

Community Friday—Juneteenth
June 19, 2020

Thank you for taking the time to watch the documentary *I am Not Your Negro*. Below are some questions to consider as you reflect on the documentary and the anti-racist work you as an individual and we as a community will do. Thank you Professor Karla Erickson for developing these questions. We strongly encourage you to read James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1992) and Jesmyn Ward's *The Fire This Time* (2017).

1. *I am Not Your Negro* is a forceful title that runs through the entire documentary. How did you react initially to the title and why? How did your understanding of the title develop or change after watching the documentary?
2. The documentary juxtaposes protests and demonstrations in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri after the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown with the work of Evers, King and Malcolm X in the 1960s. Fifty years – half a century – divide the two time frames. What does situating them together make you think? Feel?
3. Baldwin's view of the U.S. is a tragic one in which white people become "moral monsters" and in which their efforts to defend white supremacy are "destroying them". In his draft of *Remember this House*, Baldwin situates his work as an act of witnessing. What does the documentary ask you to witness? To remember?
4. Not one of these leaders – Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Medgar Evers – survives to live to 40 years of age. They are all killed by members of the country they were trying to transform. What does their monumental influence before the age of 40 make you think about the needs and leaders for this time?
5. Baldwin argues "when you try to stand up and look the world in the face like you have a right to be here, you have attacked the entire power structure of the Western world." His argument is positioned alongside the faces of young black children and adults who have died at the hands of police, often with no consequence for the officer. How central is police brutality, over-policing and incarceration to what this country currently is? What are some of the structural changes you can identify and support in response to the demands of protestors who have demanded change in so many American cities of the last month?