The history of the United States has been shaped by many movements, but perhaps one of the most significant is that of civil rights. On this program, trace the history of the civil rights movement, visiting the major sites—from Selma to the Little Rock High School—and meeting with many of the figures who were involved. Framed within the civil rights story are the histories of the music and cuisine of the South. Some of the most powerful and inspired creations of both Southern sound and cuisine were born out of hardship, and they continue to evolve as new populations, ingredients, and instruments influence regional culture.

For those interested in social justice today, there are great lessons to be learned from these struggles in our history, where a profound demonstration of commitment, against all odds, succeeded. In the words of Dr. King: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

GROUP SIZE: Up to 25 guests

PRICING: $3,995 per person double occupancy / $1,050 single supplement

STUDY LEADER: Timothy Patrick McCarthy AB ’93 is an award-winning scholar, educator, and public servant. He holds a joint faculty appointment in Harvard’s undergraduate honors program in History and Literature, the Graduate School of Education, and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he is Core Faculty and Program Director at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. His courses—“American Protest Literature,” “Stories of Slavery and Freedom,” and “Arts of Communication”—are consistently among the most highly rated at Harvard. A historian of politics and social movements, protest literature, and media culture, Tim is the author or editor of five books with the New Press, including The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition (2003), Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism (2006), and Stonewall’s Children: Living History in the Age of Liberation, Loss, and Love (2017). He has also served as an advisor on numerous political campaigns, including the Presidential campaigns of Barack Obama (2008) and Hillary Clinton (2016). He graduated with honors in History and Literature from Harvard College and earned his MA, MPhil, and PhD in History from Columbia University. Tim and his husband, CJ Crowder, live in Quincy House, where they have been Resident Scholars since 2010.
SATURDAY, MARCH 16
JACKSON

Arrive in Jackson today. This evening enjoy a welcome reception and dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: The Westin Jackson (D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 17
JACKSON

This morning attend a Sunday morning church service before touring the Medgar Evers Home Museum, where Evers lived and was later assassinated in 1963. Here you will have the opportunity to meet with the museum’s curator, Minnie White Watson.

End the morning exploring Farish Street with local business owner Daniel Dillion. Farish Street was the thriving center of African-American life in Jackson during the Jim Crow era. In recent years the street has fared poorly with boarded up buildings and vacant lots and a few lone businesses struggling to survive.

En route to lunch, stop by the former Greyhound Bus station, a site that played a prominent role in the 1961 Freedom Rides against segregation.

Enjoy lunch at the Big Apple Inn, which has attracted celebrities like BB King and President Obama. Meet owner Geno Lee, a fourth-generation owner of the Big Apple Inn. His great-grandfather, Juan “Big John” Mora, who was born in Mexico City, arrived in Jackson in the 1930s, began peddling hot tamales on street corners and, by 1939, opened up the Big Apple Inn on Farish Street.

After lunch, continue on to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum which opened in December 2017. This state-funded museum provides an honest and painful account of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi through a series of galleries packed floor to ceiling with photographs, texts and recordings. The museum exhibits begin with the back story to the civil rights period – the European slave trade. From there the museum timeline moves through the Civil War, Reconstruction and the birth of Jim Crow, and then moves to after World War II with a harrowing room which focuses on Emmett Till. Woven through the galleries is a parallel record of resistance from activists like Medgar Evers.

Depart the hotel for dinner tonight at Frank Jones Corner followed by a private performance by Blues legend Jesse Robinson. Robinson’s band opened for B.B. King at the opening of the B.B. King Museum and he is now the front man for B.B. King’s Blues Band.

Overnight: The Westin Jackson (B, L, D)

MONDAY, MARCH 18
LITTLE ROCK

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, founded here in the Mississippi Delta. Afterwards, continue on to Baptist Town, 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.

Enjoy lunch at Greenwood Museum where Mary Hoover has prepared barbeque ribs for the group and, of course, her famous butter-roll.

Stop at the Little Zion Missionary Baptist Church where blues legend Robert Johnson is buried. 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.

Next, stop at Dockery’s Farms, one of the most important plantations in the Delta, which is said to be one of the centers of the origin of blues. Listen to recordings of Charley Patton, one of the most important early Delta Blues
musicians, who spent most of his life at Dockery’s Farm.

Make a stop in Sumner at the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, which exists to tell the story of the Emmett Till tragedy and point a way towards racial healing through arts and storytelling. 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 Grille before continuing on to Little Rock.

Overnight: Burgundy Hotel (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 19
MEMPHIS

This morning visit Little Rock High School, now Central High School National Historic Site. The violent struggle over school desegregation here forced the nation to enforce African-American civil rights in the face of massive southern defiance during the years following the Brown decision, a major triumph of the movement. We have requested for Mrs. Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine, to meet with you during your visit.

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. Meet with docent Ann Kamps for a tour of the Clinton Presidential Center. Eat lunch at the presidential center.

After lunch, walk to the Anne Frank exhibit outside the center before continuing on Memphis.

Upon arrival enjoy dinner at McEwens, where we have invited reformed racists and former KKK member, Scott Shepherd to join you.

Overnight: Madison Hotel (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20
MEMPHIS

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. When he stepped out to talk to friends, a bullet struck him in the neck, taking his life instantly. Retrace some of the final footsteps of the most iconic leader of the civil rights movement and learn about the ongoing movement for racial justice and equality.

Next, walk across the street to the Legacy Building, the boarding house from where the assassin’s shot was allegedly fired, which examines the investigation of the assassination, the case against James Earl Ray, and ensuing conspiracy theories.

Eat lunch at world-famous Gus’s Fried Chicken.

This afternoon, focus on the music history of Memphis with a special tour led by a professional Beale Street musician. Enjoy live music as you learn about Memphis’s strong affiliations to rock ‘n’ roll, soul, and blues music.

A mile north is the Slave Haven Underground Railway house where dark cellars, hidden passageways, and trap doors were used by runaway slaves attempting to flee north to freedom.

Dinner is at your leisure this evening.

Overnight: Madison Hotel (B, L)

THURSDAY, MARCH 21
MONTGOMERY

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

Across the Street is the historic Kelly Ingram Park, site of civil rights rallies, demonstrations
and confrontations in the 1960s. Historic footage of police-attack dogs and high-powered fire hoses remain indelibly imprinted on the memories of those who saw the images on televisions and in newspapers around the world in the 1960s. Sculptures throughout the park are vivid depictions of police dog and fire hose assaults on demonstrators, many of them children.

Eat lunch at Delta Blues Hot Tamales with Carolyn McKinstry.

Continue on to Montgomery with time for dinner on your own.

Overnight: Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L)

FRIDAY, MARCH 22
MONTGOMERY

Begin the morning with a short walk to the waterfront to learn more about African and Native American enslavement. Montgomery was the capital of domestic slave trade in Alabama. You will be joined by Michelle Browder, the founder of I AM MORE THAN..., a Montgomery-based non-profit.

Walk a short distance to the Rosa Parks Museum, where the civil rights movement truly found its footing in 1955. The museum is set in front of the bus stop where Parks took her defiant stand in the pivotal moment that is recreated at the museum.

End the morning at 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 about his passionate views on the power of nonviolence and civil disobedience.

Stop by the Civil Rights Memorial where Vietnam Veterans Memorial designer Maya Lin created a circular black granite table that records the names of the martyrs and chronicles the history of the movement in lines that radiate like the hands of a clock. Water emerges from the table’s center and flows evenly across the top. Engraved on a curved black granite wall behind the table is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s well-known paraphrase of Amos 5:24, “We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Enjoy lunch at Chris’ Hot Dogs, which was founded on historic Dexter Street in 1917.

After lunch visit the newly opened Equal Justice Initiative’s National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The memorial is the nation’s first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence. The Memorial for Peace and Justice was conceived with the hope of creating a sober, meaningful site where people can gather and reflect on America’s history of racial inequality.

Continue on to the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. Created by the Equal Justice Initiative, the museum looks into the history of racial injustice and the narratives that have sustained injustice across generations. The museum is situated on a site in Montgomery where enslaved people were once warehoused. A block from one of the most prominent slave auction spaces in America, the Legacy Museum is steps away from an Alabama dock and rail station where tens of thousands of black people were trafficked during the 19th century.

End the day at the Equal Justice Initiative, an organization committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. We will request a meeting with the organization’s Founder and Executive Director, Bryan Stevenson.

Overnight: Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L)

SATURDAY, MARCH 23
MONTGOMERY

This morning, drive to Selma for a chance to learn about the Selma to Montgomery marches which were part of a series of civil-rights protests that occurred in 1965 in Alabama. As the world watched, the
protesters—under the protection of federalized National Guard troops—finally, on their third attempt, achieved their goal, walking around the clock for three days to reach Montgomery. The historic march, and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s participation in it, raised awareness of the difficulties faced by black voters, and the need for a national Voting Rights Act.

Upon arrival in Selma 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. Three marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama began from this church, which also served as the temporary headquarters for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Meet with Foot Solider, Annie Pearl Avery, whose civil rights work spans decades. Annie Pearl joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at age sixteen. Eventually she became SNCC’s project director for the voter registration effort in Hale County, Alabama. Annie Pearl will discuss with us her experience in the civil rights movement, as well as her experience walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965 - Bloody Sunday.

You’ll also visit the Selma Interpretive Center, located at the foot of the bridge where armed forces attacked the first wave of unarmed marchers during Bloody Sunday. Continue on to the Edmund Pettus Bridge to walk in memory of those who were beaten seeking the right to vote.

Next, continue along the 54 miles known as the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. A series of marches along this route brought the conflicts of the voting rights movement into homes across the country. Stop at the Lowndes Interpretive Center, which screens a film about the marches and the memorial dedicated to Viola Liuzzo.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner at the Central Restaurant.

Overnight: Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L, D)