes artifacts related to agriculture, Native America, regional military history, and one of the Delta’s most extensive collections of regional art.

Here you will meet with Sylvester and Mary Hoover, owners of the Hoover’s Store which is located in nearby Baptist Town. Mary Hoover has prepared barbeque ribs for the group lunch and, of course, her famous butter-roll, similar to a cobbler but without the fruit. Mary is a fabulous cook, owned a popular soul-food restaurant in the Baptist Town neighborhood for nearly 30 years, and was involved in preparing the spreads for the food scenes in the movie, The Help. Lunch will be served in the museum.
After lunch, drive a short distance to Baptist Town, which was established in the 1800s in tandem with the growth of the local cotton industry. Baptist Town is best known as the final residence of Robert Johnson, the King of the Delta Blues Singers.

Stop in at Hoover’s Store, owned by Sylvester and Mary Hoover. Tour the Back in the Day Museum, a community museum exploring the history of the blues, Baptist Town and African-American culture in the Delta.

Continue on to the nearby town of Money where the first marker on the Mississippi Freedom Trail was placed at the remains of the Bryant’s Grocery, the site associated with the murder of black teenager Emmett Till.

Make a stop in Sumner at the Emmett Till Interpretive Center. Meet with museum director, Patrick Weems, and learn of the apology resolution written by the community of Sumner and issued from the steps of the courthouse in which Emmett Till’s murderers were acquitted.

Enjoy an early dinner at Sumner’s Grille before continuing on to Little Rock and the Burgundy Hotel.

March 13, Friday: Little Rock/Memphis B,L,D

This morning visit Little Rock High School, now Central High School National Historic Site, a national emblem of the often violent struggle over school desegregation. The crisis here pushed the Federal government to enforce the desegregation legislation in the face of massive southern defiance during the years following the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision. Meeting us here, will be Elizabeth Eckford, one of nine African-American students who broke the color barrier at Central High School in 1957. There will be a chance to talk to Mrs. Eckford about her experiences.

Continue on to the William J. Clinton Presidential Center, housed in a gleaming modern space overlooking the Arkansas River. The center supports the Clinton library, foundation, and school, as well as a mock Oval Office as it looked during his administration. Enjoy lunch in the beautiful restaurant at the center.

Check into the Hu Hotel before dinner at Rendezvous.

March 14, Saturday: Memphis B,L

Begin the morning at the Lorraine Motel, now the home of the National Civil Rights Museum. Martin Luther King, Jr. stayed at the motel on April 4, 1968 in Room 306. When he stepped out to talk to friends in the parking lot below, a bullet struck him in the neck, taking his life instantly.

Enjoy lunch at The Four Ways Restaurant, one of the oldest soul food restaurants in Memphis, whose regulars included Martin Luther King, Jr., Isaac Hayes, and Aretha Franklin.

This afternoon, we will focus on Memphis’ music history with a visit to the Stax Museum of American Soul, which provides insight into the civil rights story, set within the Memphis music scene.

Drive a mile north to visit the Slave Haven Underground Railway house, where dark cellars, hidden passageways and trap doors were used by runaway enslaved men, women, and children, attempting to flee north to freedom.

Dinner is at your leisure this evening.
March 15, Sunday: Montgomery

This morning, travel to Birmingham and stop at the 16th Street Baptist Church, where on September 15th, 1963, a bomb killed four young girls as they prepared to sing in their choir. The incident caused national outrage and gave rise to a momentum that ensured the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. We have asked Carolyn McKinstry, who was 14 and inside the church when the bomb exploded, to join us on our visit.

Enjoy lunch at the Delta Blues Hot Tamales.

Drive to Selma and stop outside of the Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the site of Malcolm X’s address in support of voting rights, Dr. King’s eulogy for Jimmie Lee Jackson, and Jackson’s funeral.

Stop by the Selma Interpretive Center for a conversation with Foot Soldier Annie Pearl Avery, who joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at age sixteen and whose civil rights work spans decades.

Continue to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where we will walk two by two in memory of those who were beaten seeking the right to vote.

Drive along the 54 miles, known as the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. This route helped change American history as a series of marches brought the conflicts of the voting rights movement into homes across the country.

Arrive in Montgomery and check into the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel.

Dinner this evening is at your leisure.

March 16, Monday: Montgomery

Begin the morning with visit to the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church and Parsonage where Martin Luther King Jr. was pastor from 1954-1960. Stand in the pulpit from which he preached as a minister about his passionate views on the power of nonviolence and civil disobedience.

End the morning at the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. Created by the Equal Justice Initiative, the museum is a pass-breaking look into the history of racial injustice and the narratives that have sustained injustice across generations.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Visit the Civil Rights Memorial, where Vietnam Veterans Memorial architect Maya Lin, designed a circular black granite table which records the names of the martyrs and chronicles the history of the movement in lines that radiate like the hands of a clock.

After lunch visit the newly opened National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Continue on for a briefing at the Equal Justice Initiative.

Enjoy a farewell dinner at the Central Restaurant.

March 17, Tuesday: Depart

Independent transfers to the airport for return flights home.

Katherine (Katie) Hite is Professor of Political Science on the Frederick Ferris Thompson Chair. She is the author of Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain (Routledge 2012) and co-editor with Mark Ungar of Sustaining Human Rights in the Twenty-First Century: Strategies from Latin America (Johns Hopkins 2013), as well as several additional publications on the politics of memory, memorials and memorial museums across the Americas. Katie’s current research and most recent essays now also squarely focus on commemoration in the United States, particularly in her home state of Texas. She teaches courses on social movements, Latin American politics, and the legacies of traumatic political violence for governments and societies around the globe.

Taneisha Means is Assistant Professor of Political Science on the Class of 1951 Chair. She is a first-generation college graduate from Canton, Ohio and joined Vassar faculty in 2016. As a political scientist, her research and teaching interests include race and ethnic politics, judicial politics, political representation, and political behavior and identities. She is particularly interested in the political representation of marginalized groups in politics, especially in the U.S. courts. Her primary research focus right now is her book project, Representation and Justice in State Courts. She has also published research on voting rights, Michelle Obama and black motherhood, the development of the discipline of political science, and court tv shows. She teaches courses on political representation in government, race in American politics, and judicial politics.

Vassar College Scholars
Program Costs and Inclusions

Trip Price: $3,680 per person, double occupancy
Single room supplement: $980 (Limited Availability)

Trip price includes: All hotel accommodations as listed in the itinerary based on double-occupancy; meals as listed in the itinerary (B,L,D); all tours; excursions; sightseeing; entrances; transportation in an air-conditioned motor coach; a Distant Horizons tour manager; gratuities and porterage. Trip price based on a minimum of 20 travelers.

Trip price does not include: Airfare to Jackson and departing from Montgomery; beverages outside of the included one soft drink at mealtimes; personal insurance for health; baggage and trip cancellation; chambermaid gratuities and items of a purely personal nature.

Note: Program not recommended for children under 11 years of age. Participants must be able to walk for long distances and up and down stairs without problems. Please note that this itinerary is subject to change.

For additional information contact
Distant Horizons at
CharleenM@distant-horizons.com
or (800) 333-1240

Distant Horizons, is a California Seller of Travel (CST #2046776-40) and a participant in the California Travel Restitution Fund. Information regarding the rights of California residents to make a claim may be found at tcrinfo.org. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account.
RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENTS: Reservations for this tour require a deposit of $750 per person and an application form signed by the participant. Final payment is due by January 10, 2020 and must be paid by check, payable to Distant Horizons.

TOUR PRICE INCLUDES: Accommodations in hotels as outlined in the itinerary based on double occupancy, prices listed are based on two persons sharing a twin room. Distant Horizons reserves the right to substitute hotels for those named in the brochure when necessary. Distant Horizons will do all possible for single participants to satisfy requests to share rooms. On occasions when it is not possible, the single room supplement will apply. If Distant Horizons assigns you a roommate and your roommate cancels or changes their mind about sharing a room, you will be liable for the single room supplement. American breakfast (B), lunches (L) and dinners (D) are included as specified in the itinerary. Soft drink is included with lunch and one with dinner; welcome and farewell receptions include beer and wine; educational program of discussions; entrance fees to monuments; bottled water kept on the bus; transportation in a deluxe, air conditioned motor coach; the services of a Distant Horizons tour manager; special activities as quoted in the itinerary; and gratuities to the local guides; tour manager, driver, and waitstaff for included meals.

TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE: Air service to Jackson and from Montgomery; international airfare; meals not specified in the itinerary; transfers to and from airports; chambermaid gratuities; alcoholic drinks at included meals except for welcome and farewell receptions; drinks other than soft drink at meals; personal items such as laundry; email; fax or telephone calls; liquor; room service; independent and private transfers; luggage charges and private trip insurance. Any increases in the in-tour security, or fuel surcharges imposed after the initial pricing of this program are not included.

TOUR COST is based on rates of currency exchange at time of printing (September 2019) and is subject to change with or without previous notice. If there is a price increase prior to the day of departure in the basic costs, such increases may be passed on to the participant. If bookings fall below the minimum required, passengers will be advised of additional costs for that departure date. The minimum group size of this departure is 20 paying participants, should the number of participants fall below this number, a small group surcharge and/or revised staffing will apply.

CANCELLATIONS: Distant Horizons and The Vassar Travel Program reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason, including insufficient number of participants, and to decline to accept or retain any person as a participant at any time. Should this happen, refunds will be made without obligation, although we cannot be held responsible for any additional costs already incurred by participants. The tour price is based on a number of people traveling together.

If a participant cancels, the following refunds will be available upon written notice of cancellation to Distant Horizons:

Notice more than 60 days prior to departure: a refund less a $500 cancellation charge.
Notice on or between 60 days and 45 days prior to departure: a refund less 50% of trip price.
No refund shall be issued if cancellation is received less than 45 days prior to departure date.
No refunds shall be issued after the tour has commenced. No refunds shall be issued for occasional missed meals, sightseeing tours or any unused services.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: The purchase of trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended. Travel insurance information will be mailed to you by The Vassar Travel Program upon receipt of your registration form and deposit.

AIR CARRIERS CONTRACT: The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time tour members are on board their planes or conveyances. The passage contract in use by the airline concerned when the ticket is issued shall constitute the sole contract between the airline and the purchaser of these tickets and/or the passenger.

RESPONSIBILITY: Distant Horizons and Vassar College act only in the capacity of agent for the hotels, airlines, bus companies, railroads, ship lines or owners or contractors providing accommodations, transportation or other services. As a result, all coupons, receipts or tickets are issued subject to the terms and conditions specified by the supplier. By acceptance of tour membership, the participant agrees that neither Distant Horizons nor Vassar College nor any of their subsidiaries shall become liable or responsible for personal injury, damage to persons or property, loss, delay or irregularity caused by persons not controlled by it, such as (without limitation) airlines, bus and shipping companies, suppliers of accommodations or other services, or resulting from any acts of God, defects in vehicles, strikes, wars, whether declared or otherwise, civil disturbances, medical or customs regulations, acts of terrorism, epidemics or government restrictions. Distant Horizons and Vassar College cannot be held responsible for unfavorable weather or closure of access routes due to bad weather conditions. Distant Horizons and Vassar College cannot be held responsible if the tour lecturer or leader cancels, and passengers will be advised of a comparable replacement should time permit. Distant Horizons and Vassar College are not responsible for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the participant as a result of the above mentioned causes.

Tour participant acknowledges receipt of a copy of these terms and conditions and signifies acceptance of, and consents to, all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, on behalf of any participants they may act for and for themselves when registering for, or making payments on, this tour.