



SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.
“The Social Justice Network”

2017 Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference

Seminary Credit – 2017 Winter Intensive

Course: Sacred Memory and Honoring Ubuntu

February 20-23, 2017

Virginia Union University, Proctor School of Theology

Richmond, VA

Conference Deans:

Rev. Dr. Keri Day

Associate Professor of Theological and Social Ethics and Black Church Studies

Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth,

Rev. Dr. Obery Hendricks, Jr.

Emeritus Professor of Biblical Interpretation at New York Theological Seminary and a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Religion as well as the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University

Introduction

The aggregate expertise, research, teaching, activism, and pastoral experiences of theologians and pastors at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Pastor Conference afford an unprecedented and unique opportunity for seminarians to partake in a specially designed intensive. The 2017 conference theme and scripture are:

Theme: “The Inward Journey: Return, Remember and Renew”

Scripture: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 NRSV

Course Overview

Purpose and Goal of the Course

The purpose of this course is to explore and analyze the historical and contemporary socio-political and economic implications of Empire in the context of neoliberal globalization. Black and brown people around the world continue to be denigrated and disenfranchised by material *and* psychosocial dimensions of oppression and exploitation. This course then not only focuses on the material inequalities generated by structural injustice but also asks under what conditions healing is possible for marginalized black communities. In particular, black churches will be engaged as sites wherein visions of justice, love, and healing can be envisioned and lived out.

This class will pay special attention to the relationship between structural quests for justice and communal quests for healing. In examining structural quests for justice, an emphasis on social movements and public policy responses will be employed. In discussing communal quests for healing, the class will examine how black prophetic and pastoral theological resources provide forms of sacred remembrance toward the psychosocial repair of black lives. Course readings, reflections, and discussions will be geared toward enabling class participants to use theoretical frameworks toward ministry praxes. The trajectory of the conference presentations and course

readings provide historical, sociological, and ecumenical theological frameworks that wrestle with holistic understandings of the Black Church's witness in the world. These resources will serve as tools to deepen course participants' thinking about the link between the call to prophetic ministry, recovery from moral injury, and engagement in global social justice work.

Why This Course Now?

Religious communities across Africa, Asia, North America, the Caribbean, and Latin America have been subject to the effects of colonialism, capitalism, militarism, sexism and imperialism at the hands of empires that cross geographic borders. Humans around the globe suffer material deprivation *and* psychosocial damage, as they feel the brunt of hunger, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, violence, human and sex trafficking, war and other dynamics adversely effecting the quality of life. Mandates for the deconstruction and reconstruction of ethical and theological understandings of human community are prominent features in contemporary yearnings for new planetary consciousness and spirituality toward transforming oppressive systems and addressing global humanitarian crisis and cultural diversity. At the foundational level, as prophets, we must engage in the work of structural justice and psychosocial healing as we seek to be with and for vulnerable, marginalized people around the world.

Course Objectives

Course objectives are:

- To think theologically and sociologically about the ways in which communities and persons suffer systemic oppression and moral injury, discover where we are in need of repair, and strategize ways to journey together toward lives, ministries, and communities characterized by wholeness;
- To imagine wholeness in ways that heal the communities in which we serve while seeking justice and liberation in ways inclusive of the varieties of religious experience and political realities in the world; and

- To understand how human relatedness intersects with liberation theologies, political values, and ethical responses regarding a range of complex global problems that impact church and society – including poverty, hunger material inequality, the globalization of capitalism and democracy, and their relations to racism, homophobia, gender oppression, war and violence.

Course Requirements for 3 hours semester credit or 5 quarter hours include:

1. Conference registration.
2. Attendance and full participation at all the seminary sessions from February 20-23, 2017.
3. Completion of one 3-5 page reflection paper (in conformity with home institutional requirements) reporting on how this intensive informed and supported an understanding of prophetic social justice ministry.
4. Completion of required readings.

Course registration process:

1. Students at the sponsoring seminaries and related institutions should enroll for this course at their home institution as a part of their winter 2017 schedule. **The requirements and evaluation for credit is determined by the participating Seminary in which you are enrolled.**
2. Other seminarians may select which of the sponsoring seminaries is most appropriate for enrollment and transfer of credit back to their home institution. In all cases, the course registration process and tuition costs are determined by the host seminary.
3. Continuing education units may also be available.

Seminarian Schedule:

Feb. 20, 2017 Required Seminar 9:00 am

Feb. 20, 2017 Opening Plenary 1:30 pm

Feb. 20-21, 2017 Evening Seminarian Activities/Debriefing 9:00pm

Feb. 20-23, 2017 Conference Sessions

*schedule subject to minor changes

Course Readings:

Obery Hendricks, *The Universe Bends Toward Justice: Radical Reflections on the Bible, the Church, and the Body Politic*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.

Obery Hendricks, *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted*. New York: Three Leaves Press, 2006.

Keri Day, *Unfinished Business: Black Women, The Black Church, and the Struggle to Thrive in America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012.

Bell hooks, *Salvation: Black People and Love*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001.

Marla Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.