

Multicultural Congregations as an Act of Faith

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February 12-17, 2012
Washington, District of Columbia

Final Syllabus (Dec 1, 2011)

Who Should Take This Course?

This course is designed for seminarians, ministers, religious educators, congregational lay persons/leaders, or religious workers who want to explore the educational dynamics of a congregation/organization bent on becoming ever more multi-racial, multicultural and/or interfaith. The organizing question is this: what do I need to know in order to foster a more inclusive learning environment that supports the faith development needs of people socialized into different racial/ethnic groups? How do you grow souls capable of loving and working across racial/ethnic traditions and experiences?

Graduate-level course

Students may enroll for full graduate credit, audit or non-credit professional development. The course meets the requirements for Religious Education credentialing. The course is limited to 25 learners. Contact Eliza Bivins-Fink, Director of Student Records at Meadville Lombard for registration details (ebivins@meadville.edu or 773-256-3000, x. 251).

Course Framework

In a world where “race” and culture matter, sustaining an intentional community of faith is neither easy nor accidental. Nested in a broad framework of religious education, the course considers the educational foundations necessary to consider in a multi-racial, multicultural congregation. Notions of *faith development* – i.e., the mental and emotional structures we use to understand the patterns of our lives – will be used as a framework for developing strategies that grow ever more inclusive souls. Said another way: how can a congregation/non-profit setting be transformed into a multi-racial, multicultural and theologically diverse (TD) learning community poised to meet the spiritual and justice demands of the 21st century?

Set in the historic multi-racial/multicultural congregation of All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC and the UU Church of Arlington, Virginia, students will explore the dynamics of an urban and suburban UU congregation by a) experiencing

worship and religious education as an engine for faith development; b) connecting the racial history of a congregation with current vision and practices; c) gaining first-person insights into the dynamics of leadership in a MR/MC/TD congregation, d) exploring models of faith development and organizational change in the context of MR/MC work; and e) connecting learners' personal history to the work of leadership in a MR/MC congregation.

Housing

Students must find their own housing in Washington DC. Strong, inexpensive options are available for UU Bed and Breakfasts in the Greater Washington DC area (see All Souls Church: <http://all-souls.org/community/b&b.php>).

Costs

Students can enroll in this course for full graduate credit, audit (half the rate for a graduate course), or for professional development credit (\$250). Students are also encouraged to use this course as a "rotation," connecting the experiential learning to an existing MLTS, free-standing course (especially, Walking the Talk, RE for a Changing World, and The Method is the Message).

Pre-Course Work

Students will interview three persons in their home congregation on the history of race/ethnicity in their church and/or community. Questions should focus, for example, on how the congregation responded racial moments such as The Civil Rights Movement, school integration, "White flight," The Rodney King/LA riots, immigration struggles (90s), the election of Barack Obama, outreach and faith development targeted to People of Color, responding to the needs of multi-racial children and youth, and so forth. In your write up for our class, write about:

1. What story does the congregation tell itself about its role in responding to the impact of race/ethnicity in its life?
2. What factors are "springboards" for future action? What factors stand as hurdles to future growth?

Students enrolled for academic credit should post interview transcripts in the Meadville Lombard electronic forum, LiveText. Students enrolled for professional development credit should bring the transcripts to the class session in February.

Post-Course Work

Students will submit a final reflective essay on their experience, personal growing edges and the challenges of leading a congregation in the process of becoming more racially/ethnically diverse. Assignment details will be given during the course.

Schedule of Learning

Day One: Sunday, February 12

Focus: Experience and analysis of worship, community building, creativity and imagination

9:15am Attend worship at UU Church of Arlington, VA
4444 Arlington Blvd, Arlington, Virginia 22204. Phone: 703-892-2565

11:15 Attend worship at All Souls Church, Unitarian (DC)
1500 Harvard Street NW, Washington DC 20009 (at the corner of 16th and Harvard) • 202-332-5266

Need a ride? Send e-mail to Mark Hicks by February 1

12:30 Lunch at All Souls (private dining room)

1:30-2:30 Panel Reflections by Revs. Rob Hardies and Carlton Eliot Smith:
observations, questions, insights from both worship services

2:30-4:00 Set learning goals for the week
The role of creativity and imagination in building MR/MC/TD congregations

7:00pm Optional dinner at “BusBoys and Poets” (at your own cost:
multicultural cafe, home to many religious progressives and activists)

Day Two Monday, February 13

Focus: Frameworks of Development, Resistance and Change

9am – 4:30 All classwork done at All Souls Church, Unitarian
1500 Harvard Street (16th and Harvard Streets)

Texts: Immunity to Change, (Kegan)
Welcoming Resistance (Hobgood)

Day Three Tuesday, February 14

Focus: Reconciling Personal History of Race and Culture

Texts: People of the Dream (Emerson)
The Arc of the Universe (Takahashi Morris, et al)
Darkening the Doorway (Morrison Reed)

Day Four Wednesday, February 15

Focus: Building theory, issues for children and youth of color

Texts: Students Congregational Analysis of Race/Ethnicity
Toward a Religious Education for People of Color (Hicks)

Day Five Thursday, February 16

Focus: Transforming experiences into "opportunities for growth"

Texts: All texts from week

Day Six Friday, February 17

Focus: Wrap up, final panel with ministers

Course ends at noon

Texts

(to be completed before the course begins)

Emerson, M.O. (2006). People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Hicks, M.A. *Toward a Religious Education for People of Color*. (Lecture, UUA General Assembly, June 2011.) PowerPoint audio version of lecture:
<http://vimeo.com/29111898>

Hobgood, W.W. *Welcoming Resistance: A path to faithful ministry*. (Alban Press: New York). Order from:
<http://www.alban.org/bookdetails.aspx?id=1184&terms=hobgood>

Kegan, R. (2009). Immunity to Change Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization (Leadership for the Common Good). Harvard Business School Corporation: Boston). [A PDF of focused reading will be sent to students and posted in LiveText.]

Morrison-Reed, M. (2011). Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism (Skinner House: Boston). [Choose at least three narratives for deep study].

Takahashi-Morris, L., Rouche, C., and Spencer, L. (2009) . The Arc of the Universe Is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary (Skinner House: Boston). [Pay special attention to Chapters 10-14 and 29]

About the Instructor

Dr. Mark A. Hicks is the Angus MacLean Professor of Religious Education, and Director of the Fahs Center Collaborative Laboratory for Leaders in Faith and Learning, at Meadville Lombard Theological School (Chicago). He holds a doctorate in Philosophy and Education and a Master's degree in higher education, both from Teachers College, Columbia University in the City of New York. Specializing in "transformative learning," Dr. Hicks comes to Meadville Lombard having collaboratively designed a gold-standard professional development Master's degree that transformed the teaching and learning lives of over 1,800 public school teachers and the thousands of children and youth they serve. His scholarship and teaching has been recognized by peers and students for "Teaching Excellence" as well as making "contributions that stand the test of time" to the field of transformative teaching and research. His scholarship has appeared in journals such as *The Journal of Transformative Education*, *Multicultural Perspectives*, *Educational Studies*, and most recently, the first edition of the Handbook of Research on the Social Foundations of Education. He is a lay leader at All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC. His curricular work is published by the Tapestry of Faith (UUA.org) and, soon, through the Fahs Center at Meadville Lombard Press. Learn more by visiting his website,

<http://web.mac.com/mhicks3>.