



# The Black Freedom Movement

I. Narrating Civil Rights

II. Civil Disobedience for Civil Rights

III. Tradition of Armed Self-Reliance

IV. Militant Demands for Civil Rights

Reforms

V. Radical Critiques of America

# Prevailing images of the civil rights movement? Key moments, figures, organizations?

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Selma, Sit-Ins

Bull Connor

Rosa Parks

Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-56)

Ruby Bridges

March on Washington (1963)

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

CR Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965)

# Dominant Narratives of the Civil Rights Movement

- It was a nonviolent movement that awakened the national conscience.
- The U.S. federal government responded by passing laws on civil rights and mobilizing against a racist South.
- The movement redeemed America's promise for all.

# Radicalism of the Black Freedom Movement

- Heterogeneity, flexibility.
- Embraced and exploited American nationalism to make demands as “Americans” for equal citizenship rights.
- Exposed and interrogated America’s limitations and contradictions.

National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People  
(NAACP)

Thurgood Marshall

Chief Justice Earl Warren

*Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*

“Separate but equal” was inherently unequal  
and unconstitutional.

Desegregation should proceed with  
“all deliberate speed.”



Ella Baker  
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee  
(SNCC)





**Robert F. and Mabel Williams**  
**“Armed Self-Reliance”**





John Lewis, SNCC

# Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Enforce the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Prohibit racial discrimination in hotels, restaurants, and “any place of public accommodation.”
- Prohibit discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.



# Freedom Summer Mississippi, 1964

# Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Enforce the Fifteenth Amendment.
- Replace local registrars with federal officials.



Watts (Los Angeles), August 1965





**Black Panther Party for Self-Defense  
(organized in 1966)**

# Origins of the U.S. War in Vietnam

French colony since the nineteenth century.

Japanese invasion and occupation during World War II.

Ho Chi Minh and Viet Minh lead the struggle for national independence before, during, and after WWII.

France attempts to reclaim Indochina (1946-1954).

Geneva Accords (1954) divides Vietnam and promises national elections by 1956.

U.S. covert war (1954-1964).





Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964) escalates U.S. military intervention in Vietnam.



“Mere Gook Rule”





Martin Luther King, Jr. (1967)



**Muhammad Ali**