

Dr. Montague R. Williams

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Meeting Hours: By appointment

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Semester: Fall 2023

Time: Tu/Th 9:30am – 10:45am

Location: Smee WESL

Final Exam: Tues, Dec 12, 10:30am

PLNU MISSION – To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr., with a particular focus on his theological influences, ethical commitments, and practical strategies for pursuing justice in the church and society.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. You will gain an understanding of the complexity of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s theological and ethical commitments.
2. You will engage in meaningful dialogue regarding matters in theology and ethics.
3. You will reflect on and engage in practices that connect with Kingian theological ethics.

REQUIRED READINGS

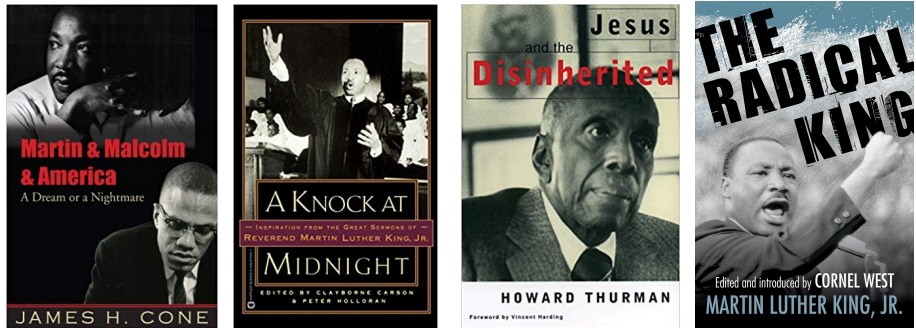
- *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or Nightmare* by James Cone
- *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* edited by Clayborne Carson and Peter Holloran
- *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
- “Black Feminism and Black Moses Part II” by Tamura Lomax

- *The Radical King* edited by Cornel West
- Podcast episodes by Alain Stephens (title not yet public; releasing October 2023)

Suggested readings (not required)

- *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee

Books to borrow or purchase:



ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignments (see descriptions in the next section)	Value (percentage of course grade)
Classmate Interview Paper	5%
Participation (face-to-face and online)	20%
Reading Reports	10%
Leading a Reading Discussion	10%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Sermon Reviews	15%
Cultivating Beloved Community (final project)	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100%	B+ = 87%-89%	C+ = 77%-79%	D+ = 67%-69%	F = 0 – 59%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83%-86%	C = 73%-76%	D = 63%-66%	
	B- = 80%-82%	C- = 70%-72%	D- = 60% – 62%	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Note: *Some assignments and classroom activities require group work and partners. If you feel uncomfortable about being partnered with a particular individual in class, please let the professor know on the first day of class via email. You do not need to explain why you feel uncomfortable about being partnered with that person.*

Classmate Interview Paper and Presentation (5% of course grade) – Students will submit a 500 to 800-word paper about a classmate and briefly present on that person in class. You will interview your assigned partner from the class and write your paper with the following components and flow.

1. Brief Introduction sharing who you interviewed, their year in school, and major. (25-50 words)
2. What is your partner's familiarity with MLK and MLK's theological ethics? What have they read, listened to, watched, engaged, or practiced that connects directly or indirectly with MLK and MLK's theological ethics? Explain. (50-75 words)
3. What matters to your partner? Before the interview, your partner should journal on the following questions: *What are two or three life questions that take up your sense of wonder these days? It may be helpful to identify at least one broader theological or philosophical question you have and at least one question that is more about daily life matters. However, such separation is not necessary. If all two or three questions intertwine the academic and the daily life, that is perfectly fine. What really matters to you in this season of life? What are you hoping to understand better or figure out one day (soon or later)? Do any of your "two or three questions" involve curiosity about what it means to live a meaningful life? How so?* When discussing this with your partner, simply frame the question as "What matters to you?" then allow your partner to share whatever they feel comfortable sharing from their journaling. Please note that your partner does not have to share about anything they do not want to share about, and the same goes for you. You won't be able to fit everything in when you write this section of the paper. However, your goal is to listen well and discern how to write about it in a meaningful and substantive manner. (175-250 words)
4. Who or what influences your partner? You can share about your partner's favorite theologians, philosophers, or public leaders. Or you can share about an experience or encounter your partner had that continues to have an impact on how they live or

imagine. You could also share about one of your partner's family members. After you ask, "Who or what influences you?" listen for stories. (75-100 words)

5. What does your partner need from other students in the class in order to facilitate learning and engagement during class meetings and gatherings? How does your partner plan to help the classroom be a place of mutual engagement, learning, and respect? (50-100 words.)
6. Looking at the syllabus and considering the course introduction, what aspect of this course is your partner looking forward to the most? Why? Is there anything on the syllabus for which your partner needs clarification? Explain. (50-100 words)
7. What did you learn from your partner? (75-125 words). This is an opportunity for your own reflection based on your conversation with your partner.

As noted earlier, if you feel uncomfortable about being partnered with a particular individual in class, please let the professor know on the first day of class via email. You do not need to explain why you feel uncomfortable about being partnered with that person.

Participation (20% of course grade) – This includes participation in all-class course dialogue, group discussions, online dialogue, classroom activities, and any planned course events or trips.

However, half of this score will be based on participation in all-class course dialogue throughout the semester. Students who are regularly punctual and present without unexcused absences or tardies have met the bare minimum requirement for participation, namely being present. These students can expect to earn at least a D for their course dialogue participation score at the end of the semester. Students who do this but also *regularly get involved* in classroom dialogue in a substantive manner can expect to earn at least a B for their course dialogue participation grade. Students who exemplify regular participation can expect to earn an A for their course dialogue participation grade at the end of the semester.

Regular participation in class means you are consistently offering thoughtful comments and questions as well as respectfully supporting the regular participation and perspectives of fellow students. The professor may call upon any student to answer a question or expound upon a particular course topic or reading. You do not have to agree with your fellow students. Come to the (literal and metaphorical) table with humility and readiness to learn from your peers, share with your peers, and challenge your peers when appropriate. *Last note: Rather than simply finding a way to talk a lot, focus your concern on doing your part to promote meaningful course dialogue regarding the reading and classroom activities.*

Event/Course Trip: We will attend an evening lecture with Heather McGhee, the New York Times bestselling author of *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*.

Date: September 26, 2023

Time: 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Where: San Diego Central Library, 330 Park Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92101

You need to sign up for your tickets right away using the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-book-one-san-diego-author-event-with-heather-mcghee-tickets-696139751737>

*This course may include practices of Christian spirituality. While the professor does hope you find these meaningful for your own reflection and meaning-making, the professor does not assume that everyone at PLNU is a Christian. If you do not feel comfortable engaging in Christian practices, please know that the professor is willing to discern alternative options for you. Simply inform the professor during the first week of class and set up a meeting to discuss alternatives.

Reading Reports (10% of course grade) – You will complete a reading report for every reading assignment. The reading reports are due at the beginning of the class time for which its corresponding reading is due. You will submit your reading reports on Canvas, but you should also bring a print out or written version of your reading reports to class. Every reading report will have you provide responses for the following:

1. Two meaningful quotes from the reading that would be worth remembering after the course or even your college years are over. Cite the page numbers. Be ready to share why you picked those quotes.
2. One question that can help those who read the assignment engage in meaningful conversation. Don't be vague; build upon a specific idea or concept in the reading.
3. One way the reading connects to real life experiences you know about—either yours, someone else's, an organization, or a social situation you know about.

Leading a Reading Discussion (10% of course grade) – Each student will be assigned a date to lead the class in a 45-minute discussion of the reading. This requires a 10- to 15-minute presentation and your facilitation of an in-depth 30-minute classroom conversation on the reading. A detailed outline of your discussion plan must be submitted in advance of the presentation.

You should begin with a 10- to 15-minute presentation that aims to increase your own and other students' understanding of the assigned reading. The presentation should introduce the reading, highlight key points, identify potential implications of those points, and potential connections to previous readings or discussions in the course. It needs to be clear that you have given a close read of the assignment and have found important avenues for classroom dialogue. The point here is not simply to offer a summary of what everyone already read, but to enable your colleagues to think in greater depth about the material and pave the way for an enjoyable discussion.

When you move to questions, it needs to be clear that you have planned thoughtful questions in an appropriate flow. As you facilitate, you can make room for new questions, purposeful meandering, sacred moments and surprises, and fun. However, you will be responsible for making sure the class stays on topic.

You are encouraged to embrace creativity when leading a reading discussion. Here are some ideas:

- List/outline some questions or issues or points that arise out of specific passages in the readings and which can be a focus for a classroom-wide discussion.
- Develop some creative individual or group activities based on thinking about the readings. For example...a game, a survey, storytelling, setting up a debate, drawings or paintings, collages, writing poems or monologues in response to an idea represented in the readings.
- Show a video clip or short series of clips related to the text and develop a discussion based on questions about that relationship.

The available dates for the "Leading a Discussion" assignment are listed at the after the Course Schedule of this syllabus.

Mid-Term Exam (20% of course grade) –The exam will cover content from the first half of the course (Units 1 and 2) and include no more than fifty questions. The exam will cover figures and concepts from the course readings, lectures, and discussions. While the vast majority of questions will be multiple choice and short answer, the exam may include essay questions as well.

Sermon Reviews (15% of course grade) – A great deal of King's theology is expressed through his sermons. You will need to complete three sermon reviews. The class will have to read sets of King's sermons due on three dates in Unit 3. You will pick one sermon from each of those reading sets and complete a sermon review each one. The sermon reviews are due by the beginning of class on the day the reading of the sermon is due. The sermon reviews are quizzes on Canvas that ask the following:

Required:

- Which sermon are you reviewing?
- When and where did King preach this sermon?"
- What are the main points of the sermon?

Pick Three:

- Look up an audio version of the sermon online. How does the audio of King preaching the sermon offer insight regarding the sermon's meaning and emphases?
- How might you connect, interpret, or rewrite aspects of the sermon in light of contemporary questions and issues?
- Where do you see connections between Christian spirituality and the embodied work of justice?
- Select an image or illustration from the sermon. How might you make use of or build upon that imagery/illustration?
- If this sermon were preached today, what would be an appropriate creative response practice?
- What is one major theological or philosophical concept in this sermon, and what is being said about it? Explain.
- Considering the theology and call of the sermon, what is this sermon saying about what it means to be human? Explain.
- Considering the theology and call of the sermon, what music could be used to prepare listeners to hear and respond to the sermon? Explain.
- Considering the theology and call of the sermon, what existing artistic pieces could be used to prepare listeners to hear and respond to the sermon? Explain.
- Is there a film that deals with a core message of the sermon? Share about the film and explain the connections to the sermon.
- Considering the theology and call of the sermon, what about the sermon is worthy of critique?

Be ready to discuss your responses in class.

Cultivating Beloved Community Project (20% of course grade) – The Cultivating Beloved Community Project is worth 20% of the student's course grade. You will create an artistic expression that points to and conjures reflection on an understanding of King's theological ethics that you did not have before this course. The focus should be narrow and in-depth. It may be most helpful to begin with a question as you would a research paper and seek to offer a project that takes us to deeper reflection than a research paper could. There are four components to this project: (1) your original creation, (2) your artist's memo, (3) your presentation, and (4) your reflection on two of your classmates' projects, and (5) your responses to classmates' questions. Please see the course schedule for the due date. For a description of the four components, see the explanations below:

- 1) Your original creation. You will submit *your own original creation* that creatively and substantively builds upon content from this course to point to and conjure reflection on an understanding of King's theological ethics that you did not have before this course. This project can be done in a variety of ways (i.e., painting, short film, song, music video, podcast, game, app, built structure, machine, business plan, concept illustration, food, clothing, etc.). However, due the existence and common misuse of AI programs, no digital art projects will be allowed without approval from the professor.

While it is true that many do not feel as if they are creative people, the theological reality is that every human being is created in the image of God—the Creator of all things. We are created as creative beings by a creative God. As you prepare for this assignment, feel free to try your hand at something new. However, don't assume creativity is limited to a certain stereotype. Take a moment to reflect on the ways you are already a creative being before jumping into a project.

- 2) Your artist's memo. Along with your original creation, you must submit an "artist's memo" that explains your intentions undergirding the composition of your original creation. Your explanation in the "artist's memo" needs to make it very clear that you understand the course content and that your original creation has been created in a thoughtful and careful manner. The length of the "artist's memo" is 150 – 250 words. The "artist's memo" needs to answer the following questions:
 1. What is the significance of this piece?
 2. How does it creatively and substantively build upon content from this course to express an understanding of King's theological ethics that you did not have before this course?
- 3) Your presentation. On the last day of class (before the final exam time slot), each student will give a 3-minute presentation to the class on their project. Projects that require a particular time (i.e., a song or a short film) may be allotted more presentation time.
- 4) Your reflection on two other projects. After presenting, students will arrange their projects in a gallery style in a designated room. You will need to spend some time viewing (or listening to, observing, etc.) several projects and then reflect meaningfully on two of your classmates' projects using a reflection guide provided by the professor. You'll have to submit your reflections on Canvas. All of this needs to happen before the final exam time slot. During the final exam time slot, you will interact with the two classmates/artists in a Q and A session.

- 5) Your responses to classmates' questions: During the final exam time slot, each student will field comments and questions from the class about their project and interact with those comments and questions.

Extra Credit: The professor may offer extra credit assignments throughout the semester. However, extra credit assignments will not be provided on an individual basis. Any extra credit opportunity will be made available to every student in the class.

Extra Credit #1: If a student reads and presents on a chapter from *The Sum of Us*, they can receive up to 2% of extra credit on their overall course grade. Before selecting your chapter, check with the professor to find out which chapters are available. Plans to do such a presentation need to be arranged with the professor at least two weeks in advance of the presentation. The presentations must be complete before Week 15.

Presentations need to be 10 minutes and done in a professional manner with a digital slideshow. The slideshow file must be submitted on Canvas. The presentation must include a summary of the chapter and an analysis of the content. If two students would like to do a presentation together, that is allowed. However, the presentation would need to be 15 minutes.

Extra Credit #2: Currently, there is only one extra credit assignment available.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise stated by the professor assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires a final project and presentation **on its scheduled final exam day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. The final project for this course is the Cultivating Beloved Community Project. See details for this assignment in the syllabus.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Educational Access Center (EAC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2533 or by e-mail at EAC@pointloma.edu. See [Educational Access Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. Thus, terms like "man" or "mankind" or the pronoun "he," should not be used to refer to all humans. Instead "people," "humanity," "humans," and "he or she" better acknowledge women as full persons.

COURSE SCHEDULE

THE4025 MLK Jr and Theological Ethics

Fall 2023 – Tuesdays and Thursdays - 9:30am-10:45am

The professor maintains the discretion to change aspects of the course and assignments as needed. Also, please know that the professor may change this schedule framework in light of Covid restrictions.

Be sure to mark the date of your “Leading a Reading Discussion” assignment.

WEEK	Date	TOPIC	DUE	CLO
Unit 1: Introductory Matters				
Week 1	Tues 8/29	Intro and Syllabus Review		1
	Thurs 8/31	Getting to Know Each Other		2
Week 2	Tues 9/5	King’s Family of Origin		1
	Thurs 9/7	Classmate Interview Presentations & Comparing Martin and Malcolm’s Early Influences	Cone, Intro – Ch. 2 Classmate Interview Papers	1, 2
Unit 2: A Bigger Picture of King’s Context and Theological Perspective				
Week 3	Tues 9/12	Hope: Implications of Martin’s Dream	Cone, Ch. 3	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 9/14	Honesty: Malcolm’s Critique of the Dream	Cone, Ch. 4	1, 2, 3
Week 4	Tues 9/19	Martin and Malcolm’s Religious Traditions	Cone, Ch. 5 - 6	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 9/21	Thurman’s Jesus	Thurman, Ch. 1	1, 2, 3
Week 5	Tues 9/26	Thurman on Fear and Deception	Thurman, Ch. 2 - 3	1, 2, 3
	<i>Evening Lecture with author, Heather McGhee</i> Sep 26 – 6:30pm to 8:30pm San Diego Central Library 330 Park Boulevard San Diego, CA 92101			
	Thurs 9/28	Thurman on Hate and Love	Thurman, Ch. 4 - Epilogue	1, 2, 3
Week 6	Tues 10/3	Class on Canvas: Malcolm and Martin’s Move Toward Each Other	Cone, Ch. 7-8	1, 3
	Thurs 10/5	Class on Canvas: The Mutually-Critical Relationship Between Martin and Malcolm	Cone, Ch. 9	1, 3
Week 7	Tues 10/10	Sexism and Classism	Cone, Ch. 10; Lomax essay	1, 2, 3

	Thurs 10/12	Unit 1 and 2 Review	Cone, Ch. 11 - 12	1, 3
Week 8	Tues 10/17	Mid-term Exam		1, 3
	Thurs 10/19	No Class - Fall Break		
Unit 3: King's Thought, Writings, Sermons, and Speeches				
Week 9	Tues 10/24	Neighbor-hood and Kinship	King, <i>Knock</i> Ch. 1 and 11	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 10/26	Courage	King, <i>Knock</i> Ch. 2 - 4 Sermon Review 1	1, 2, 3
Week 10	Tues 10/31	Ecclesiology and Embodiment	King, <i>Knock</i> Ch. 5 - 7 Sermon Review 2	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 11/2	Discerning Faithfulness	King, <i>Knock</i> Ch. 8 - 10 Sermon Review 3	1, 2, 3
Week 11	Tues 11/7	A Conversation about Guns, Race, and Public Life Guest Speaker: Alain Stephens	Stephens podcast	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 11/9	Radical Love	West, <i>Radical</i> , Intro - Ch. 2,	1, 2, 3
Week 12	Tues 11/14	Radical Love (continued)	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 3 - 5	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 11/16	Prophetic Global Vision	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 6 – 8 OR West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 9 - 11	1, 2, 3
Week 13	Tues 11/21	Class on Canvas: The Revolution of Nonviolent Resistance	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 12 - 14	1, 3
	Thurs 11/23	No Class – Thanksgiving Recess		
Week 14	Tues 11/28	The Revolution of Nonviolent Resistance (continued)	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 15 – 18	1, 2, 3
	Thurs 11/30	Overcoming the Tyranny of Poverty and Hatred	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 19 - 20	1, 2, 3
Week 15	Tues 12/5	Overcoming the Tyranny of Poverty and Hatred (continued)	West, <i>Radical</i> , Ch. 21 and 23	1, 2, 3

	Thurs 12/7	Cultivating Beloved Community Presentations & Course Review	Cultivating Beloved Community Project Presentation	1, 3
Week 16 Finals Week	Tues 12/12 At 10:30am	Cultivating Beloved Community Final Q and A Session	Cultivating Beloved Community Final Q and A Sessions	1, 2, 3

Dates available to complete the “Leading a Discussion” assignment are listed below. Be sure to mark the date you’ve been assigned and see the course schedule for the reading assignment.

Date	Student Leading the Discussion
Thurs 9/14	
Tues 9/19	
Thurs 9/21	
Tues 9/26	
Thurs 9/28	
Tues 10/24	
Tues 11/7	
Thurs 11/9	
Tues 11/14	
Thurs 11/16	
Tues 11/28	
Thurs 11/30	
Tues 12/5	