

## Syllabus

### **Bending the Arc: Effective Justice Ministries**

RSFT-2130-01

3 Units

Starr King School for the Ministry – Graduate Theological Union

Fall 2019

#### **Instructor Information:**

Name: Rev. Lindi Ramsden

Email: lramsdn@sksm.edu

Phone Number: 510 549-4727 – office or 916 206-9176 – cell

I am available for phone, Zoom, or in-person appointments. Please email me to find a mutually convenient time.

#### **Meeting Dates, Time, Place:**

Wednesdays, 2:10 – 5:00pm Pacific Time

Starr King School for the Ministry

2441 LeConte Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709

September 4 – December 11 (no class October 23 during reading week)

#### **Course Description:**

In the face of profound climate disruption, racial injustice and economic inequality, people of faith are called to be change agents, co-creators of more equitable, sustainable and life-giving communities. How does change occur, for individuals and larger systems? What particular gifts can faith leaders and communities bring to this work? How can our justice ministries be more theologically grounded, effective, meaningful and sustainable?

This course will utilize a variety of formats: short lectures by the instructor and/or guest speakers, video, participatory exercises and class discussions, and student presentations. Classes will open and close with short readings, songs and/or rituals helping students to build a repertoire for use in justice ministry settings.

In conversation with the instructor, each student will have the opportunity to select and further explore a justice issue of their choice, connecting with local organizing and applying the concepts they learn in class.

Students will write a final paper of 6-8 pages, applying effective justice ministry concepts to the issue of their choice and will present their work to the class.

Interested students are welcome to participate in the optional Border Witness trip from San Diego to Tijuana with UU Justice Ministry of CA November 20-25, 2019.

## **Learning Objectives:**

Students in this course will:

- deepen their spiritual grounding for justice ministry
- engage with foundational and emerging theories of social change,
- learn from historic and current movements for justice,
- harness the power of story for change
- become acquainted with justice networks & leaders: Unitarian Universalist, interfaith, faith/labor, community organizing and legislative
- further develop practical skills to inspire, organize, analyze, structure, resource, sustain, and pastor justice ministries

## **Course Policies:**

Attendance and participation in class discussions are essential components of this course. Students are expected to be prepared to fully and authentically engage in class, to bring their knowledge, questions, growing edges, and mutual support to this learning community. Please be on time. Please refrain from texting, e-mailing or surfing the Internet for personal reasons during class. If you are waiting for an important call (e.g. as a chaplain, on a family emergency), please notify the instructor and sit next to the exit door. If you are a low resident student participating via Zoom video conferencing, please access the class from a space that is free of distraction and outside noise.

Class will meet in the SKSM Fireside Room. We will include low residency students via Zoom.

## **Course Assignments:**

Assignments will vary from week to week, including reading, video and audio, community interviews, short writing assignments, and class presentations. Students will write a final paper of 6-8 pages, applying effective justice ministry concepts to the issue of their choice and will present their work to the class.

## **Grading:**

In keeping with Starr King's educational philosophy, this course is offered on a credit/no-credit basis (grade recorded on the GTU system as P/F). I will provide a narrative evaluation of your work. The assessment will include class attendance, class participation, quality of written assignments, and demonstration of a thoughtful engagement with all elements of the class. If you want to receive a letter grade, please notify me within the first two weeks of class.

## **Required Books, Video and On-line Articles:**

All but the *Organizing for Social Change, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists* are available as an e-book. All books are also available, new and used, in paperback.

1. brown, adrienne mare. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, AK Press, 2017. ISBN-13: 9781849352604
2. Bobo, Kim, Jackie Kendall and Steve Max. *Organizing for Social Change 4th Edition: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*, Forum Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-09842752-1-2

3. Gibb Millspaugh, John, editor. *A People So Bold: Theology and Ministry for Unitarian Universalists*, Skinner House Books, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-55896-552
4. Solnit, Rebecca. *Call them by Their True Names: American Crisis (and Essays)*, Haymarket Books, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-60846-946-8
5. Stout, Linda. *Collective Visioning: How Groups Can Work Together for a Just and Sustainable Future*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011. ISBN: 978-1605098821
6. Luiselli, Valeria. *Tell Me How it Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*, Coffee House Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-56689-495-1

### **On-line Videos/Articles/Websites:**

1. Center for Story Based Strategy  
<https://www.storybasedstrategy.org/tools-and-trainings>
2. Coates, Ta-Nehesi. *The Case for Reparations*, The Atlantic. June, 2016  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
3. DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility*, International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, Vol 3 (3) (2011) pp 54-70 [libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/download/249/116](http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/download/249/116)
4. Pope Francis. *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' On Caring for our Common Home*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 2015  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)
5. George Marshall with George Monbiot (2014) Video "Don't Even Think About It"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdAifpWgh4g>
6. McKibben, Bill. Recalculating Climate Math, New Republic, Sept. 22, 2016.  
<https://newrepublic.com/article/136987/recalculating-climate-math> (note, if you have not read the original article this references *Global Warming's Terrifying New Math*, Rolling Stone, July 19, 2012, you can find that here:  
<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>
7. Lopez, Mark. *Segregated by Design* (video documentary based on the book, *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein) 2019 <https://www.segregatedbydesign.com>
8. Momentum website <https://www.momentumcommunity.org/>
9. Ramsden & Slattery (2014) Video: *Thirsty for Justice: The Struggle for the Human Right to Water*, UU Justice Ministry of CA & Environmental Justice Coalition for Water. Viewing time, 38 minutes <https://ejcw.org/index.php/thirsty/>
10. Solnit, Rebecca. "Hope is an embrace of the unknown: Rebecca Solnit on living in dark times", The Guardian, July 15, 2016  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jul/15/rebecca-solnit-hope-in-the-dark-new-essay-embrace-unknown>
11. Takahashi, Leslie. *Truth Trauma and Transformation: Embracing the Cracks and the Gold*, Berry St. Essay, 2019 <https://www.uua.org/page/BerryStreet>
12. UUA, *Inspired Faith, Effective Action: A Social Justice Workbook for Unitarian Universalist Congregations*. <https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/washingtonoffice/ifea.pdf>

**Choose an additional book that is based in a personal narrative or story to deepen your understanding of an issue. Use one of the suggested books, or speak to the instructor about choosing a different book.**

- Thompson, Gabriel, Editor. (2017) *Chasing the Harvest: Migrant Workers in California Agriculture*, Verso. ISBN: 9781786632210
- Stout, Linda, (1996) *Bridging the Class Divide: And Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing*, Beacon Press. ISBN-13: 978-0807043097
- Regan, Margaret (2010). *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona Borderlands*, Beacon Press. ISBN: 978-0-8070-0130-1
- Coates, Ta-Nehesi (2015). *Between the World and Me*, Spiegel & Grau. ISBN 978-0812993547
- Stephenson, Bryan. (2015) *Just Mercy*, Spiegel & Grau, ISBN: 978-0812984965
- Stephenson, Wen. (2015). *What We're Fighting For Now is Each Other: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice*, Beacon Press. ISBN: 978-080708840
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. (2016). *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, The New Press, NY. ISBN: 978-1-62097-225-0

#### **Additional Resources (optional)**

- Barber II, The Rev. Dr. William J. *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics and the Rise of the New Justice Movement*, Beacon Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8070-8360-4
- Morrison-Reed, Mark D. *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism*, Skinner House Books, ISBN: 978-1558967335
- Alexander, Michelle. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, New York: The New Press.
- Rasor, Paul. (2012) *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square*, Skinner House Books, 2012 ISBN: 978-1-55896-676-5
- Solnit, Rebecca. (2016) *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Haymarket Books. ISBN: 978-1-60846-576-7
- Mishra-Marzetti, Manish & Nordstrom, Jennifer, eds. *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*, Skinner House Books, 2018.
- Welch, Sharon D. *After the Protests Are Heard: Enacting Civic Engagement and Social Transformation*, New York University Press, 2019

**Classes will time to connect with Spirit using readings, song, art work, facilitated group exercises or theological reflections suitable for use in congregational and organizing settings.**

This class relates to SKSM Threshold # 2 “Prophetic Witness and Work” and UUA Ministerial Fellowship Competencies #4 “Social Justice in the Public Square.”