



## **THE HISTORY OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PROPHETIC WITNESS**

**HSFT-4009.IN18**

**3 Units**

**Starr King School for Ministry ~ Graduate Theological Union**

**January Intensive 2018**

### **Instructor Information:**

The Rev. Meg Richardson, Ph.D.

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925-951-3048 (cell)

Availability:

Please email to set up a meeting in person or by phone, Skype, Zoom, or Google Hangout.

### **Meeting Dates and Times:**

1/22/18 – 1/26/18 9:00 am to 5:00 pm January Intersession

### **Course Description:**

This intensive course will explore the history of Unitarian Universalist Prophetic Witness since the Merger in 1961, as expressed in actions voted on by the annual Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. It will combine historical investigation of social justice actions and witness with deep analysis of Unitarian Universalist Polity and how congregations transform affirmation into action. Students will trace the moral arc from 1961 issues like desegregation, disarmament, reproductive rights, migrant farm workers, House UnAmerican Activities and Capital Punishment to those of the present, including Islamophobia, Gun Control, and Black Lives Matter. Required texts will be drawn from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's reading list and will include *The Arc of the Universe is Long* (2009), *The Premise and the Promise* (2001), *Prophetic Encounters* (2012) and *Conrad Wright's Congregational Polity* (1997). Prerequisite: ECO Intensive preferred.

In accordance with Starr King School for the Ministry's pedagogy, students will enter our learning community in a spirit of cultural humility and personal authenticity. Our personal lived experiences and academic sources will inform our investigation of the history of Unitarian Universalist prophetic witness.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Develop an understanding of the arc of Unitarian Universalist prophetic witness from the merger in 1961 to contemporary times.



- Explore central events, figures and coalitions in Unitarian Universalist social justice, and tools for community organizing.
- Research with online tools to track social justice concerns through Unitarian Universalist General Assembly resolutions.
- Employ critical tools to evaluate the history of Unitarian Universalist prophetic witness, especially in regard to the role of privilege and the use of power to counter oppression in all its forms.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Articulate various movements that contributed to the development of Unitarian Universalist prophetic witness.
- Familiarity with Unitarian Universalism's major events, figures and coalitions, as well as tools for community organizing.
- Ability to use various sources and frameworks to investigate social justice issues in Unitarian Universalism.
- Prepare to challenge others to innovate and disrupt systems of oppression through Unitarian Universalist social justice.

### **Course Policies:**

Students are expected to complete all required reading and present their research findings daily to the class.

Please contact the professor regarding accessibility, including special needs or other considerations.

### **Course Assignments:**

#### **Introduction Essay**

For this assignment, students will write a brief personal essay on the class Moodle as an introduction and answer the following questions:

When did you first become aware of social justice? Did your family protest, boycott, march? If you had \$1,000 that you had to give away to an organization or groups, how would you spend the money? In your opinion, what is the greatest threat to global harmony?

In addition, students should briefly discuss their backgrounds, and their professional goals. In the event the Moodle is not accessible by the deadline, students may email the essay to the professor who will post it there. This essay should be brief and is due before class starts:

**Wednesday, January 17th.**

#### **Readings:**

As much as possible, readings will correspond with the [Reading List](#) of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee. All of the required texts, and most of the recommended texts and



supplemental material are from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's list. Books marked with \* should be read in advance. There will be additional materials, such as articles and videos, posted on the class Moodle.

### **Course Structure:**

Each student will be assigned a social justice theme or themes to track over time, each day, during the week we meet as a class. The theme will be assigned when the student requests permission to register for the class. Depending on this theme, there will be additional readings from the Ministerial Fellowship reading list. These themes will conform roughly to the categories available to search on the Unitarian Universalist Association's website's social justice statements, as well as sign-on letters and amicus briefs. Please note it is important to skim through all the statements, as the professor found one on gun control listed under Reproductive Justice.

Each day the class will examine roughly a decade of prophetic witness:

Monday 1/22	1961-1971
Tuesday 1/23	1972-1982
Wednesday 1/24	1983-1993
Thursday 1/25	1994-2004
Friday 1/26	1995-2017

The ten topics that are searchable on the [UUA statements webpage](#) are: "Beliefs and Principles," "Civil Rights and Religious Liberty," "Criminal Justice," "Economic Justice," "Environmental Justice," "International Human Rights and Justice," "International Peace and Conflict," "LGBTQ Welcome and Equality," "Racial Justice, and Reproductive Health." Depending on class size, these may be shared or divided.

### **Presentations:**

There will be daily presentations by students on the developments for their topic in the years covered for that day. These presentations should also incorporate historical context and polity tools.

### **FINAL PAPER:**

There will be one final paper, due Monday, January 29th. It should be a ten to fifteen page reflection paper based on your research for the course.

Your paper should be double spaced lines of text, and conform to the Research and Citation guidelines presented on the Purdue OWL website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

### **Grading:**



Grading will be based 30% on class participation, 30% on demonstrated preparation, and 40% on the final paper. Students are encouraged to take the class Pass/Fail in accordance with SKSM pedagogy: those who wish to receive a letter grade must indicate this in advance upon registration for the course.

### **Required Texts:**

Please read books with \* IN ADVANCE.

\*McKanan, Dan, ed. [\*A Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism Volume Two: From 1900 to the Present\*](#) (2017) ISBN: 9781558967915 \$20.00 pp. 218-538

\*McKanan, Dan, *Prophetic Encounters: Religion and the American Radical Tradition* (2012) ISBN-10: 080701317X \$19.58 pp. 1-15 and 174-277

\*Parker, Kathleen, [\*Sacred Service in Civic Space: Three Hundred Years of Community Ministry in Unitarian Universalism\*](#) (2007) ISBN: 0979558905 \$18.00 pp. 205-294

\*Rasor, Paul [\*Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square\*](#) (2012) ISBN-10: 1558966765 \$ \$7.99 (Kindle)

\*Ross, Warren, [\*The Promise and the Promise\*](#) (2001) ISBN: 9781558964181 \$9.99 (Kindle edition)

\*Stout, Linda, [\*Bridging the Class Divide: And Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing\*](#) (1997) ISBN-10: 0807043095 \$17.48

Please also explore these websites:

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal Reports including reports in PDF (search [here](#)):

<https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/class-coa-report2015.pdf>

<https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf>

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/governance/polity>

[Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](#)

[Coalition of Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Networks](#)

### **Recommended Readings:**

These are from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's List.

Gilbert, Richard [\*The Prophetic Imperative: Social Gospel in Theory and Practice\*](#) (2000) ISBN-10: 1558964118 \$18.00 (eBook requested from the publisher)



Harris, Mark [\*Elite: Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History\*](#) (2010) ISBN-10: 1558965734 \$6.72 (Kindle Book)

Millspaugh, John Gibb, ed., [\*A People So Bold\*](#) (2009) ISBN: 9781558965522 \$16.00

Wright, Conrad, [\*Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice\*](#) (1997) online link

### **Additional Readings by Topic:**

These are also from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's List. Students will want to obtain the books for their assigned areas, and may also wish to do additional reading in other areas. Students are welcome, even encouraged, to use other books and resources for their research in addition to those listed here.

#### **“Beliefs and Principles”**

Adams, James Luther and Beach, George K., [\*JLA: The Essential James Luther Adams\*](#) (1997) ISBN-10: 1558963529 \$14.00

Adams, James Luther and Adams, Jonathan [\*Examined Faith\*](#) (1991) ISBN-10: 080701611X \$29.00

Adams, James Luther, and Stackhouse, Max [\*On Being Human Religiously\*](#) (1976) ISBN-10: 0933840292 \$10.00 - \$30.00 on the secondary market

Buehrens, John and Parker, Rebecca Ann, [\*A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-First Century\*](#) (2010) ISBN-10: 0807001503 \$12.00

Arnason, Wayne and Scott, Rebecca, [\*We Would Be One: A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements\*](#) (2005) ISBN-10: 1558964886 \$9.99 (Kindle edition)

#### **“Civil Rights and Religious Liberty”**

Morrison-Reed, Mark, [\*The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism\*](#) (2014) ISBN-10: 1558967338 \$7.99 (Kindle edition)

Patton, Sally, [\*Welcoming Children with Special Needs\*](#) (2004)

Takahashi, Leslie, Roush, Chip, Spencer, Leon, [\*The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary\*](#) (2009) ISBN-10: 1558965483 \$24.00

Vaughn, Jacqueline [\*Disabled Rights: American Disability Policy and the Fight for Equality\*](#) (2003) ISBN-10: 0878408983 \$17.25 (Kindle edition)

#### **“Criminal Justice”**



Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012) ISBN-10: 1595586431 \$9.99 (Kindle edition)

### **“Economic Justice”**

Although there are no assigned texts on Economic Justice, students might begin research with the following websites:

[Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (Economic Justice)

[Center for Economic and Social Justice](#)

[Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

[The Movement for Black Lives](#)

[National Organization for Women](#)

### **“Environmental Justice”**

Ramsden, Lindi “[A Changing Climate for Ministry](#),” Berry Street Essay (2014)

[Environmental Justice Resources of the UUA](#):

[Commit2Respond](#), [Green Sanctuary](#), [Ethical Eating](#), [Divestment and Socially-Responsible Investment](#), [United Nations Climate Justice Initiative](#)

### **“International Human Rights and Justice”**

William Schulz, “[What Torture’s Taught Me](#),” Berry Street Essay (2006)

Miguel de la Torre, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (2009) ISBN-10: 1570757984 \$10.49 (Kindle edition)

### **“International Peace and Conflict”**

William Schulz, “[What Torture’s Taught Me](#),” Berry Street Essay (2006)

Miguel de la Torre, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (2009) ISBN-10: 1570757984 \$10.49 (Kindle edition)

### **“LGBTQ Welcome and Equality”**

[Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation Program](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Association Living the Welcoming Congregation](#)

Ellison, Marvin and Plaskow, Judith, *Heterosexism in Contemporary World Religion* (2007) ISBN-10: 0829818103 \$14.00

### **“Racial Justice”**

Don Robinson, “[Our Ministry Begins When We Leave This Place](#),” Berry Street Essay (2013)



Takahashi, Leslie, Roush, Chip, Spencer, Leon, [\*The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary\*](#) (2009) ISBN-10: 1558965483 \$24.00

[Black Lives Matter Resources](#) (The link on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's list was to a [blog](#) that has been taken down)

**“Reproductive Health”**

Unitarian Universalist Association, Various Authors, [Our Whole Lives Curricula](#)

Ehrenreich, Nancy, [\*The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood\*](#) (2008) ISBN-10: 0814722318 \$10.00-\$30.00

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**Additional readings, videos and supplemental articles will be provided by the professor on the class Moodle.**