

## The Civil Rights Movement and the Moral Life

IDIS/Rel 296; T/TR 8:55 – 10:05

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*“I think it's really important that young people today understand that the movement of the sixties was really a people's movement. The media and history seems to record it as Martin Luther King's movement, but if young people realized that it was people just like them, their age, that formulated goals and strategies, and actually developed the movement, that when they look around now, and see things that need to be changed, that they, instead of saying, I wish we had a leader like Martin Luther King today, they would say, what can I do, what can my roommate and I do to effect that change.”*

Diane Nash

**Course Description:** Many forces and ideas shaped the civil rights movement. Through both a historical and a theological/philosophical lens, students will examine those forces and ideas and will consider how the power and depth of the movement continues to challenge us with its continued relevance today. The course includes in-close examinations of key events in the movement, such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Nashville sit-ins, in order to view the movement from the vantage of people involved in the movement.

### Essential Questions:

When did the civil rights movement begin? Did it end?

How does the civil rights movement affect what we do today?

What ideas drove the movement?

What people were involved with the struggle for civil rights? Why are so many forgotten?

### Course Texts:

John Lewis. *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1998. For purchase in the college bookstore.

Many other assigned texts are posted in our course Blackboard site. In this case you are responsible for downloading, printing them and bringing them to class with you on the day assigned.

We will be focusing on the video documentary series *Eyes on the Prize* as a central course text. You will be asked to view most of the 14-CD series.

**Course Requirements:** 1) Attendance and participation 2) Five Short Papers (30%) 3) Biographical Paper 4) Event Paper???? 5) Synthesis Paper (20-25%)

### Schedule of Classes

## Unit I: When Did the Civil Rights Movement Begin?

Jan. 17 Course Introduction

Jan. 19 The Civil Rights Movement before 1950

Assignment: 1) *African Americans, A Concise History*, Early Twentieth Century (PP. 281-291) 1920's (pp. 315-323), WWII (384-386) [PB, Posted on Blackboard]

2) *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* by Joanne Grant (Chapters 2 & 3) [PB]

Jan. 24 Assignment: 1) Selection from William E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, first written in 1903 (Chapter 1, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 [PB])

## Unit II: The “Hidden” Becomes Visible: Emmet Till, Black Awareness, White Dawning Awareness (1954-1958)

Jan. 26 Emmett Till

Assignment: 1. View: *EP (Eyes on the Prize)* DVD, Episode 1: “Awakenings” [links for viewing Eyes on the Prize are posted in Blackboard]

2. VOF (*Voices of Freedom*), Chapter 1, Emmett Till, 1955. [PB]

Jan. 31: Brown v. Board of Education, Little Rock, and Ole Miss

Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 2: “Fighting Back” [PB]

2. VOF, Chapter 3 “The Little Rock Crisis, 1957-1958 [PB]

Feb. 2: Howard Thurman’s legacy

Assignment: Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, (Chapters 1, 2, & 5) [PB]

**Short Paper 1: Thurman, DuBois, and the beginnings of the movement**  
**See Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date:**

## Unit III: The Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-56)

Feb. 7 People of the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Assignments: 1. *Fire in the Streets*, Chapter 1, E.D. Nixon: The New Expectations [PB]

2. *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women who Started it*, Chapter 1, “The Origin of the Trouble” [PB]

3. *Daybreak of Freedom*, Interview with Domestic Workers and others (pp. 125-128; pp. 221-233) [PB]

Feb. 9 Bayard Rustin/The theology of Martin Luther King

Assignment: 1. *Daybreak of Freedom*, “Montgomery Diary” by Bayard Rustin (pp. 164-172) [PB]

2. Short essays from Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence”; “An Experiment in Love” “Suffering and Faith”; “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”; [PB]

3. Selection from King, *Strength to Love* [PB]

Feb. 14 Gandhi, Dr. King, and Nonviolence

Assignment: 1. A & E Biography: Gandhi: Pilgrim of Peace (1 hr) (this will be a helpful introduction to Gandhi’s life, mission and philosophy for students unfamiliar with him and the philosophy of nonviolence) (link to view this film is posted in Blackboard)

2. Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers* (Selection: Religion and Truth” pp. 41-62; “Ahimsa or the Way to Nonviolence”), pp 77-87. [PB]

3. “My Trip to the Land of Gandhi”, by Dr. Martin Luther King, *Testament of Hope* (pp. 23-30) [PB]

4. Secondary materials you will want to peruse more briefly:

a) “How Nonviolence Works”, Glenn Smiley,

<http://forusa.org/nonviolence/65smiley.html> (skim this resource)

b) Gandhi’s Influence on the Modern African American Freedom Struggle The Gandhi-King Community website

[http://gandhiking.ning.com/notes/Gandhi%27s Influence on the Modern African American Freedom Struggle](http://gandhiking.ning.com/notes/Gandhi%27s%20Influence%20on%20the%20Modern%20African%20American%20Freedom%20Struggle) [students should spend 15 minutes or so just surfing through this website and checking out the

connections and resources – this is to help you see the connection between Gandhi, civil rights, King and today]

c) Be aware that we have posted on Blackboard a number of additional short Youtube videos showing original footage of Gandhi – check them out when you have time!

### **Short Paper 2: On Montgomery**

#### **Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date:**

Feb. 16 Malcolm X, Another Voice

- Assignment: 1. *Waitin' til the Midnight Hour*, Chapter 1, Foreunners (pp. 9-26) [[PB]  
 2. Malcolm X-Rustin Debates [PB]  
 3. "I See a Nightmare: 1952-63", James Cone, *Martin and Malcolm* (pp. 98-119) [BP]

## **Unit IV City Sit-Ins, Nashville, Greensboro, and the Founding of SNCC (1960)**

Feb. 21 Nashville and James Lawson

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 3, "Ain't Scared of Your Jails"  
 2. WWTW, Chapters 4-5  
 3. Chapter 3, Learning Nonviolence, Encountering James Lawson from *The Civil Rights Life of Diane Nash* by Robert H. Mayer PB  
 4. View: The short Youtube videos featuring James Lawson in 2009/2010 [PB]

Feb. 23 Nashville Sit-Ins

- Assignment: 1. WWTW, Chapters 6  
 2. VOF, Chapter 4 (pp. 53-67) [PB]  
 3. Terrence J. Rynne, "Gandhian Satyagraha," *Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence*, pp 38-80 [PB]

Feb. 28 Greensboro

- Assignment: 1. Website: "Greensboro Sit-Ins,: Launch of a new civil rights movement (<http://www.sitins.com/index.shtml>)  
 -Listen to Following Interviews Under "Key Players" making sure to read the biography of each: Jibreel Khazan, Franklin Eugene McCain, Joseph Alfred McNeil, David Lenail Richmond, Dr. Willa B. Player, and Clarence Curly Harris.  
 -Newspapers: Click on "Media" section and then "Newspaper Headlines." Read all articles from February, 1960

March 1 Founding of SNCC

- Assignment: 1. Chapters 7 pp. 125-133, *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* by Joanne Grant [PB]  
 2. WWTW, Chapter 7  
 3. Chapter 14, "A Glorious Opportunity" from *Free at Last* [PB]  
 4. Three Documents from the Raleigh Conference (Handout)

### **Short Paper 3: Sit-ins, SNCC, and Nonviolence**

#### **Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date:**

## **Unit V: Students in and of the Movement SNCC and the Freedom Rides (1961)**

March 13 Freedom Rides

- Assignment: 1. View: *American Experience, Freedom Riders* [PB]  
2. WWTW, Chapter 8

March 15 Freedom Rides

- Assignment: 1. VOF, Chapter 5 [PB]  
2. WWTW, Chapter 9

## **Unit VI: Birmingham Marches, Bombing, Murder and A March on Washington (1963)**

- March 20 Assignment: 1. Chapter 1 and 2, *When the Children Marched* [PB]  
2. View: EP Episode 4, “No Easy Walk” [PB]

March 22 An Essential Document

- Assignment: 1. “Statement by Alabama Clergy” see link below:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/clergy.pdf>  
2. “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (available through link to Kings Papers Project, PB)  
3. “White Clergymen Urge Local Negroes to Withdraw from Demonstrations,”

*Birmingham News*, 13 April 1963. See link below:

<http://bplonline.cdmhost.com/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4017coll2/id/746/rec/8>

March 27 The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

- Assignment: 1. WWTW, Chapter 10 and 11 (includes different versions of Lewis’ speech)  
2. “The Ballot or the Bullet” Malcolm X [BP]  
3. In class: look at the different versions of Lewis’ speech and Malcolm’s reaction

### **Short Paper 4: On Letter from Birmingham Jail** **Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date:**

## **Unit VII: Organizing in Mississippi, Freedom Summer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1962-1964)**

April 3 Organizing in Mississippi

- Assignment: 1. View: EP Episode 5, “Mississippi: Is this America?” [BB]  
2. WWTW, Chapter 12  
3. VOF, Chapter 9 [PB]

April 5 Freedom Summer

- Assignment: 1. View: *Freedom on My Mind* [PB]  
2. WWTW, Chapter 13 and 14  
3. VOF, Chapter 12 [PB]

## **Unit VIII: Marching in Selma, the Meredith March, the Rise of Black Power, Dr. King’s Final Years (1965-1968)**

April 10, Selma

- Assignment: 1. View: EP Episode 6, “Bridge to Freedom” [BP]  
2. WWTW, Chapters 15, 16 & 17  
3. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Chapter 19 [PB]

April 12, The Rise of Black Power

Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 7, “Time has Come”

2. Malcolm X, “An Appeal to African Heads of State,” *Malcolm X Speaks*, address given 17 July 1964, pp 72-77.

3. *Fire in the Streets*, Chapter 10. Stokely Carmichael [PB]

4. “What we want” by Stokely Carmichael [PB]

5. “Black Power Defined” Martin Luther King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* 1967 [BP]

April 15, Dr. King’s Final Years

Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 9, “The Promised Land”

2. “Beyond Vietnam: Sermon at Riverside Church,” [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_beyond\\_vietnam\\_4\\_april\\_1967/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_beyond_vietnam_4_april_1967/)

3. *WWTW*, Chapter 18

April 17 The Black Panther Party

1. *EP* Episode 8: Power! (1966-68) (Focus on middle section on the birth of the Black Panther Party)

2. Black Panther Party, Platform and Program: What We Want, What We Believe

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/blackpanthers/history.shtml>

3. Documents from *The Black Panther* newspaper: Handout 7: Breakfast Program: To Feed Our Children and Why the Free Breakfast?

Handout 8: Education: Black Child’s Pledge and Liberation Schools

Handout 9: Legal Rights: Pocket Lawyer of Legal First Aid

Handout 10: People’s Medical Care Center

4. *WWTW*, Chapter 21

**Synthesis Paper 5:**

**Guidelines Posted on Blackboard: Due Date**

## Unit IX: Civil Rights and Today

April 19 TBA

Possibilities for the Day: View: *EP* on Chicago; Mixtapes; ???

April 24 “The Movement’s” reach in contemporary times, issues and challenges

Assignment: 1. Robert M. Franklin, “Nurturing Citizens through Liberal Arts Education,” *Criterion: A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School*, Winter 2011.[PB]

2. James Cone, “Making their Mark: Legacies”, *Martin and Malcolm*, pp 288-318

3. Also peruse these resources more briefly and consider the connections to today:

a) “The New Jim Crow: How the War on Drugs Gave Birth to a Permanent Undercaste by Michelle Alexander (*Mother Jones*, Tom Dispatch) <http://motherjones.com/politics/2010/03/new-jim-crow-war-on-drugs>

b) “A More Perfect Union” Barack Obama  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/18/obama-race-speech-read-th\\_n\\_92077.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/18/obama-race-speech-read-th_n_92077.html)

c) Chris Hedges, “Where Were You When They Crucified My Lord?” *Truthdig*. Dec. 5, 2011. <http://www.truthdig.com>

Barbara Ehrenreich, “Homeless in America” *TomDispatch.com*, Dec. 2, 2011.  
<http://222tomdispatch.com/blog/175457>

Cornel West, “Dr. King Weeps From His Grave” *ReaderSupported News*, August 26, 2011. <http://readersupportednews.org>

Naiomi Wolf, “The Obligation to Peacefully Disrupt” *ReaderSupportedNews*, Oct.

22, 2011. <http://www.readersupportednews.org>

Mohammed Bazzi, "Fertile Crescent" *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/11/books/review/rock-the-casbah-by-robin-wright-book-review.html?pagewanted=all>

April 26: Assignment: 1. View: Bill Moyers on James Cone, "The Cross and the Lynching Tree"  
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/11232007/watch.html>