

**Starr King School for the Ministry  
Intersession 2010 - 2011**

**Preaching in a Multicultural Context  
Rev. Sofia Betancourt**

**General Description:**

This week long preaching intensive explores advanced work in counter oppressive ministry through worship and the arts. Hands on learning will combine the daily sharing and peer review of brief homilies with exercises aimed at identifying an authentic preaching voice. Questions of how to make our worship services ever more relevant in today's culturally shifting world will be explored through thea/ological study of homiletics through a libratory lens and an engagement with issues of cultural appropriation and misappropriation in Unitarian Universalist liturgical practice. Preaching experience and/or course work in basic homiletics is an expected prerequisite for this class.

**Course Outline:**

Each day of class will be divided into two sections. Lecture and discussion (topics listed below) followed by students preaching short homilies and peer review. The final day (or day and a half depending on class size) will be spent delivering and critiquing full sermons that will draw on work done earlier in the week.

*Session One*

The first session of this course will open with a short liturgy and preaching by the instructor, and will focus on finding an authentic preaching voice that both takes into account personal social location and the call to serve in covenants of right relationship with the various communities found in our congregations, community, and broader society. We will explore the importance of a multicultural approach to Unitarian Universalist homiletics and begin to connect that conversation to theologies of liberation.

*Session Two*

The second session of this course will focus on questions of cultural appropriation and misappropriation in UU liturgical practice. Students will connect the writings and voices of members of underserved groups to their own experiences in our houses of worship and use that dialogue to address the ways in which our insufficiently nuanced understandings of radical hospitality and inclusive worship have hindered our building of the beloved community.

*Session Three*

The third session of this course will delve more deeply into the mechanics of preparing sermons for multicultural and often multi-religious congregations. We will explore the use of text, story, and song and broaden our understandings of the impact of language and

imagery in our sermons. There will also be time in this session for several writers' circle styled exercises to liberate us from our traditional writing forms and open up new methods of approaching the Spirit in our sermon preparation.

#### *Session Four*

The fourth session of this course will be a time to deepen our examination of theological approaches to preaching that come from cultures and religious traditions that at times discomfit Unitarian Universalists. We will engage with the ways in which our cultures and our comfort are shaped by the faith of our childhoods, and what that requires of our commitment to a living tradition that embraces the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

#### *Session Five*

The final session of the course will be devoted to the delivery and peer review of full sermons from class members, drawing on work that has been building throughout the week of the class.

#### **Required Texts:**

1. Smith, Christine Marie, ed. Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives. Wipf & Stock Publishers (November 2008).

**ISBN 10:** 1-60608-142-X, \$20.00 list price.

**Review:** Preaching Justice brings together eight very diverse voices from eight distinct cultural/ethnic communities, challenging them to articulate the specific justice concerns, issues, and passions that give rise to a preaching ministry within their own community and beyond. Theological analyses are offered by these persons representing their particular communities: Kathy Black - persons with disabilities; Martin Brokenleg - Native Americans; Teresa Fry Brown - African Americans; Eleazar Fernandez - Filipino Americans; Justo Gonzalez - Hispanics; Eunjoo Mary Kim - Korean Americans; Stacy Offner - Jews; Christine Marie Smith - lesbians and gays. This volume offers a rare vision of what transformed preaching might sound and look like, and urges that all preaching - whatever community it comes from, whatever community it hopes to reach - be grounded in the sacred acts of listening and knowing.

2. Course Reader (selected examples):

- Bowens-Wheatley, Marjorie. "Cornrows, Kwanzaa and Confusion: The Dilemma of Cultural Racism and Misappropriation"
- Mankiller, Wilma. "Context is Everything," from every day is a good day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women.
- Gonzalez, Justo and Catherine. "The Dynamics of Liberation Preaching," from Liberation Preaching.
- Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria. "On the Birthing Stool: Mujerista Liturgy," from Mujerista Theology.
- Excerpts from Deloria, Vine. God is Red: A Native View of Religion.

- Excerpts from Cannon, Katie. Teaching Preaching: Isaac Rufus Clark and Black Sacred Rhetoric.
- Cannon, Katie. Katie's Cannon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community. (Chapter 9, Womanist Interpretation and Preaching in the Black Church)
- Raboteau, Albert. A Fire In The Bones: Reflections on African American Religious History. (Chapter 7, The Chanted Sermon).