

The PHI BETA KAPPA Society

VISITING



SCHOLAR
PROGRAM

PENIEL JOSEPH

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Public Affairs, and Distinguished Service Leadership
Professor and Professor of History in the College of
Liberal Arts

**PUBLIC LECTURE
OFFERINGS**

**FREEDOM SEASON: HOW 1963 TRANSFORMED AMERICA'S CIVIL
RIGHTS REVOLUTION**

In Freedom Season, acclaimed historian Peniel E. Joseph offers a stirring lecture on 1963, marking it as the defining year of the Black freedom struggle—a year when America faced a deluge of political strife and violence and emerged transformed. Nineteen sixty-three opened with the centenary of the Emancipation Proclamation and ended with America in a state of mourning. The months in between brought waves of racial terror, mass protest, and police repression that shocked the world, inspired radicals and reformers, and forced the hands of moderate legislators. By year's end the murders of John F. Kennedy, Medgar Evers, and four Black girls at a church in Alabama left the nation determined to imagine a new way forward. Alongside the stories of historical giants like James Baldwin and Martin Luther King Jr., Joseph uplifts the perspectives of less celebrated leaders like playwright Lorraine Hansberry and activist Gloria Richardson. Over one heartbreakingly tumultuous year, America unraveled and remade itself as the world looked on. Freedom Season shows how the upheavals of 1963 planted the seeds for watershed civil rights legislation and renewed hope in the promise and possibility of freedom

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THE THIRD RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA'S STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In *The Third Reconstruction*, distinguished historian Peniel E. Joseph offers a powerful and personal new interpretation of recent history. The racial reckoning that unfolded in 2020, he argues, marked the climax of a Third Reconstruction: a new struggle for citizenship and dignity for Black Americans, just as momentous as the movements that arose after the Civil War and during the civil rights era. Joseph draws revealing connections and insights across centuries as he traces this Third Reconstruction from the election of Barack Obama to the rise of Black Lives Matter to the failed assault on the Capitol. America's first and second Reconstructions fell tragically short of their grand aims. Our Third Reconstruction offers a new chance to achieve Black dignity and citizenship at last—an opportunity to choose hope over fear.

THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD: THE REVOLUTIONARY LIVES OF MALCOLM X AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

To most Americans, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. represent contrasting ideals: self-defense versus nonviolence, Black Power versus civil rights, the sword versus the shield. The struggle for Black freedom is wrought with the same contrasts. While nonviolent direct action is remembered as an unassailable part of American democracy, the movement's militancy is either vilified or erased outright. This lecture upends these misconceptions and reveals a nuanced portrait of two men who, despite markedly different backgrounds, inspired and pushed each other throughout their adult lives. Now updated with a new afterword, this is a strikingly revisionist account of Malcolm and Martin, the era they defined, and their lasting impact on today's Movement for Black Lives.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. WHAT HAPPENED TO AMERICA'S RACIAL RECKONING?
2. "THE LANGUAGE OF HUMAN JOY": HOW STORYTELLING TRANSFORMS THE WORLD AND OUR SOULS
3. RACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY
4. THE FIRE THIS TIME: JAMES BALDWIN'S 1963 AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION
5. THE LAST REVOLUTIONARY: MALCOLM X'S FINAL YEAR