

Subject: EM: Religion and Civil Rights & Religion course
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From: Chavez, Linda

Sent on behalf of Prof. Gaston Espinosa



What came first racism or slavery? Does religion hinder or empower social change and civil rights? After exploring a brief history racism, slavery, and Jim Crow segregation, this seminar analyzes the influence of racial-ethnic spirituality on 3 major civil rights movements from 1954-1972: Black, Mexican American, and American Indian (AIM). We will also briefly discuss current struggles over Black Lives Matter and the Standing Rock Indian struggle. It takes a biographical and comparative approach to the three civil rights movements side-by-side through the struggles of key leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Diane Nash, César Chávez, Reies López Tijerina, Dolores Huerta, Dennis Banks, Leonard & Mary Crowdog, Stokely Carmichael & Hip-Hop artists. It explores how they drew on their Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal, Muslim, Baptist, and Native spiritualities, symbols, rhetoric, traditions, and resistance art and music to create counter-narratives to overcome segregation, white supremacy, and structural inequality and disenfranchisement in U.S. society. It explores their religious visions, leadership styles, spiritual intelligence, and both non-violent and militant methods of social change. We will analyze debates, conflicts, their speeches, documentaries, movie clips, write four short two-page papers, a final creative arts project (e.g., sing a song tied to civil rights, poetry reading, dramatic interpretation, skit, art work, Hip-Hop song, music video, spiritual bio, wall mural, etc...), and have a final dinner at the Athenaeum. This course can count for (1) Religious Studies, (2) General Education, (3) Africana Studies, (4) Chicano Studies, (5) Kravis Leadership Sequence, and/or (6) Human Rights Sequence credit.



Linda Chavez-Nunez (She/her/hers)
Coordinator - Psychological Science & Religious Studies



Faculty Support West
850 Columbia Ave, Kravis Center 108c
Claremont, California 91711
Phone: 909-607-3394
Fax: 909-621-8419
Email: linda.chavez@cmc.edu
Web: www.cmc.edu
Mon-Fri 8-5pm