

The Civil Rights Movement and the Moral Life
IDIS/Rel 263; T/TR 10:20-11:30 in Comenius 114
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“The black movement in the United States at its best has always been a part of the heroic struggle of the American people to make our constitutional vision and visions of the Declaration of Independence become real and true. The struggle of the Negro for change has therefore been a struggle to get America to become America for everyone: women, all people of color, and in my own ministry especially, children must become equal in our sight before God.”

Rev. James Lawson

“Here’s the thing. When we talk about race relations in America or racial progress, it’s all nonsense.... White people were crazy. Now they’re not as crazy. To say that black people have made progress would be to say they deserve what happened to them before.”

Chris Rock

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 and which of those ideas do we need today?
- What people were involved with the struggle for civil rights? Why are so many forgotten?
- What is the civil rights movement about?

Course Texts and Readings/Video on Blackboard:

-John Lewis. *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1998.

- Howard Thurman. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

-Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Vocies of Freedom, An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s*.

-Other assigned texts are posted in our course Blackboard site. For those readings you are responsible or downloading, printing them and bringing them to class with you on the day assigned or having them available as digital text.

-Film, especially the documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*, is important text for the course. Assigned documentaries are available via our course Blackboard site.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Attendance and participation (5%)
- 2) Quizzes and Journals (15%)
- 3) Three Short Papers (30%)
- 4) Biographical Paper(15%)
- 5) Synthesis Paper (20 %)
- 6) Final: Course Reflections (15%)

Attendance/Assignments

Since the issues being considered in the course require informed discussion and involvement, you are expected to attend every class with a basic understanding of the assigned reading or video or with

questions to be raised about the assignment. You are also expected to be on time. If you must be absent for some reason, you must let one of us know ahead of time, unless there is some emergency. In the case of an emergency, speak to one of us about the situation as soon as you are able. Absences will be excused for legitimate reasons such as illness, religious observance and family emergency. For each unexcused absence, a 0 will be calculated for 2% points of your total grade. Missing more than three sessions will be a signal to us of a serious problem that we should discuss.

There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. You will be permitted to make up these quizzes if your absence is excused. In addition, it is your responsibility to find out about and secure any materials that may have been distributed or assignments given during missed classes.

Absence is not an excuse for missed work. If circumstances arise that keep you from completing an assignment when it is due, you should discuss the situation with one of us. It will be your responsibility to talk to class members to find out in detail what you missed.

Grades for assignments that are late without prior agreement will be lowered by 5% of the total value of the assignment on the first day and 5% more for every subsequent two days of lateness.

Academic Honesty

The Student Handbook defines plagiarism as: “A major form of academic dishonesty...the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment.” The Handbook then states, “Students may not submit homework, computer solutions, lab reports, or any other coursework prepared by, copied from, or dictated by others.” We will abide by the overall academic honesty procedures as laid out in the student handbook. Make sure that you read the policies carefully. For instance, the Handbook also demands this. “Students must keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given.” Please follow that dictum. You are encouraged to discuss readings and to seek feedback on papers from your colleagues in the class. Collaboration is great. Cheating is wrong. The work you turn in, ultimately, must be of your own creation.

Work proven to be in violation of the academic honesty policy will receive a 0 and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be informed of the violation.

Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Cell Phones

Unless being used for classroom purposes, cell phones need to be put away during class, meaning no texting during class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Unit I: When Did the Civil Rights Movement Begin? Did it ever end? (1900-1954)

Jan. 20 Course Introduction

Jan. 22 Ferguson, Cleveland, and Staten Island: Finding the Historical Context: The Civil Rights Movement before 1950

Assignment:

Everyone Reads:

1. "What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'?" by George Yancy and Judith Butler. *New York Times Opinionator*, Jan. 12, 2015. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/whats-wrong-with-all-lives-matter/?emc=eta1>
2. "When Will the North Face its Racism," Isabel Wilkerson, *NY Times*, Jan. 10, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/opinion/sunday/when-will-the-north-face-its-racism.html? r=0>

Each class member chooses at least one of the following to read, absorb and be ready to report on for Thursday:

- 1) "Ferguson in Context" by [Rev. Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell](#), posted on Huff-Post Politics, 11/20/2014
- 2) "12 things you should know about the Michael Brown shooting by German Lopez, posted on VOX, December 16, 2014
- 3) "Q & A, What happened in Ferguson?" *New York Times* [<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html>]
- 4) "Why we're so mad at de Blasio; The N.Y.P.D. Protests: An Officer's View by Steve Osborne, *New Yprk Times*, Jan. 8, 2015 [<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/08/opinion/the-nypd-protests-an-officers-view.html>]
- 5) "Protesters wrong on Ferguson: Michael Brown will never be Emmett Till by Crystal Wright, *Conservative Black Chick* [<http://conservativeblackchick.com/blog/2014/11/30/protesters-wrong-on-ferguson-michael-brown-will-never-be-emmett-till/>]
- 6) "Crimes and Commissions," [JELANI COBB](#) [<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/08/crimes-commissions>]

January 27 The early twentieth century

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

2. "Atlanta Compromise" Speech-Booker T. Washington [PB]

People-Organization Organizer Assignment: Submission due on January 26 at midnight.

January 28 at 7:00pm MLK Celebration Speaker - Michelle Alexander in Baker Hall (Zoellner Auditorium)

Important Note: Students will attend this lecture, unless they have a class that night. Your journal prompt for Jan. 29 will all address this experience

Jan. 29 W. E. B. Du Bois

Assignment: Selection from William E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, first written in 1903 Chapter 1, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 [PB]

DUE: Biographical report name (please inform us of this at the end of your journal due today)

Journal Assignment: Submission due on Jan. 28, midnight

(Note: Since all students are required to attend the Michelle Alexander lecture on Jan. 28, you will need to plan accordingly to read DuBois and complete your assignment early; please note that this journal assignment asks you to address both DuBois AND your learning at the lecture)

Unit II: The "Hidden" Becomes Visible: Emmet Till, Little Rock, The Montgomery Bus Boycott (1954-1958) ; Gandhi, Dr. King & Nonviolent Resistance

February 3 Emmett Till

Assignment: 1. View *Eyes on the Prize* DVD-EP, Episode 1: "Awakenings" [PB-links for viewing *Eyes on the Prize* are posted on Blackboard]

2. *Voices of Freedom-VOF* Chapter 1, “Emmett Till, 1955”

Journal Assignment: Submission due on Feb. 2, midnight.

February 5 Little Rock

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

2. *VOF*, Chapter 3 “The Little Rock Crisis, 1957-1958

Journal Assignment Submission due on Feb. 4, midnight.

Annotated Bibliography for bio report due on Feb. 11, Wed., midnight

February 10 Howard Thurman’s legacy

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

Journal Assignment Submission due on Feb. 9, midnight

Short Paper 1: Thurman, Du Bois, and the beginnings of the movement

See Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date: Sunday, Feb. 15 by midnight. Deliver to BlackBoard course assignment link

Feb. 12 People of the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Assignment:-1. *VOF*, Chapter 3 “The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-1956

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. 17 Dr. King, and Nonviolence/The theology of Martin Luther King

Assignment: 1. Short essays from Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence”; “An Experiment in Love” “Suffering and Faith”; “Love, Law and Civil Disobedience”; [PB]

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

Journal Assignment Submission due on Feb. 16, midnight

Malcolm X’s World 50 Years Later: Race, Religion and Revolution in the 21st Century Tuesday February 17, 2015 to Thursday, February 19, 2015 at Lehigh University [You are encouraged to attend]

Feb. 19 Gandhi and Nonviolence

1. **View: *A Force More Powerful, Part 1 and Part 2.*** (this is about 50 minutes long and can be accessed through “Kanopy”, Reeve’s Streaming Video Collection. This part illustrates Gandhi’s leadership of civil disobedience in India and also the ways his methods of nonviolent resistance were taken up by black college students in the 1960’s.)

2. **Read:** Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers* (Selection: Religion and Truth” pp. 41-62; “Ahimsa or the Way to Nonviolence”), pp 77-87. [PB]; “My Trip to the Land of Gandhi”, by Dr. Martin Luther King, *Testament of Hope* (pp. 23-30) [PB]

Please note: Secondary materials you will want to peruse more briefly now and later in our semester’s work together:

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!

d) **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)

Journal Assignment due on Feb. 18, midnight

Unit III Student Sit-Ins: Nashville, Greensboro, and the Founding of SNCC (1960)

Feb. 24 Nashville and James Lawson

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 3, "Ain't Scared of Your Jails" [PB]
2. *Walking with the Wind-WWTW*, Chapters 4-5
3. "American Gandhi" in *My Soul Looks Back in Wonder: Voices of the Civil Rights Movement* by Juan Williams. [PB]

Professor Michael Eric Dyson will be speaking February 26 in Foy Hall at 7:00 [You are encouraged to attend]

Feb. 26 Nashville Sit-Ins

- Assignment: 1. *WWTW*, Chapters 6
2. *VOF*, Chapter 4, "Student Sit-Ins in Nashville, 1960" (pp. 53-67) [PB]
3. Chapter 3, Learning Nonviolence, Encountering James Lawson from *The Civil Rights Life of Diane Nash* by Robert H. Mayer [PB]
4. View: James Lawson Interview, "Lunch Counter Sit-Ins in Nashville" [PB]
5. View: **Short Videos with or about James Lawson [PB] [Optional]**

James Lawson on Gandhian non-violence, 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8K4HLM03dw>

James Lawson on experience of non-violence in Nashville sit-ins

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C_FGc9c9as&feature=relmfu

Jim Lawson and the Nashville Sit-ins

Journal Assignment due Feb. 25, midnight

March 3 Ella Baker, Reverend Lawson, Greensboro, and the Founding of SNCC

- Assignment: 1. Chapter 7 pp. 125-133, *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* by Joanne Grant [PB]
2. *WWTW*, Chapter 7
3. Three Documents from the Raleigh Conference [PB]

Short Paper 2: Sit-ins, SNCC, and Nonviolence

Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date: Sunday, Mar. 15 by midnight. Submit to BB assignment link

Unit IV: Black Consciousness and Black Power, The Momentum Continues (SNCC & Freedom Rides, Birmingham Marches, Washington March)

March 5 Malcolm X, Another Voice

- Assignment: 1. *VOF*, Chapter 14, "Malcolm X (1925-1965)"
2. Malcolm X-Rustin Debates [PB]
3. "I See a Nightmare: 1952-63," James Cone, *Martin and Malcolm* (pp. 98-119) [PB]

Spring Break, March 7-16

March 17 Freedom Rides

- Assignment: 1. View: American Experience, *Freedom Riders* [PB]
2. *WWTW*, Chapter 8 and 9

March 19 Marching in Birmingham/"Letter from Birmingham Jail"

- Assignment: 1. *VOF*, Chapter 8, "Birmingham, 1963"
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:

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

[DUE March 20 by Noon \(COMENIUS 109\): Movement Biographical Report Paper](#)

[Short Paper 3: On Birmingham, Letter from Birmingham Jail, and Freedom Rides](#)
[Guidelines Posted in Blackboard: Due Date: Sunday, April 5, midnight. Submit to the BB Assignment Link](#)

March 24 The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom/A View from Malcolm X

- Assignment: 1. *WWTW*, Chapter 10 and 11
2. "The Ballot or the Bullet" Malcolm X [PB]

Unit V: Organizing in Mississippi, Freedom Summer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1962-1964)

March 26 Organizing in Mississippi

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 5, "Mississippi: Is this America?" [PB]
2. *WWTW*, Chapter 12
3. *VOF*, Organizing in Mississippi, 1961-63

March 27 (Friday) InFocus conference: From War to Peace: Drawing on the Power of Narrative and Dialogue to Build a More Just Society in the Lehigh Valley"

March 31 Organizing in Mississippi

Assignment: View *Freedom on My Mind* [PB]

April 2 Freedom Summer

- Assignment: 1. View Freedom Summer
2. *WWTW*, Chapter 13 and 14
3. *VOF*, Chapter 12, "Mississippi Freedom Summer"

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

April 7 Selma

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 6, "Bridge to Freedom" [PB]
2. *VOF*, Chapter 13 "Selma, 1965"
3. *WWTW*, Chapters 15 and 16

April 9 The Rise of Black Power

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 7, "Time has Come" [PB]
2. *VOF*, "The Lowndes County Freedom Organization, 1965-66"

Synthesis Paper 4: Guidelines Posted on Blackboard: Due Date Sunday, April 26 by midnight

April 14, The Rise of Black Power 2

1. *VOF*, Chapter 16, "The Meredith March, 1966"
2. "What we want" by Stokely Carmichael [PB]
3. *WWTW*, Chapter 17 [Optional]

Unit VII: Reverend James Lawson/Where do we go from here?

April 16, Dr. King's Final Years

- Assignment: 1. View: *EP* Episode 9, "The Promised Land" [PB]
2. "Beyond Vietnam: Sermon at Riverside Church," http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_beyond_vietnam_4_april_1967/
3. *VOF*, Chapter 19, "King and Vietnam, 1965-67"

April 21 Rev. Lawson's visit

Wed., April 22: Peacebuilding Workshop with Dr. Lawson: 4:00 -- 5:15 pm (Mandatory Attendance)

April 23 Dr. King's Final Years-Follow Up , Memphis Strike, Conversation about Rev. Lawson

- Assignment: 1. *VOF*, Chapter 24, "King's Last Crusade, 1967-8"
2. "At the River I Stand." Available through Kanopy on the Reeves webpage

Thursday, April 23: Rev. Lawson speech in Prosser at 7:00 (Mandatory attendance)

April 28 Follow-up conversation-Rev. Lawson/ The Black Panther Party

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

April 30 Lingering Agenda

Assignment:

1) *The New Jim Crow: How the War on Drugs Gave Birth to a Permanent Undercaste* by Michelle Alexander View the following Youtube video (12 minutes in length):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_R0niQgkAa4&NR=1&feature=endscreen

2) Chapter 1, “There is no achievement gap at birth,” and Chapter 4, “Warm demanders: The importance of teachers in the lives of children of poverty,” in “*Multiplication is for White People, Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children*” by Lisa Delpit.

Lingering Ideas/Stalwart Activists

Assignment: Everyone should do the following first three things below:

- 1) Cornell West: View the following video from his “Poverty Tour” with Tavis Smiley:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ4A4K18hOk>
- 2) Read: “A More Perfect Union” Barack Obama
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/18/obama-race-speech-read-th_n_92077.html
- 3) Read: James Cone, “Making their Mark: Legacies,” *Martin and Malcolm*, pp 288-318 [PB]

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

Assignment: Students ALSO will choose among **one** of the following below, read it carefully, and come to class prepared to speak about the connections between the issues raised and the civil rights movement.

1. Chris Hedges, “Where Were You When They Crucified My Lord?” *Truthdig*. Dec. 5, 2011. <http://www.truthdig.com>
2. Barbara Ehrenreich, “Homeless in America” *TomDispatch.com*, Dec. 2, 2011. <http://222tomdispatch.com/blog/175457>
3. Cornel West, “Dr. King Weeps From His Grave” *ReaderSupported News*, August 26, 2011. <http://readersupportednews.org>
4. Naomi Wolf, “The Obligation to Peacefully Disrupt” *ReaderSupportedNews*, Oct. 22, 2011. <http://www.readersupportednews.org>
5. 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>

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 8, 1:30PM

MOVEMENT BIOGRAPHICAL REPORT

PAPER

On the next pages is a list of names for some lesser-known activists involved in the fight for civil rights. We want you to study one of these people up-close to better understand who these activists were and what motivated them. Choose an individual carefully. Do a little research before you make your choice and pick someone whose life and experience resonates for you in a personal way. This individual will serve as your partial eyes and ears for examining the fight for civil rights. If there is someone not on the list that you would like as your choice, please talk to us about that person. Be ready to volunteer knowledge about your choice when that knowledge has a relevance to our conversation in class. **On January 29 (Thursday) turn in a slip of paper with your name and the name of your choice.**

The goal of this research and report is to come to know the individual well both as an activist for civil rights and as a person, though we acknowledge that those two elements are connected. Your written and oral report needs to do the following:

1. Motivation: *Explain what **ideas, people, and experiences** motivated the individual to become involved in the civil rights struggle. With ideas, be specific about thinkers, books, and philosophies that engaged and motivated the individual.*

2. Involvement in the Movement: *Describe this person's involvement in the struggle. In what ways were they involved? What stances did they take? Lay out where and how they disagreed with others in the movement. If you don't know for sure, feel free to speculate but make clear from the person's background why you think they would have disagreed.*

3. What they are like: *Capture a sense of the individual as a person, their personality, the way they seem to interact with others, the way they are in the world.*

4. Reaction: *Present a personal reaction or critique of the individual you describe. To what extent do you admire this person? To what extent do you agree with the person? Explain.*

The report does not need to be laid out in any particular order, just so all of the issues above are dealt with and just so the paper has organization.

The report should be around five pages, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on every page. You need at least seven sources. Wikipedia and other encyclopedias, including on-line encyclopedias, may not be one of those seven sources. Use primarily books and journal articles. Be very wary of Internet sources. (There are many sites with primary documents related to civil rights. If you find sites with documents related to your choice, get excited and use them.) At least two sources must be primary, that is some interview or writing from the individual you have chosen. If the person is alive today, a primary source might be notes from some personal contact you had with the individual.

The paper must include a reference sheet and citations using the APA or MLA style. Make sure to cite quotes and ideas you take from other sources. Quote sparingly and with purpose. Words, for the most part, need to be your own. So take notes on reading you do, but then write a report that is yours.

DUE Thursday, January 29 (In Class) Paper with your name and the name of your choice

DUE Wednesday, February 9 (By Midnight): Annotated bibliography with a list of seven sources with a few sentences indicating both what the text is about and why you think it would be helpful for writing the report.

DUE Wednesday, February 25 (By Midnight): Draft of report.

DUE Wednesday, March 25 (By Midnight): Final Paper

GRADING CRITERIA

Exemplary reports will:

- convey a rich portrait of the individual,
- include description of the individual's involvement in the civil rights struggles,
- convey a sense of what the individual was like as a person,
- convey your personal reaction or critique of the individual,
- convey what motivated the individual to become involved in the movement
- be logically organized with coherent paragraphs and sentences that flow together,
- be five pages, double-spaced, with one-inch margins,
- include a reference page with at least seven sources, two of which must be primary, plus proper citations,
- adhere to conventions of standard written English and include less than three mechanical errors,
- have been shared in part in class when appropriate.

NAMES

Fred Shuttlesworth

Bayard Rustin

Angela Davis

Harry Belafonte

Glen Smiley

Virginia Gray Adams

Huey Newton

Septima Clark

Ella Baker

Robert Moses

Amzie Moore

Diane Nash

Sandra Cason (Casey Hayden)

Amelia Boynton Robinson

Myles Horton

Ralph Abernathy

Andrew Young

Daisy Bates

Bernice Johnson Reagon

James Foreman

Bernard Lafayette

Fannie Lou Hamer

Stokely Carmichael James Bevel

Gloria Richardson

Elaine Brown

James Baldwin

Hollis Watkins

E.D. Nixon

Jo Ann Robinson