

# GALE DIGITAL SCHOLAR LAB USE CASE FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND LINGUISTICS



## RESEARCH TOPIC

Nonviolence, Christian faith, and Martin Luther King (1929-1968) in the American civil rights movement

- To study the core tenets of nonviolent resistance he advocated through metaphor analysis
- To examine the social functions of religion both in social movements and in the contemporary world

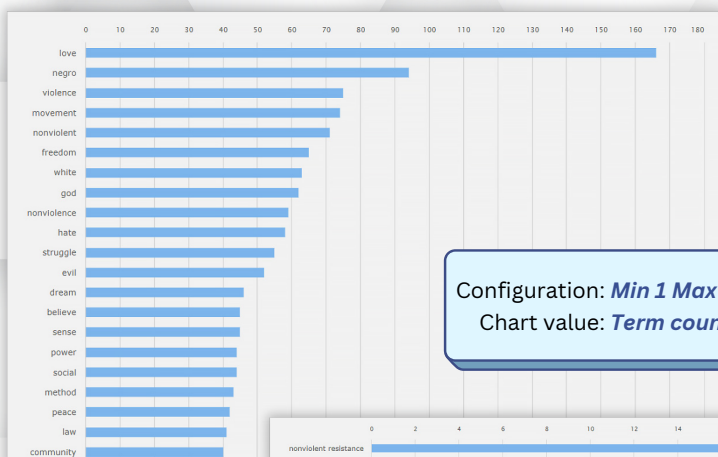


## FINAL CONTENT SET

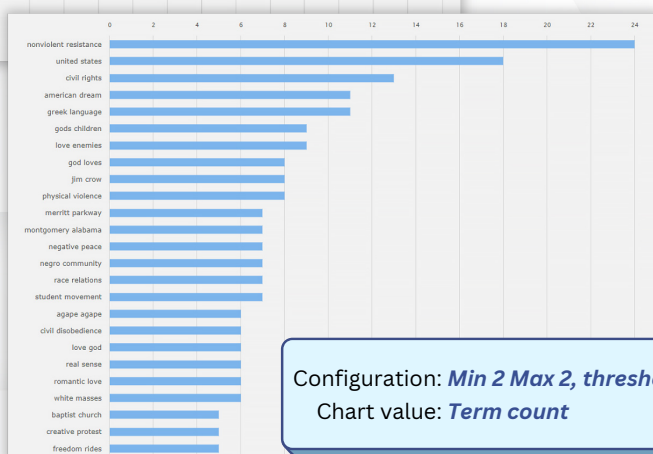
*Primary sources collected by the user and uploaded to the platform*

- 18 sermons and public speeches delivered by Martin Luther King between the 1950s and 1968
- A corpus of 50,000 words

## NGRAMS



Configuration: *Min 1 Max 1, threshold 2*  
Chart value: *Term count*



Configuration: *Min 2 Max 2, threshold 2*  
Chart value: *Term count*

## INTERESTING FINDINGS

- The automatic frequency count shows that the terms *love*, *nonviolent resistance*, and *American dream* appear most frequently, reflecting King's core values and strategies in the fight against racial injustice.
- *Love*, which King referred to as *agape* from the New Testament of the Bible, means selfless, sacrificial and unconditional love.

This central belief of Christianity found a broader application in the civil rights movement. Despite the violence that surrounded the movement, King emphasized *love* as a means of constructing a worldview of universal brotherhood that erases the differences between oppressed and oppressors, friends and enemies, because he believed that hatred does not solve social problems.

- Corpus lexicographic research has shown that each meaning of a word has its own set of collocates and that the use of metaphors is shaped by genre, cultural, and ideological factors. To boost the morale of protesters, King used the linguistic metaphor of ‘the American dream’ in his speeches, where *dream* was given a figurative meaning and combined with *American* to form a collocation. This metaphor represented a hope for the realization of the promise made in the Emancipation Proclamation that “all men are created equal” and endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

## TOPIC MODELING



Topic metric: *Average word length*  
Sort: *Metric high-low*



## INTERESTING FINDINGS

- Possible themes include:
  - ▶ Violence, nonviolent, nonviolence, movement, change, demonstrations, riots, power, problem, negroes
  - ▶ God, social, power, liberalism, nonviolence, thinking, neoorthodoxy, theological, reason, course
  - ▶ India, moral, Gandhi, education, standards, Western, equal, leaders, organize, attitudes
- Topic Modeling highlights the influence of Gandhi’s method of nonviolent resistance on King and his theological reconciliation of liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and the social gospel. King’s ideas here raise further research questions about contemporary society: How have Christians and Muslims engaged with the Black Lives Matter movement in America? What role has the Russian Orthodox Church played in supporting Putin’s war in Ukraine? These questions serve as important starting points for understanding religion, politics, war, and peace in the modern world.