

**African Americans
and the
Universalists, Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists**

Winter Intensive
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January 23 – 27, 2012
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Course Overview

This course will familiarize you with both the African-American experience within the liberal religious community and that community's attitudes toward African Americans. Who were these African-American women and men? When and how did they become part of the liberal religious movement? What were the attitudes they met among Anglo-Americans and what was the institutional response to them? Using both primary and secondary resources we will approach these topics from two perspectives: the national and the local.

The secondary aim of this course is to help you to acquire skills in doing historical research, and also to develop and practice ministry skills. The former will be put in practice in preparing for the week-long intensive via local research into the history, in regard to race, of your local congregation. The latter will be addressed through the presentation of this research in the form of a sermon, newsletter column and R.E. program.

Important warning: This course is front end loaded. The majority of the assignments **must** be completed before you arrive in Chicago for the M/L Winter Intensive and the assignments submitted **on or before** their due dates.

Class Size: 15

Time: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Objectives

1. Understand the historic experience of African Americans within the liberal religious traditions.
2. Understand the response of those traditions to African Americans and the issue of race.
3. Clarify your own stance as to how you wish to respond as the issue of race impacts your congregation and public ministry.
4. Develop skill in doing historical research and become familiar with archival practices.
5. Hone your ministerial skill at communicating history in a pastoral manner in ways that invite congregational transformation.

Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation
2. Post a one page bio and description of your goals for the class by **October 21**.
3. Prior reading of assigned texts and web material, and the written submission of a 300-400 word review of each. (Due no later than **January 16**, but should be submitted upon your completion of each separate text.)

4. Read the materials on class website about doing research, if at that point or subsequently you have questions in regard to doing the actual research post them on LiveText under “Discussions” “All Topics” “Research Queries” and the instructor and your class members can contribute their thinking and experiences.
5. Research the history of race relations within your local congregation and locale and write for presentation in class:
 - a 15 **minute** sermon and after delivering it in class post it to “Assignments” on LiveText.
 - an R.E. session for any age post on LiveText under “Discussions” “All Topics” “R.E. Programs” and to the instructor under “Assignments.” (Due **January 20.**)
 - a newsletter column (**No** more than 250 words) post on LiveText under “Discussions” “All Topics” “Newsletter Columns” and to the instructor under “Assignments.” (Due **January 22.**)
 - Bring copies of the materials collected e.g. tape recordings, sermons, newsletter columns used in doing research and write a 300 word description of the process (post this under assignments on LiveText), including documentation on where the resources are located.
6. Locate yourself in regard to race i.e. describe your heritage, class and neighborhood, your earliest memory of racial awareness, your subsequent experiences, your current situation, reflect on what impact racism has had on you and outline what beliefs you now hold in regard to race. (1000 words due **November 14.**)
7. After reading the entire section in *Darkening the Doorways* on Universalism (pp. 89-149) read the online essay “The Gospel of Inclusion: A Black Pentecostal Bishop Embraces Universalism, Befriends a Unitarian Minister, and Shakes Up the Largest Congregation in the UUA” by Kimberly French, listen to the podcast of *This American Life*, #304: “Heretics” and then write a theological reflection that answers the questions: *Can Universalism speak to African Americans today and, if so, how would UUism have to change?* (300 words due **December 12.**)
8. Review the Sankofa Project website. It is in the process of being redesigned. In point form list two things you found helpful and two things you would suggest that would enhance the site. (100 words or less due **December 19.**)
9. Read *Been in the Storm so Long*, edited by Jacqui James and Mark Morrison-Reed, Skinner House, Boston, 1991. Choose one meditation that speaks to you, say why and suggest how you might use it. (100 words or less due **January 9.**)
10. Re-articulate your stance in the world regarding race and how you see that affecting your congregational and public ministry. (300-400 page word essay submitted between the last day of class January 27 and **February 6.**)

Course Bibliography

(* Can be ordered from the UUA Bookstore)

Required: Read and write a 300-400 word review.

1001 Things Everyone Should Know about African American History by Jeffery C. Stewart **or** *From Slavery to Freedom* by John Hope Franklin **or** *Before the Mayflower* by Lerone Bennett **or** if you have taken an African American history class in some other context write up a two page summation of the bibliography and your learning’s. **This is your first reading assignment; it is meant to provide a broad context in which to view and understand what transpired within the liberal faith tradition.**

Black Pioneers in a White Denomination, Mark D. Morrison-Reed, Skinner House, 1994*

Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism, Mark D. Morrison-Reed. Skinner House, 2011.*

Miracle In Birmingham – A Civil Rights Memoir 1954-1965, W. Edward Harris, Stonework Press, 5705 Crestview Ave., Indianapolis, IN, 46220 **or** *Call to Selma: 18 Days to Witness*, Dick Leonard, Skinner House, Boston, 2001*

“The Gospel of Inclusion: A Black Pentecostal Bishop Embraces Universalism, Befriends a Unitarian Minister, and Shakes Up the Largest Congregations in the UUA” by Kimberly French, UU World, Fall 2009 <www.uuworld.org/life/articles/145503.shtml> **and** the podcast from *This American Life*, #304: Heretics <www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/304/Heretics>

Crisis and Change: My Years as President of the UUA 1967-1977, Robert N. West, Skinner House, Boston, 2007 (pgs. 1-48, 99-103)***and** (available on-line)“In Their Own Words: A Conversation with participants in the Black Empowerment within the UUA, Edited by Alicia McNary Forsey, Starr King School for Ministry” www.sksm.edu/research/publications/itow.pdf.

The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism and the Journey from Calgary, Leslie Takahashi Morris, Chip Rouch and Leon Spencer, Skinner House, Boston, 2009, pages 1 – 275.*

UU Sankofa Project Online Archive http://meadville.edu/LL_Sankofa.htm

Optional Texts

Read at least one of the following books, write a 300-400 review, post on Live Text under “Discussions” “All Topic” “Book Reviews” website for your classmates and submit to your instructor under “Assignments.”

1. *Discarded Legacy: Politics and Poetics in the Life of Francis E. W. Harper 1825-1911*, Melba Joyce Boyd, Wayne State University Press, 1994.
2. *Patterns of Anti-Slavery among American Unitarians 1831-1860*, Douglas C. Stange, Cranbury, NJ, Associated University Presses, 1977.
3. *The Sea Captain’s Wife – A True Story of Love, Race and War in the Nineteenth Century*, Martha Hodes, W.W. Norton, 2004. A Universalist woman marries across the color line.
4. *Killer of the Dream*, Lillian Smith (1897-1966), 1949, rev. and enl New York, Norton, 1961, paperback 1994
5. *The Charge of the Chalice: The Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church Growth & Diversity Story*, John T. Crestwell, Jr., Movement Ministries, Camp Springs, MD, www.dmuuc.org, 2007
6. *The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in America’s “Racial” Crisis*, Orlando Patterson, Basic Civitas, New York, 1997
7. *Black and White Sat Down Together: Reminiscences of an NAACP Founder*, Mary White Ovington, Edited and with a Foreword by Ralph E. Luker, Afterword by Carolyn E. Wedin, The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, New York, 1995
8. *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*, Anthony B. Pinn, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998
9. *Empowerment: One Denomination’s Quest for Racial Justice 1967-1982*, 1983 Study by the UUA Commission of Appraisal (preferred reading)
10. *Long Challenge: The Empowerment Controversy (1967-1977)* Victor H. Carpenter, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, 2003*

Class Session Outline

Each day starts with a half hour lecture. The first class will review a time-line of events. Subsequent lectures will focus on primary historical documents that will be handed out the first day of class. Each lecture will be followed by four one hour sections during the day with breaks, and beginning no later than

4 p.m. each day; the class will end with a covenant group. It uses readings from African-American UUs as the focus for reflection. Three sessions each day will be for a student oral presentation and class feedback.

The other five hour long sessions will be used to:

1. Watch the DVDs “Black Pioneers in a White Denomination,” “Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice within the UUA 1967-1970” and “Breakthrough Congregations 2007: Davies Memorial UU Church.”
2. Review and discuss the newsletter columns prepared by the class members.
3. Review and discuss the R.E. programs prepared by the class members.

Due Dates

October 21 – One page biography and description of your goals for the class.

November 14 - Racial Location Paper due. (I will respond with my reflections and questions before Thanksgiving.)

December 12 – Universalism Theological Reflection Paper.

December 19 – Sankofa appraisal.

January 9 – *Been in the Storm* response.

January 16 - Review of all books due.

January 20 – R.E. program due

January 22 - Newsletter column and

January 27 - Archival materials due on the last day of class.

February 6 - Final paper re-articulating your stance in the world vis-a-vis race is due.

Important Note: If you need an extension you must write me prior to the due date and negotiate an alternative date. This course will be graded Pass/Fail. If more than four of the 17 assignments are submitted late or the sermon, R.E. program or newsletter column not submitted on time you will fail. Furthermore, after February 20 I will register an incomplete. Failure to submit any outstanding materials during the subsequent year will lead to the recording of a permanent incomplete.