Malcolm & Martin
The Political Thought of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement 1954–1968

POSC 100                                    Prof: Barbara Allen
Tues Thurs
Weitz 235                                Mon – Thurs by appointment
10:10- 11:55                                        Sign up ON MOODLE

See MOODLE For All assignments and due dates

The Course

This seminar will examine the speeches, sermons, and writings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. We will study both activists’ ideas as part of the larger discourse of civil rights, liberation, non-violence, and social justice. Our goal will be to draw out the complexities of these ideas to see how they challenge democratic political practice in the United States and, more generally, the tradition of liberal political theory on which much of that practice is based.

Readings are on e-reserves with password POSC or hyperlinked in Moodle

Course Requirements

The lives and works of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X are said to reflect two traditions of African American thought: an “integrationist” approach to civil rights with the goal of inclusion in the public and political life of a liberal democracy (ML King) and a “separatist” or “nationalist” ideal of liberation from what would be considered an inevitably oppressive, hegemonic Euro-American culture and political regime (Malcolm X). The actions inspired by ML King and Malcolm X are furthermore placed in contrast according to their core beliefs (philosophy, religion, and ontology informing their course of action) and their strategies for confronting injustice, especially their positions on non-violence and self-defense. Yet, if we look beyond these obvious dimensions of contrast, we find several significant perceptions — sources of hope and despair — shared by the two activists. In fact, the differences in their experiences and actions might be seen as part of a larger matrix of response — ideas and initiatives raising questions about citizenship and self-government in the context of American democracy. We will take up the complex ideas and questions raised by King and X in class discussion and individual writing assignments. Both activists emphasized thinking and doing in community, and our examination of their work will likewise stress the importance of preparation (by reading, listening, and speaking) and participation (by writing and taking part in the larger discourse of campus life). In addition to coming to class prepared to talk about the reading assignments and events in the world, I ask you to write two (3-5 page) essays, one focusing on King’s ideas and the second focusing on the views of Malcolm X. In each case the assignment is simply to write about some specific aspect of each “philosophy” of interest two you. The third assignment will ask you to take these ideas
“beyond the books” to look at the legacy and contemporary meaning of the Civil Rights activism in the U.S., particularly as these ideas are represented in popular culture (e.g. music and in the films that we have screened).

**Grades will be computed as follows:**

- Seminar Participation: 10%
- Essays 30% each: 90%
- Total: 100%

**Topics for Discussion and Reading Assignments:**

**Part 1 The Cultures of Jim Crow**

*Tues Sept 12*  
Introductory Overview of American Democracy and Legal Impediments to Equality  

Guest Convener Roy Cady-Kimball

*Read:*  

*Podcast: Legal Development in 19th Century* Presentation covers the following documents, which are listed for your reference

- Declaration of Independence (1776)
- U.S. Constitution Art. I, Sect. 2 and Sect. 9; Article IV, Sect 2, Sect. 3, and Sect 4 (1789)
- Fugitive Slave Act (1793), *Dred Scott v Sanford* (1856)
- Reconstruction Amendments, Civil Rights Act (1866, 1870, 1871 & 1875), Black Codes (Examples from Texas), *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873) [also see this citation], *Civil Rights Cases* (1883), *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896), *Brown I* and *Brown II* (1954)

**Wed Sept 13 7:15 pm**  
Film Screening Library 344

*Freedom on My Mind* 1994, Connie Field, Marilyn Mumford Documentary 110 min

*Thurs Sept 14*  
NO IN CLASS MEETING

Watch podcast on Moodle
You may consult the following documents for today and next week discussions

**Slavery, Segregation, the Black Church and the Social Gospel Movement**

**Part 2 King’s Political Thought**

**Tues Sept 19**  
Civil Disobedience, Constitutionalism, and Christianity

1. Discuss your filmed introductions of yourselves and your paragraph on Taylor Branch statement from Preface

And 2. Discuss the idea of civil disobedience in two contexts, US Constitution and "civil religion" in our main case, "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail," integrating discussion of readings from 9/14

Read MLK “Letter from the Birmingham Jail" Eight Alabama Clergymen, "Go Slow, Dr. King!"


*Taylor Branch. Parting the Waters. 18–19.*


**Thurs Sept 21**  
Civil Disobedience and Federalism


*Taylor Branch. Parting the Waters. 4.*

**Tues Sept 29**  
“Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience,” “The Social Organization of Nonviolence”

Taylor Branch. *Parting the Waters*. Ch 5


**Thurs Sept 28**

King and Media Representations

Read MLK and James Kilpatrick Guests on "The Nation's Future" 26 Nov 1960

King on Equality, Justice, and Political Liberty


*Taylor Branch. Parting the Waters. Ch. 10*

Listen:

Martin Luther King Speaks in New York City on the 100th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation 12 September 1962

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0Jzqiqwo5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0Jzqiqwo5A)

**Mon Oct 5** Film Screening

*Selma*, 2014, Ava DuVernay, 128 min

**Tues Oct 6**

King on History, “Race,” the Individual, and Social Progress — and Obstacles

Read MLK “Bold Design for a New South,” “Behind the Selma March,” “The Current Crisis in Race Relations,” “Who Speaks for the South,” “Next
Stop: The North,” Where do We Go From Here?” “Transcript of ‘Meet the Press’”
Taylor Branch. *Parting the Waters*. Ch. 12

WATCH: Martin Luther King at Stanford University, April 14, 1967
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3H978K1R20

Thurs Oct 5                Love as Power


Read Draft of "Love in Action" Here; See King's outline here

Listen to "Loving Your Enemies"

“Shattered Dreams”
Read one version of "Loving Your Enemies" Here
Taylor Branch. *Parting the Waters*. Ch. 14

Tues Oct 10         The Beloved Community as Political Community—Beyond Desegregation, beyond America

Read “I Have a Dream,” “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” “A Time To Break Silence,” "I've been to the Mountaintop"

Taylor Branch *Parting the Waters*. Ch. 22–23

**Part 3 Malcolm X’s Political Thought**

Thurs Oct 12                Jim Crow in the North and Black Nationalism


WATCH:

Chicago NBC Affiliate WMAQ,“City Desk,” 17 March

1963 Malcolm X interviewed by Jim Hurlbut, Floyd Kalber, Len O’Connor, and Charles McCuen
http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/aahistory/MalcolmX.pdf

****************** Essay One Due in Class ******************

MONDAY Oct 19   MIDTERM BREAK

MONDAY Oct 16   MIDTERM BREAK

TUESDAY Oct 17   FIELD TRIP to Penumbra Theater to see "Wedding Band" by Alice Childress, directed by Lou Bellamy. Board bus in front of Willis 5:30 for a 5:45pm departure; play begins at 7:30pm. Run time TBA with a post production conversation with director and cast.

Tues Oct 17    The Nation of Islam and American Democracy


Ossie Davis discusses his eulogy

Watch:
Chicago NBC Affiliate WMAQ, Malcolm X interviewed by Jim Hurlbut, Floyd Kalber, Len O’Connor, and Charles McCuen on the program
“City Desk,” March 17, 1963

WED Oct 20 Film Screening
Malcolm X His Own Story as it Really Happened 1972, Arnold Perl, 91 min.

Thurs Oct 19 Malcolm X on Equality, Justice, and Political Liberty
See text on line (below) “When the Chickens Come Home to Roost”
LISTEN
A Message to the Grassroots 10 November 1963
Text:
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0147.html
Audio:
https://ia801400.us.archive.org/21/items/100-Best--Speeches/MX_19631010.mp3

A Declaration of Independence 12 March 1964
Text:
http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/a-declaration-of-independence/
Audio:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdWvQrTOMZU

After the Bombing 14 February 1965
Text:
http://www.malcolm-x.org/speeches/spc_021465.htm
Audio:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRZV9zbOces

WATCH
God’s Judgment of White America 12/04/1963 (The Chickens Come Home to Roost, Comment on the assassination of John F. Kennedy)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzuOOshpddM

Optional Performance of When the Chickens Come Home to Roost Pts 1 and 2 1982. Written by Lawrence Holder, starring Denzel Washington. at Carleton
http://search.alexanderstreet.com.ezproxy.carleton.edu/view/work/2072565
https://carleton.mnpals.net/vufind/Record/.b38824206


LISTEN:

The Ballot or the Bullet
http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html
12 April 1964

Another version of Ballot or the Bullet 29 March 1964 (Easter) Carleton OnLine Videos, First 8 min of “The Turbulent 60s”


WATCH: Democracy is Hypocrisy 2 February 1965 Carleton OnLine Video
https://carleton.mnpals.net/vufind/Record/.b39696340/Holdings#tabnav

Founding Rally of OAAU 28 June 1964

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBS416EZsKM

Thurs Oct 24  Self Defense
Read from Malcolm X Speaks: “At the Audubon (Dec 13 & 20);” from By Any Means Necessary: “Interview by A.B. Spellman,” “Young Socialist Interview;” “Short Statements,” From Last Speeches: “Whatever is Necessary to Protect Ourselves”

WATCH IN CLASS Excerpts from Malcolm X: Make It Plain, David McCullough, 150 min Mike Wallace and Louis Lomax. 1959. The Hate that Hate Produced. CBS. News 94 min. https://archive.org/details/PBSTheHateThatHateProduced

Tues Oct 26  Beyond America — Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism

Watch: After Travels Abroad, Malcolm X on Front Page Challenge, January 5, 1965, CBC Interview
https://vimeo.com/67400751
WED Nov 1 Film Screening
Malcolm X, 1992, Spike Lee, 202 min

Part 4 Powerful Perceptions, Deficiencies, and Legacies
Thurs Nov 2 Media Representations and Movement Responses

**************Second Essay Due in Class**********
Tues Nov 7 Movement Organization — Hierarchy and Grass Roots —The Black Church and early Black Political Associations, Participatory Democracy and “Organization” as Response to Government (In)action
Watch “Eyes on the Prize V3, Mississippi: Is this America?”
Gender & Class in Nationalist and Civil Rights Movements
Review Malcolm X Enunciates the Muslim Program and speeches at the three rallies of the OAAU; MLK, Why We Can’t Wait and Where Do We Go from Here?


Thurs Nov 9 Significance of Martin & Malcolm Today

Tues Nov 14 No Class MEETING
**************Third Essay Due in Class**********