



## Martin Luther King Jr.

*By John A. Kirk*

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Combining the latest insights from King biographies and movement histories, this book provides an up-to-date critical analysis of the relationship between King and the wider civil rights movement. Delivering a fresh perspective on the relationship between 'the man and the movement', Kirk argues that it is the interaction between national and local movement concerns that is essential to understanding King's leadership and black activism in the 1950s and 1960s. Kirk examines King's strengths and his limitations, and weighs the role that King played in the movement alongside the contributions of other civil rights organizations and leaders, and local civil rights activists.

Suitable for undergraduate courses in 20th century US history.

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## Editorial Review

Review

"the finest brief biography of King currently on the market"

*Patterns of Prejudice*

"... a very fine introduction to the major themes of the civil rights movement"

*Institute of Historical Research*

"John A. Kirk's study achieves its aim of contextualizing King's contribution to the civil rights movement and evaluating his career."

*Journal of American Studies, Volume 39 - 2005*

"The book would work as a supplemental text in survey courses or other classes that emphasize political history, leadership, government or the civil rights movement. Gives readers a glimpse of the political leadership of Martin Luther King Jr".

*S. Jonathan Bass, Samford University*

From the Back Cover

Martin Luther King Jr exercised a tremendous degree of influence in a movement that between 1955 and 1965 successfully dismantled a system of legalised racial segregation and disfranchisement entrenched for over sixty years in the United States. How did King, who came from a subordinated group within American society, help effect this change? What background, characteristics, abilities and ideas enabled him to do this? Why was King so important in shaping the civil rights movement?

John A. Kirk looks at the sources of King's power in the black community and its relationship to wider American society, focusing particularly on the role of the black church, the philosophy of nonviolence and issues of leadership, whilst paying due attention to the voices of King's critics and detractors and to the limitations of his power. He locates King firmly within the context of other leaders and organisations, voices and opinions, and tactics and ideologies, which made up the movement as a whole.

Fifty years after the Montgomery bus boycott, which launched King's movement leadership, this book moves beyond the all-too-often oversimplified story of King's life and times to provide an innovative analytical framework for understanding the role played by one of the United States' most important historical figures.

John A. Kirk is George W. Donaghey Professor and Chair of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR).

#### About the Author

John A. Kirk is George W. Donaghey Distinguished Professor of History and Department Chair at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR)

### **Users Review**

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