

**Afro-Americans
and the
Universalists, Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists**

Winter Intensive
Dr. Mark D. Morrison-Reed
January 2008
9:00 – 5:00
416-660-8745 markmr@hotmail.com

Course Overview:

In this course we will familiarize ourselves with both the Afro-American experience within the liberal religious community and the community's attitudes toward Afro-Americans. Who were these Afro-American women and men and when and how did they become part of this 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 come at these topics from two perspectives: the national and the local.

The secondary aim of this course is to help the students develop 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 their local congregation. The latter will be addressed by presenting this research in the form of sermons, columns and R.E. programs.

Class Size: 15

Time: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Objectives:

1. Understand the historic experience of Afro-Americans within our religious tradition.
2. Understand the response of the movement to Afro-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 and historical research and become familiar with archival practices.
5. Hone your ministerial skill at communicating history in a pastoral manner in congregational context that invites transformation.

Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation.
2. Prior reading of assigned texts and web material and write and submit a 300-400 word review of each. (Due prior to class.)
3. Review material on class website about doing research and participate in on-line discussion about the discoveries you make and challenges you face in the process.

4. Research the history of race relations within your local congregation and locale and write for presentation in class:
- a 15 minute sermon
 - an R.E. session for any age
 - a newsletter column (150 words)
 - Bring copies of the materials collected e.g. tape recordings, sermons, newsletter columns in doing research and write a 300-400 description of the process, including documentation on where the resources are located.
5. Locate yourself in regard to race i.e. describe your heritage, class and neighborhood, when and how did you first become aware of race, what has been your experience with race, your current situation, your beliefs. (1000 words due December 15.)
6. Re-articulate your stance in the world and how you see it affecting your congregational and public ministry. (750 words due within three weeks of the end of the class.)

Course Bibliography (* Can be ordered from the UUA Bookstore)

Required: Read and write 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 Afro-American history class in some other context write up a two page summation of the bibliography and your learnings.
- *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, Mark D. Morrison-Reed, Skinner House, 1994*
- *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*
- *Long Challenge: The Empowerment Controversy (1967-1977)* Victor H. Carpenter, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, 2003* or *UUism and the Quest for Racial Justice*, UUA*
- Harvard Masters Thesis (25 to 1: Experiences of People of Color in Unitarian Universalism 1980-2005). Joseph Santos-Lyons you can download the PDF 180 pages from: <http://radicalhapa.typepad.com/2006SeniorThesisFinalv2.pdf> (This paper should focus, in part, on the relationship between people of color within the UUA.)
- The UU Sankofa Project Online Archive www.uusankofa.org

Optional Texts:

Read at least one of the following books and write 300-400 review and share online with other class members. (Prior to December 31.)

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.

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. *Crisis and Change: My Years as President of the UUA 1967-1977*, Robert N. West, Skinner House, Boston, 2007*
6. *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
7. *The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in America's "Racial" Crisis*, Orlando Patterson, Basic Civitas, New York, 1997
8. *Been in the Storm so Long*, edited by Jacqui James and Mark Morrison-Reed, Skinner House, Boston, 1991*
9. *Varieties of African American Religious Experience*, Anthony B. Pinn, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998

Class session outline:

- Each day starts with a half hour lecture. First class will review a time-line of events. Subsequent lectures will focus on primary historical documents that will be handed out the day before. Each lecture will be followed by four one hour sections during the day with breaks and beginning at 4 p.m. each day will end with covenant groups that will use readings from Afro-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 video of the discussion of Selma between Orloff, Olson, Gordon and Leonard
 2. Meeting with Qiyamah A. Rahman to give her feedback on Sankofa Project website.
 3. Meet with Anthony Heacock to talk about Archives.
 4. Review and discuss the newsletter columns prepared by the class members.
 5. Review and discuss the R.E. programs prepared by the class members.