

School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
901 12th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98122
Summer Quarter, 2011
July 18-22, 2011

Course Information

STMM 593 Martin Luther King, Jr:
Beloved Community
Room: Hunthausen, Room 100
Email: fwb@seattleu.edu
Meeting Days: Monday-Friday

Instructor

Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.
Office: Hunthausen 200
Phone: 206 296-5330
Office Hours: 5:00 p.m.
Time: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Required Texts:

Baldwin, Lewis V. *To Make the Wounded Whole: The Cultural Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.
Erskine, Noel Leo. *King Among the Theologians.* Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994.
Washington, James M., Editor. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986.

Recommended Texts:

Ansbro, John. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Making of a Mind.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984.
Baldwin, Lewis V. *There is a Balm in Gilead: The Cultural Roots of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1991.
Baldwin, Lewis V. *Toward the Beloved Community: Martin Luther King, Jr. and South Africa.* Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1995.
Bell, Derrick. *Ethical Ambition: Living a Life of Meaning and Worth.* New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2002.
Cone, James. *Martin, Malcolm & America: Dream or Nightmare?* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.
Dyson, Michael Eric. *I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: NY: Touchstone, 2000.
Jackson, Thomas F. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
King, Martin Luther and Carson, Claybourne. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998.
Manheimer, Ann S. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Dreaming of Equality (Trailblazers Biography).* Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 2005.
Moses, Greg. *Revolution of Conscience: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Philosophy of Non-Violence.* New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
Phillips, Donald T. *Martin Luther King, Jr. on Leadership: Inspiration and Wisdom for Challenging Times.* New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998.

Tutu, Desmond. *Dream: The Words and Inspiration of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Me-We)*. Auckland, New Zealand: PQ Blackwell Limited, 2007.

Course Description

This course seeks to reflect theologically on the life and ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his quest for the Beloved Community from a three-fold perspective:

- 1) We, as American citizens, citizens of the world, and people of compassion, often respect and are inspired by the life and ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr., who risked and lost a great deal as he fought against injustice. We are able to see his risk taking, sacrifices, and suffering. However, we don't as readily discern the connection between his life and how we may live ours in this post-integration age in the United States. This course will examine the life and works of Martin Luther King, Jr., not as a moral saint, but as a courageous human being who, like all of us, had to reach beyond his own shortcomings and take on challenges against seemingly overwhelming odds. Guided by the methodology in ethics of the internationally acclaimed legal scholar Derrick Bell, the course asks the central question, "How may I, an ordinary human being in my time just as Martin Luther King, Jr. was an ordinary human being in his own time, pursue a primary ambition of living a life of integrity?"
- 2) Many studies have been done on the role of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a civil rights activist in the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality for oppressed people. Yet interpreters of his thought have not in any sustained way explored his contribution as a theologian. This course posits that Dr. King's life and works emerged and are to be interpreted primarily from his theological legacy. It will investigate his contribution as a theologian, locating (as does the theologian Noel Erskine and church historian Lewis Baldwin) the primary context of his work in his cultural legacy of the African-American community and the Black Church.
- 3) The course will look at the primary source of King's writings (edited by church historian Joseph Washington) to get a comprehensive view of the development of his public theology and philosophy both from the documents themselves and from the editor's headnotes and footnotes for each document.

Course Objectives

The goal of the course is to encourage students toward a sense of personal and social responsibility for realizing the Beloved Community in our country and the world. In order to accomplish this, students will be guided by our prayers, readings, theological reflections, class discussions and assignments to (from the point of view of womanist theologian and ethicist Katie Cannon) pursue the objectives of:

1. Taking responsibility for collecting the facts to determine whether injustice exists, whether a law, an historical situation, existing social relations elevate or debase human beingness

2. Becoming moral agents who evaluate every situation as to whether it contributes to or impedes the growth of human personality and genuine community
3. Determining whether inalienable rights are granted or denied
4. Becoming intolerant of civil arrangements that result in the horrors of racism, sexual or gender discrimination, economic exploitation, and widespread cruelty
5. Embracing the interdependency that projects a constructive equality of oneness which, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., shapes the spirituality of the Beloved Community in the belief that, "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Participation. Students are required to attend all classes. Absences will lower your grade by two letter grades per absence. In other words, if your grade is an A in the course, one absence will lower your grade to a C. More than one absence will result in failure of the course. Please note that much that determines your grade for the course is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Attendance is therefore crucial. Please do not call, email, or personally ask me to excuse any absences.

You are required to demonstrate effective group skills by prayerfully, actively, compassionately, and critically contributing to class feedback and discussions. This includes your attendance (see above), punctuality, participation, and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect.

This course also requires timely reading and relevant discussion of the assigned texts that reflects *critical* intellectual assessment that may lead to practical applications in ministry. The demonstration of how well you have read and analyzed the readings should be reflected in our discussions, and your written and oral assignments.

1. **Class Leadership, Participation (see above) and Discussion: 50% of Grade**

Please be prepared to do one 15-20 minute group (two or three students in each group) class opening using prayer, Scripture, music, and whatever worship aids you choose to help us reflect upon the Beloved Community. You may do this however you choose but it must pertain to the theme of the Beloved Community. Also be prepared to help lead class discussion on the day's assigned readings (for one class session per group) by submitting your questions about the readings in written form (make a copy for everyone in the class) and handing them out to everyone at the beginning of each class session.

2. **One Small Reflection Paper Due After Each Class Session: 25% of Grade**

Please submit to me by email an individual reflection paper (3 pages each) on the day's assigned readings and reflections on the day's lecture and class discussion on the evening after each class session *by 8:30 p.m.* Include in your reflection any aspect of our readings and/or class discussion that particularly spoke to you. I will read these papers each evening and return them to you by the following class session. It is not possible for me to accept late submissions. This means you will submit one three page reflection paper each on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings.

3. One Case Study Due on the Last Day of Class: 25% of Grade

Prepare a personal case study that suggests how you might use what you have learned from the writings and ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr., to bring about the Beloved Community in your individual ministerial setting. Be sure to include a statement of the important influences from King's work that helped shape and define your own understanding of the Beloved Community and your own ethical ambitions around your goals. Use Derrick Bell's book, *Ethical Ambition*, to raise questions that he raises (for example, How can I maintain my integrity while seeking success in bringing about the Beloved Community, etc.) to explain your own prophetic vision and theology of how we can bring about the Beloved Community in our life time in the church and the United States. This case study should be seven to ten pages (double spaced).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Monday, July 18, 2011

9:00 to 9:20 a.m. - Class Opening (Flora)

9:20-9:45 a.m. - Introductions

Distribution and Review of the Syllabus

9:45-10:00 a.m. - Class Break

10:00- 11:00 a.m. - Film Excerpt: *The Untold Story of Emmett Till*

- WARNING: Please note that this film contains graphic violence about the lynching and mutilation of Emmett Till.

11:00-12:00 p.m. - Film Excerpt: *I Have a Dream*

12:00-1:00 p.m. - Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m. - Class Discussion

2:30-2:45 p.m. - Class Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. - Class Discussion

8:30 p.m. - Email due from each student to me about reflections on the day's class discussion

Tuesday, July 19, 2011

The Day's Reading Assignment: *To Make the Wounded Whole* by Lewis Baldwin; *A Testament of Hope* by Joseph Washington, Part I

Bring copies of your questions about the day's reading for everyone in the class.

9:00 to 9:20 a.m. - Class Opening (Students assigned alphabetically beginning with A)

9:20-10:20 a.m. - Lecture

10:20-10:35 a.m. - Class Break

10:35-11:35 a.m. - Film Excerpt: *Eyes on the Prize*

11:35 a.m. -12:00 p.m. - Class Discussion

12:00-1:00 p.m. - Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m. - Class Discussion

2:30-2:45 p.m. - Class Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. - Class Discussion

8:30 p.m. – Email due from each student to me about reflections on the day's discussion

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

The Day's Reading Assignment: *King Among the Theologians* by Noel Erskine; *A Testament of Hope* by Joseph Washington, Part II

Bring copies of your questions about the day's reading for everyone in the class.

9:00-9:20 a.m. - Class Opening (Students assigned alphabetically)

9:20-10:20 a.m. - Lecture

10:20-10:35 a.m. - Class Break

10:35-12:00 p.m. - Class Discussion

12:00-1:00 p.m. – Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m. - Class Discussion

2:30-2:45 p.m. - Class Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. - Class Discussion

8:30 p.m. - Email due from each student to me about reflections on the day's discussion

Thursday, July 21, 2011

The Day's Reading Assignment: *A Testament of Hope* by Joseph Washington Parts III and IV

Bring copies of your questions about the day's reading for everyone in the class.

9:00-9:20 a.m. – Class Opening (Students assigned alphabetically)

9:20-10:20 a.m. – Lecture

10:20-10:35 a.m. – Class Break

10:35-12:00 p.m. – Class Discussion

12:00-1:00 p.m. – Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m. - Class Discussion

2:30-2:45 p.m. – Class Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. – Class Discussion

8:30 p.m. – Email due from each student to me about reflections on the day's discussion

Friday, July 22, 2011

The Day's Reading Assignment: *A Testament of Hope* by Joseph Washington, Part V

Bring copies of your questions about the day's reading for everyone in the class.

Case Studies due at the beginning of class.

9:00-9:20 a.m. – Class Opening (Students assigned alphabetically)

9:20-10:20 a.m. – Lecture

10:20-10:35 a.m. – Class Break

10:35- 12:00 p.m. – Class Discussion

12:00-1:00 p.m. – Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m. – Class Discussion

2:30-2:45 p.m. - Class Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. – Class Discussion and Course Evaluations

8:30 p.m. – Email due from each student to me about reflection on the day's discussion.