

Dartmouth College
Religion 61 (Identical to AAAS 82)
DIST: SOC; WCult: CI
Spring 2013
Tuesday & Thursday 10A

Religion and the Civil Rights Movement

Randall Balmer
E-mail: randall.balmer@dartmouth.edu

Course Description

An examination of the importance of religion in the drive for civil rights during the 1950s and 1960s. The course will look at the role of activists, clergy, sermons, and music in forging the consensus in favor of civil rights. Open to all.

This course will open with the historical context for understanding the civil rights movement: the crucible of slavery, the imposition of Jim Crow laws after Reconstruction, the persistent denial of rights and opportunities to African Americans. We'll examine the rise and the influence of such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and the failure of blacks to receive justice in white courtrooms, as illustrated in the Scottsboro case. We'll then explore the theology that lay behind the civil-rights struggle, particularly that of Howard Thurman as well as the Social Gospel ideas of Walter Rauschenbusch.

For the civil rights struggle itself — which is generally traced to Rosa Parks's refusal to surrender her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus on December 1, 1955 — we'll rely both on textual materials as well as on excerpts from the award-winning PBS series, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*, treating the documentary itself as a text. The life and theology of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference play a prominent role in this segment.

The penultimate section looks at the Freedom Summer of 1964 and its effects on the state of Mississippi. The final segment examines the relation of civil-rights leaders with other African American movements, such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Nation of Islam. We'll conclude with an assessment of the long-term effects of the civil-rights struggle.

Textbooks

Birnbaum, Jonathan, and Clarence Taylor, eds. *Civil Rights since 1787: A Reader on the Black Struggle*. New York: New York University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0-8147-8249-3.

Garrow, David. *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*. New York: William Morrow, 1999. ISBN: 0-688-16632-6.

Manis, Andrew M. *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002. ISBN: 0-817-31156-4.

Marsh, Charles. *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-691-02940-7.

Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-807-01029-4.

Textbooks are on reserve in the Dartmouth College Library and may be purchased at Wheelock Books.

The Eyes on the Prize and Murder of Emmitt Till documentaries are available for your viewing outside of class on "streaming video" and should be viewed before class, just as the assigned readings should be read before class.

Schedule of Topics & Readings (Lectures are indicated by *)
(*Primary-source readings are indicated by bold italics*)

March 26

Introduction to Course

*The Crucible of Slavery & the Rise of Independent Black Churches

INTRODUCTION & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

March 28

*Theological Defenses of Slavery

Unchained Memories (excerpts)

*Jim Crow

Penny Edgell and Eric Tranby, "Religious Influences on Understandings of Racial Inequality in the United States," *Social Problems*, 54 (May 2007), 263-288.

James H. Dorman, "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Rice (With Apologies to Professor Woodward)," *Journal of Social History*, 3 (Winter 1969-1970), 109-122.

Birnbaum & Taylor, pp. **29-34, 41-44, 47-52, 78-82, 165-171, 190-198**

April 2

*The KKK & Campaigns of Intimidation

*Southern Justice

Birth of a Nation (excerpts)

Robert Moats Miller, "A Note on the Relationship between the Protestant Churches and the Revived Ku Klux Klan," *Journal of Southern History*, 22 (August 1956), 355-368.

Hugh T. Murray Jr., "Aspects of the Scottsboro Campaign," *Science & Society*, 35 (Summer 1971), 177-192.

James A. Miller, Susan D. Pennybacker and Eve Rosenhaft, "Mother Ada Wright and the International Campaign to Free the Scottsboro Boys, 1931-1934," *American Historical Review*, 106 (April 2001), 387-430.

Birnbaum & Taylor, pp. **138-140, 177-183, 203-212**

April 4

*Legal Groundwork

*The Murder of Emmett Till

The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till (excerpts)

"How America's Newspapers Responded a Half-Century Ago to the Supreme Court's Ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 45 (Autumn 2004), 46-47.

Clenora Hudson-Weems, "Resurrecting Emmett Till: The Catalyst of the Modern Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of Black Studies*, 29 (November 1998), 179-188.

Thurman, ***chaps. 1-3***

THEOLOGY OF CIVIL RIGHTS

April 9

*The Social Gospel & Howard Thurman

*Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

Walter Earl Fluker, "They Looked for a City: A Comparison of the Idea of Community in Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 18 (Fall 1990), 33-55.

David L. Chappell, "Religious Revivalism in the Civil Rights movement," *African American Review*, 36 (Winter 2002), 581-595.

Thurman, *chaps. 4-5, epilogue*

April 11

*Vernon Johns & Martin Luther King Jr.

Ralph E. Luker, "Murder and Biblical Memory: The Legend of Vernon Johns," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 112 (2004), 372-418.

Garrow, chap. 1

Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King Jr.: The Morehouse Years," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 15 (Spring 1997), 121-125.

Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King Jr.: The Crozer Seminary Years," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 16 (Summer 1997), 123-128.

John W. Rathbun, "Martin Luther King: The Theology of Social Action," *American Quarterly*, 20 (Spring 1968), 38-53.

Stephen B. Oates, "The Intellectual Odyssey of Martin Luther King," *Massachusetts Review*, 22 (Summer 1981), 301-320.

Birnbaum & Taylor, pp. **464-466**

THE SECOND RECONSTRUCTION

April 16

*Montgomery

Eyes on the Prize, 1: "Awakenings"

August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "The Boycott Movement Against Jim Crow Streetcars in the South, 1900-1906," *Journal of American History*, 55 (March 1969), 756-775.

Donald H. Smith, "An Exegesis of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Social Philosophy," *Phylon*, 31 (1970), 89-97.

Warren E. Steinkraus, "Martin Luther King's Personalism and Non-Violence," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 34 (March 1973), 97-111.

Manis, pp. 1-67

April 18

*The Foundations of Nonviolence & the SCLC

*Lunch Counters & Freedom Rides

Eyes on the Prize, 2: "Fighting Back"

Adam Fairclough, "The Preachers and the People: The Origins and Early Years of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1955-1959," *Journal of Southern History*, 52 (August 1986), 403-440.

August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "The First Freedom Ride," *Phylon*, 30 (1969), 213-222.

Diane McWhorter, "The Enduring Courage of the Freedom Riders," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 61 (Autumn 2008), 66-73.

Garrow, chaps. 2-3

Manis, pp. 68-112

April 23

*St. Augustine

*Fred Shuttlesworth

Charles R. Gallagher, "The Catholic Church, Martin Luther King Jr., and the March in St. Augustine," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 83 (Fall 2004), 149-172.

Manis, pp. 113-212

Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights "Declaration of Principles," June 4, 1956

April 25

Mid-term examination

April 30

*Advances & Reversals

*Music in the Civil Rights Movement

Eyes on the Prize, 3: "Ain't Scared of Your Jails"

Michael Chalfen, "The Way Out May Lead In': The Albany Movement Beyond Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 79 (Fall 1995), 560-598.

Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Let the Church Sing 'Freedom,'" *Black Music Research Journal*, 7 (1987), 105-118.

Garrow, chap. 4

May 2

*Birmingham & Project C

Birnbaum & Taylor, pp. **477-489, 504-507**

"Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Wesley T. Mott, "The Rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr.: *Letter from Birmingham Jail*," *Phylon*, 36 (1975), 411-421.

James A. Colaiaco, "A Dream Unfulfilled: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Phylon*, 45 (Spring 1984), 1-18.

Dwayne A. Mack, "Crusade for Equality: Spokane's Civil Rights Movement during the Early 1960s," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 91 (Winter 2003/2004), 16-25.

May 7

*The March on Washington

Eyes on the Prize, 4: "No Easy Walk"

Garrow, chap. 5

"I Have a Dream," August 28, 1963

Alexandra Alvarez, "Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream': The Speech Event as Metaphor," *Journal of Black Studies*, 18 (March 1988), 337-357.

Elizabeth Vander Lei and Keith D. Miller, "Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' in Context: Ceremonial Protest and African American Jeremiad," *College English*, 62 (September 1999), 83-99.

May 9

*"Bombingham"

*Honors & Political Gains

*Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Manis, pp. 253-342

Francis Shor, "Utopian Aspirations in the Black Freedom Movement: SNCC and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1960-1965," *Utopian Studies*, 15 (Winter 2004), 173-189.

Emily Stoper, "The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: Rise and Fall of a Redemptive Organization," *Journal of Black Studies*, 8 (September 1977), 13-34.

Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, 1964

May 14

*Freedom Summer

Eyes on the Prize, 5: "Mississippi: Is this America?"

Daniel Perlstein, "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *History of Education Quarterly*, 30 (Autumn 1990), 297-324.

John R. Rachal, "'The Long, Hot Summer': The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer, 1964," *Journal of Negro History*, 84 (Autumn 1999), 315-339.

Marsh, chaps. 1-3

May 16

*Malcolm X & the Nation of Islam

Marsh, chaps. 4-5

Garrow, chap. 8

Frederick D. Harper, "The Influence of Malcolm X on Black Militancy," *Journal of Black Studies*, 1 (June 1971), 387-402.

James H. Cone, "Martin and Malcolm on Nonviolence and Violence," *Phylon*, 49 (2001), 173-183.

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," April 3, 1964

May 21

*Selma to Montgomery

Eyes on the Prize, 6: "Bridge to Freedom"

Manis, pp. 343-390

Garrow, chap. 7

David J. Garrow, "The Voting Rights Act in Historical Perspective," *American Historical Quarterly*, 74 (Fall 1990), 377-398.

Lyndon B. Johnson's Message to Congress, March 15, 1965

May 23

*The Road to Memphis

*Black Manifesto

Garrow, chap. 11

Jerry K. Frye, "The 'Black Manifesto' and the Tactic of Objectification," *Journal of Black Studies*, 5 (September 1974), 65-76.

Adam Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the War in Vietnam," *Phylon*, 45 (1984), 19-39.

"Black Manifesto"

AFTERWORD

May 28

*Final Justice

*Reverberations of Civil Rights

S. Willoughby Anderson, "The Past on Trial: Birmingham, the Bombing, and Restorative Justice," *California Law Review*, 96 (April 2008), 471-504.

Harry A. Reed, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: History and Memory, Reflections on Dreams and Silences," *Journal of Negro History*, 84 (Spring 1999), 150-166.

Vincent Gordon Harding, "Beyond Amnesia: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Future of America," *Journal*

of American History, 74 (September 1987), 468-476.
Marsh, conclusion

TBA

Final Examination

Course Requirements & Grading

Mid-term examination on **April 25**: 60 points.

Final (non-cumulative) examination **TBA**: 60 points.

Option 1 (two response papers):

First paper, due **May 2**, 4-6 double-spaced pages; topic will be revealed on Blackboard at 6:00 **April 25**: 40 points.

Second paper assignment will be revealed on Blackboard at 6:00 **May 14**: 40 points. Due **May 23**.

Option 2 (research paper):

Research paper option, 8-12 pages, due **May 28**, *instead of the two papers*: 70 points. Prospectus and bibliography (10 points) is due **May 7**