Malcolm & Martin

Tues Thurs 1:15- 3:00
Sayles-Hill 253

The Course

This first year seminar will examine the speeches, sermons, and writings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. We will study both activist's 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

The following books have been ordered for the course:


Malcolm X. *By Any Means Necessary*. George Breitman ed. 2nd ed. New York: Pathfinders. 0 873 48754 0.


On Reserve:

A Leader of the Kansas Exodus, "We Wanted to Go To A Territory by Ourselves"

Barbara Allen, "Martin Luther King's Civil Disobedience and the American Covenant Tradition."

Richard Allen, "The Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1787-1816"


Frederick Douglass, "Our Elevation as a Race, Is Almost Wholly Dependent Upon Our Own Exertions"

W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Negro People as a Race Have a contribution to Make to Civilization Which No Other Race Can Make."

Marcus Garvey, "Ethiopia Shall Once More See the Day of Glory"
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 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 three (3-5 page) essays. The first two will be focused on each activist's ideas - some specific aspect of each "philosophy" of interest two you. The third essay will ask you to take these ideas "beyond the books" to see how they may be applied to some contemporary concern.

Grades will be computed as follows:

- Seminar Participation: 25%
- Essays 25% each: 75%
- Total: 100%

Topics for Discussion and Reading Assignments:

Part 1 The Cultures of Jim Crow

Tues Sept 11 Introductory Overview of American Democracy and Legal Impediments to Equality

- Declaration of Independence (1776) - 2 views, U.S. Constitution Art. I, Sect. 2; Art. II, Sect. 9; Art. IV, Sect. 2 (1789), Fugitive Slave Act (1793), Dred Scott (1856), Reconstruction Amendments, Civil Rights Act (1866 & 1875), Black Codes, Slaughterhouse Cases (1872), Civil Rights Cases (1883), Plessy (1896), Brown (1954)

Thurs Sept 13 Slavery, Segregation, the Black Church and the Social Gospel Movement

- Read Branch Ch1-4; R. Allen, "Founding of the AME," Payne "Contributions of the Negro Church"

Part 2 King's Political Thought
Tues Sept 18 Civil Disobedience, Constitutionalism, and Christianity

Read MLK "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"

B. Allen "MLK's Civil Disobedience and Covenant"

Thurs Sept 20 Montgomery and Nonviolent Direct Action


Branch Ch 5-9

Tues Sept 25 King on Equality, Justice, and Political Liberty


Thurs Sept 27 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'"

Branch Ch 10-15

Tues Oct 2 Love as Power and the Beloved Community as Political Community - beyond desegregation, beyond America

Read MLK "Suffering and Faith," "A Gift of Love,"


Thurs Oct 4 No class meeting - Time to Work on Your Essays

Part 3 Malcolm X's Political Thought

Tues Oct 9 Jim Crow in the North and Black Nationalism

Read Autobiography: Intro, Chi 1-9, On Reserve: Douglass "Our Elevation as a Race," A Leader of the Kansas Exodus, "We Wanted to Go," Garvey, "Ethiopia Shall Once More," Dubois, "The Negro People"

********************** Essay One Due in Class **********************
Tues Oct 16 Malcolm X on Equality, Justice, and Political Liberty


Branch Ch 21-23


Tues Oct 23 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"

Thurs Oct 25 Beyond America - Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism


**Part 4 Deficiencies and Legacies**

Tues Oct 30 Media Representations and Movement Responses

No Additional Reading Assignment, View Eyes on the Prize: Ain't Scared Of Your Jails, Fighting Back (1957-62), No Easy Walk (1962-65); The Hate that Hate Produced; The American Experience: Malcolm X; Bring contemporary media examples to class for discussion (any medium, including music)

****************Second Essay Due in Class********

Thurs Nov 1 Movement Organization - Hierarchy and Grass Roots - "Indigenous" Legacies (the Black Church and early Black Political Associations), Participatory Democracy and other Ideologies, "Organization" as Response to Government (In)action

Read Mamie Locke "Is this America?," Grace J. McFadden "Septima Clark," (reserve Women in the CRM); Review Malcolm on Nation of Islam and OAAU MLK, Why We Can't Wait; Review, Where Do We Go from Here?

Tues Nov 6 Dissent in the Movement, Organizational Tensions


Thurs Nov 8 Gender & Class in nationalist and civil rights movements
James H. Cone "Nothing but Men" from *Martin and Malcolm In America* (reserve) Joyce Hope Scott "From Foreground to Margin" and Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan, "State Fatherhood" both in *Nationalisms & Sexualities* (reserve)

Tues Nov 13 Significance of Martin & Malcolm Today

**************************Third Essay Due in Class**************************