

# The Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

## African American Studies 124, Summer Session 2012

Prof. C. Henry

Office Hours: Wed. 11-12:30  
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### About the Course

#### Course Description

The life of Martin Luther King, Jr., provides a rare opportunity to understand the crucial issues of an era that shaped a good deal of contemporary America. As that era's greatest leader, King's life helps us both focus history and humanize it. As a profound thinker, as well as an activist, King epitomizes the interdependence of academic excellence and social responsibility. By examining the forces that shaped King's life and his impact on society, we should gain some sense of history and historical possibility. By critically reviewing his political philosophy we should gain some appreciation of its depth and relevance for today. Recently, for example, protesters in Egypt were singing "We Shall Overcome."

Each student will be expected to fully participate in the course including daily reading, watching the multimedia lecture presentations, engaging in interaction with the graduate student instructors and professor, posting short essays to a discussion board, interacting with peers in study sections, writing a critical book review of the Tyson book, taking four quizzes, and completing the mid-term and final examinations. Each quiz will count ten points. The mid-term and final examinations will count 20 points each and the critical book review will count 20 points. Extensions and incompletes will only be granted in rare circumstances. Prof. Henry will hold virtual office hours on Wednesdays from 11 to 12:30 pm. He will also be available on campus at those hours during select Wednesdays and will post these dates in the announcements on b space.

### Required Reading

#### Hard Copy

Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.

Carson, Clayborne (ed.), *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 1998.

Tyson, Timothy B. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

## Online Material in PDF format

Chapter 8: "Fighting Fire with Water" (PDF)

Nagler, Michael. *The Search for a Nonviolent Future: A Promise of Peace for Ourselves Our Families, and Our World*. New World Library, 2004.

Holy Bible, "The Sermon on the Mount"

Chapter 1: "Solo"-- The Mystery of Stanley Levison (PDF)

Garrow, David. *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York, N.Y. Penguin Books, 1983, 1981.

Chap. 6: Enforcement and Effects: The Voting Rights Act and Black Political Participation in the South, 1965-1976 (PDF)

Garrow, David. *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978.

Chapter 5: Election Reform: Revisiting the Right to Vote (PDF)

Ronald Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough: Black Voters, Black Candidates, and American Presidential Politics*. Lanham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005.

Chapter 1: The Religion of the Slave (PDF)

Wilmore, Gayraud. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972.

Chapter 1: Where Are We? (PDF)

King, Jr., Martin Luther. *Where Do We Go From Here?* New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Chapter 1: "I Am a Man" (PDF)

Posner, Gerald. *Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Random House, 1998.

Information about ordering textbooks can be found in the Course Information folder near the top of the Modules tab page.

## Learning Activities

Each student will be expected to fully participate in the course including daily reading, watching the multimedia lecture presentations, engaging in interaction with the graduate student instructors and professor, posting short essays to a discussion board, interacting with peers in study sections, writing a critical book review of the Tyson book, taking four quizzes, and completing the mid-term and final examinations. Each quiz will count ten points. The mid-term and final examinations will count 20 points each and the critical book review will count 20 points. Extensions and incompletes will only be granted in rare circumstances. Prof. Henry will hold virtual office hours on select Wednesdays from 11 to 12:30 pm. He will also be available on campus at those hours most Wednesdays and will post these dates in the announcements on b space.

## Readings

Read the assigned chapters for the Module. View the assigned multimedia presentations. The module learning objectives and multimedia lectures will provide an overview to assist students in focusing their study for quizzes, assignments, and research study.

Readings and Multimedia are listed under each respective **Module #** button.

Specific reading assignments are listed on the Course Schedule and in the specific Modules.

## **Multimedia**

A list of PowerPoint lectures can be located on the Course Schedule and in the specific modules. Links to the PowerPoint lectures can be found within each Module. Note that for each narrated PowerPoint lecture, there is also a "PDF handout." This supplement is available for printing and note taking.

## **Discussions**

The purpose of the online discussion board is to create a group knowledge base. Please share your experiences, thoughts, outside references, and any insights you have gained from our assigned readings. Comments should provide insight and encourage meaningful discussion. Comments such as "I agree" are not appropriate unless accompanied by statements that qualify the comment through personal experience or references. Post a response that uses proper sentence structure, spelling and grammar; points will be deducted for misspelling and improper grammar. Acknowledge and show respect for the diversity of opinions presented by your classmates.

Post your response to each discussion question as a reply to the topic message. This way the Message Board will be properly threaded and easy to read. If you mispost a message, simply copy the content of the message, then delete the message and repost it.

Discussions are expected to be posted by the due date each week. If they are late, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade.

## **Drop Box**

Submit your written assignments by attaching the document to its specified drop box. If attaching a Word-processed file, save it in rich text format (.rtf) or as a text file (.txt) before attaching. Keep copies of all your work.

## **Book Review**

The Book Review will act as a measure of how well you can articulate your understanding of the material presented. It should be approximately 1500 to 2000 words in length. Adhere to the following guidelines to receive full credit for the review:

1. Follow directions.
2. Share thoughts, experiences, and insight on the chosen topic.
3. You may need to use other resources besides the required texts to present your views.
4. If applicable, display decision-making and problem-solving skills.
5. Write in complete sentences, using proper punctuation, grammar, and spelling rules.
6. Submit using the Drop Box in Angel by the due date.
7. Submit documents in Microsoft Word.
8. Cite all references using the APA format.

Additional Guidelines can be found in Module Eight.

## Submitting Assignments

It is important to start the course soon and begin submitting work regularly. Your assignments will be submitted through the Drop Box or Discussion Boards.

## Virtual Office Hours - Chats

The Course Instructor/Facilitator will set virtual office hours when students can communicate real time (synchronously). While these chats are optional they can be valuable for case study discussion, answering questions, or reviewing for quizzes. Students can log into their Course Faculty/Facilitator's chat room by clicking on **Chat >Join** (next to Course Faculty/Facilitator's name). Faculty/Facilitator chats are optional; no points are awarded for participation. Days and times for Instructor/Facilitator Virtual Office Hours are posted on the course site under **Faculty & Staff** as well as on the **Chat** page.

## Course Evaluation

UC Berkeley Extension is committed to improving our online courses and instruction. Please take a few minutes to participate in our End of Course Evaluation to share your opinions about this course. We are interested in your online learning experience, and your candid feedback will help us plan for the future and make improvements. Please take the survey before your course End Date.

The evaluation does not request any personal information, and your responses will remain strictly confidential.

To access the evaluation, please follow the link near the bottom of the Modules tab page.

## Assessments

### Mid-term Examination

The mid-term examination will consist of multiple essay questions. Once you begin the exam, you will have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete it. Students will be able to review their grade upon completion of the exam.

### Final Examination

After you have completed all the other requirements, you will take a three-hour, proctored, closed-book final exam, on **Friday, August 12th, 1 pm to 4pm**, in **Valley Life Sciences, Room 2060**. There will be no make-up exam. You must pass the final exam to receive credit for the course. **All examinations are closed book. Any violation of this closed book policy will result in failure of course and possible academic suspension.** Students must take the final examination in person or arrange to have the examination proctored on August 12 if you cannot come to campus. Refer to Course Schedule for dates.

### Quizzes

There will be 4 multiple-choice quizzes. Each quiz will consist of 10 to 20 questions. Once you begin a quiz, you will have 30 minutes to complete.

Students will be able to review their grade upon completion of the quiz.

**All quizzes are closed book. Any violation of this closed book policy will result in failure of course and possible academic suspension.**

Refer to Course Schedule for dates.

\*\*\* If you have problems accessing or submitting the quiz please contact the UC Berkeley help desk by phone at [\(510\) 642-3899](tel:5106423899) or email ([grobton@berkeley.edu](mailto:grobton@berkeley.edu)). Also, immediately notify the Course Instructor/Facilitator by email.

## Evaluation

### Grading Policy

Method for Calculation of Course Grade

Assignment	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6	Module 7	Module 8	Total Points
Quizzes	10	10			10	10			40
Exams				20				20	40
Book Review								20	20
Discussions	<b>Discussions are expected to be posted by the due date each week. If they are late, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade.</b>								
Total Points	10	10		20	10	10		40	100

### Grading Scale

Final grades are assigned according to the following percentages:

94-100 points = A  
90-93.9 points = A-  
87-89.9 points = B+  
84-86.9 points = B  
80-83.9 points = B-  
77-79.9 points = C+  
70-76.9 points = C

**Students earning grades below a “C” will have to repeat the course.**

## Course Policies

### Late Work

Late work will be accepted only after the student has received permission from the instructor to submit it past the due date. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis and only under exceptional circumstances.

**Academic Integrity**

The UC Berkeley Rules, including the Student Code of Conduct, and documented policies of the department, college, and university related to academic integrity will be enforced. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism or cheating, will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct. All quizzes are closed book. Any violation of this closed book policy will result in failure of course and possible academic suspension.

**Special Needs**

If you have any special needs related to your participation in this course, including identified visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability that may influence your performance in this course, you should notify the Course Faculty to arrange for reasonable provisions to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. At the discretion of the Course Instructor some accommodations may require prior approval by Disability Services.

**Grade Dispute**

Any question or dispute over the earned points for a quiz, assignment, discussion, or extra credit should be addressed by first appealing in writing to the Course Faculty. An appeal of a negative decision may then be made to the Program Chair, who will follow the grade dispute policy of the University.

## **Course Outline**

You'll find complete instructions for your assignments within the course modules.

### **Week 1: Culture and the Black Experience in Historical Perspective.**

#### **A. Theme: African spirituality and oral traditions**

**Questions:**

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the oral tradition?
2. What African traditions survive in the New World?

**Reading:** Wilmore, chap. 1

#### **B. Theme: "Black" Christianity v. "White" Christianity**

**Questions:**

1. How was Christianity used by the master to pacify slaves?
2. How was Christianity used by the slave to promote rebellion?

**Reading:** Wilmore, chap. 1; Branch, chap. 1

#### **C. Theme: A family of preachers**

**Questions:**

1. What was sharecropping and how could you avoid it?
2. How did African Americans develop a middle-class?

**Reading:** Branch, chap. 2

## **D. Theme: Youthful rebellion**

### **Questions:**

1. Who were King's role models?
2. Why does King rebel against his father's profession?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 1 & 2

### **Quiz**

## **Week II. From Intellectual to Activist**

### **A. Theme: The Scholar Preacher**

#### **Questions:**

1. Is emotion escapism or a route to God?
2. Are humans essentially good or essentially evil?
3. Is it possible to love a group?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 3 & 4 Branch, chaps. 3 & 4

### **B. Theme: Gandhi and King Interview with Prof. Kusum Singh**

#### **Questions**

1. What are the differences between Gandhi and King?

### **C. Theme: The Hero in History**

#### **Questions:**

1. Why did Coretta give up her career and move South?
2. Why King and not Vernon Johns?

**Reading:** Branch, chaps. 5-9

### **D. Theme: The Montgomery Story**

#### **Questions:**

1. What impact did the Brown decision have?
2. How was the law used to frustrate protest?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 6-9

### **Quiz**

## **Week III. Building a Movement**

### **A. Theme: Institutionalizing Protest**

**Questions:**

1. Why establish another civil rights organization?
2. What is Eisenhower's response to civil rights?

**Reading:** Branch, chaps. 10-13

**B. Theme: Charismatic v. Collective leadership Interview with Prof. Hardy Frye****Questions:**

1. What is charisma and who has it?
2. How does SNCC challenge King's leadership?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 10-15

**C. Theme: Birmingham: Civil Rights Comes of Age****Questions:**

1. What role did King play in Kennedy's election?
2. How can you justify breaking the law?
3. Why did the Albany movement fail?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 16-19

**D. Theme: The March on Washington****Questions:**

1. Why did John Lewis have to change his speech?
2. Why has King's address become iconic?

**Reading:** Branch, chap. 22; Carson, chap. 20

**Week IV. Legislating Change**

**Mid-term Examination – July 13th**

**A. Theme: A New Political Will****Questions:**

1. Why is the 1964 Civil Rights bill more effective than earlier bills?
2. How did Kennedy's assassination effect the movement?

**Reading:** Carson, chaps. 21 & 22

**B. Theme: Reward and Punishment****Questions:**

1. How did the Nobel Prize affect King?
2. Why did the FBI want to silence King?



**Reading:** Carson, chap. 24; Garrow, chap. 1

### **C. Theme: The Mississippi Challenge**

**Film:** "Freedom Summer"

**Questions:**

1. How did the involvement of Whites change SNCC?
2. How did the MFDP influence today's Democratic Party?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 23

## **Week V. Selma and Voting Rights**

### **A. Theme: Democracy**

**Questions:**

1. Why weren't previous voting laws effective?
2. Did Malcolm go to Selma to challenge King?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 25

### **B. Theme: Selma**

**Questions:**

1. How was Selma different from Birmingham?
2. How do media influence protest?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 26

### **C. Theme: Implementation and Evasion**

**Questions:**

1. Why was the 1965 Voting Rights Act effective?
2. How has Black voting power been diluted?

**Reading:** Garrow, chap. 6, Walters, chap. 5

**Film:** "Fundi: The Ella Baker Story"

**Quiz**

## **Week VI. The Northern Movement**

### **A. Theme: Watts**

**Questions:**

1. Why did violence erupt in the North?
2. Why didn't the rioters respond to King?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 27

## **B. Theme: The Chicago Campaign**

**Questions:**

1. Why did King pick Chicago?
2. How did the Daley machine defeat King?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 28

## **C. Theme: Black Power**

**Questions:**

1. Why did SCLC, CORE and SNCC join the Meredith March?
2. Why did King oppose Black power?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 29

## **D. Theme: The Rise of Identity Politics**

**Questions:**

1. How does the rise of Black power radicalize King?
2. What influence does Black power have on other groups?

**Reading:** King, chap. 1

## **Quiz**

## **Week VII. From Vietnam to Iraq**

### **A. Theme: Moving from domestic to international affairs**

**Questions:**

1. What are King's objections to the War in Vietnam?
2. Why isn't King supported by other civil rights leaders?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 30

### **B. Theme: Lessons for today Interview with Prof. Michael Nagler**

**Questions:**

1. What are the similarities and differences between Vietnam & Iraq?
2. Is a non-violent foreign policy feasible?

**Reading:** Nagler, "Fighting Fire with Water"

### **C. Theme: The Poor People's Campaign**

**Questions:**

1. Is a multi-racial coalition possible?
2. How did King's tactics change from Montgomery to D.C.?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 31

**D. Theme: Memphis****Questions:**

1. Why did violence break out in Memphis Are economic rights as important as civil rights?

**Reading:** Carson, chap. 32

**Week VIII. The Legacy****A. Theme: Assassination****Questions:**

1. Did Ray act alone?
2. Why did the King family support Ray?

**Reading:** Posner, chap. 1

**B. Theme: Negroes With Guns Film: "Negroes with Guns"****Questions:**

1. What is the legacy of picking up the gun?
2. What unites King with Malcolm and Williams?

**Reading:** Tyson, all Book Review due—August 9th

**C. Theme: Black Leadership Today****Questions:**

1. What happened to SCLC?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Jackson & King & Obama?

**D. Final Examination – August 12th**

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