



# WABASH CENTER

For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



## Teaching Civil Rights: Taking Students to Sites of Remembrance via Instagram for Real

Ralph Basui Watkins, *Columbia Theological Seminary*

Blog Series: Social Justice and Civic Engagement

June 25, 2020

Tags: justice | site visits | engaged learning | civil rights

We can teach the ongoing struggle for civil rights by taking students to the current day struggle via Instagram and sacred sites. Who on Instagram is doing the work that the great ancestral photographers like Mikki Ferrill, Louise Martin, Moneta Sleet Jr., John Shearer and Gordon Parks did? One is Joshua Rashaad McFadden. His Instagram is liberative in every way. We can invite our student to share who they are following, while also inviting them to follow those doing the work of showing us the struggle. What this does is show the students the power of photography in the liberation struggle yet lives as it did in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover it takes them out of the classroom and into the real world via a virtual photography feed.

The second step in this process is taking student to sacred sites that are living. When you go to the field and experience the sites where the struggle occurred in your town or the town the student is living in, if they are taking the course online. Go and see, feel and hear the power of the sacred sites where the struggle was and is being waged. In the video below I take you to the sacred site where we in Atlanta honored the life of Rayshard Brooks. Rayshard Brooks was lynched by the Atlanta Police Department on June 12, 2020. The Wendy's where the lynching occurred has become a sacred site of remembrance and resistance. I take you there in this

video and you hear from one the leading modern day civil rights photographers alive today. Joshua Rashaad McFadden is someone you want to follow. May the videos speak for itself.

<http://www.joshuarashaad.com>

[https://www.instagram.com/joshua\\_rashaad/](https://www.instagram.com/joshua_rashaad/)

<https://wabashcenter.wabash.edu/2020/06/teaching-civil-rights-taking-students-to-sites-of-remembrance-via-instagram-for-real/>