

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of Religious Studies

Spring 2015 -- REL 4937

Faith in Social Justice

Instructor: Jeanette Smith

Email: jesmith@fiu.edu

Office Hours: by appointment although before class is always convenient

Cell: 305-598-1404

Classroom: DM 193

W 5:00 PM – 7:40 PM

Course Description: This course will explore concepts of social justice within faith traditions and students will have the opportunity to work on a social justice project with a local faith-based organization or house of worship of their choice.

Course Readings

DeYoung, Curtiss Paul. *Living Faith: How Faith Inspires Social Justice*. (Living Faith below)

Publisher: Fortress Press

ISBN-13: 978-0-8006-3841-2

Heidt, Mari Rapela. *Moral Traditions: an introduction to world religious ethics*. (Moral Traditions below)

Publisher: Anselm Academic

ISBN-13: 978-0-88489-749-1

Marquez-Sterling, Guillermo. *Rise of the Spiritual Activist: A Beginner's Guide for Integrating Faith and Justice*. (Spiritual Activist below)

Publisher: WestBow Press

ISBN-13: 978-1-4497-7269-7

There may occasionally be additional articles of interest included in the readings and students should feel free to contact me with any articles or items of interest that they would like to share with the class.

Course Requirements

The class format will include discussions of the readings, visits by outsider presenters, and a social justice faith-based project to be chosen by the student. Students will choose a topic, prepare a one page proposal, work with the organization or group on the topic, prepare a short project results and reflection paper, and present on the project at the end of the semester. The class is designed to be very hands on in a seminar style format. Participation and attendance is key due to the heavy discussion and dialogue component of the class.

Grading: The grading for this course will be as follows:

Attendance and Participation	40%
Proposal for Project	5%
Project	25%
Project Paper & Reflection	20%
Project Presentation	10%

Grading scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	below 60

Reading list: The texts are engaging, fast reads and the amount of reading is balanced so that everyone can keep up. We may need to be somewhat flexible as we accommodate the schedules of our outside guests, but, as much as possible, each guest will be matched to the reading for that particular week.

Schedule

January 14, Week One

Introduction, Syllabus Review, Expectations

January 21, Week Two

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapters 1 & 2 & appendix – pages 1-23, 160-162
Spiritual Activist, Preface & Introduction – pages ix-xxvi, 229
Moral Traditions, Chapter 1, pages 6-9

January 28, Week Three

Topic due
Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 3, pages 25-47
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 1 – pages xxvii-9
Moral Traditions, Chapter 5, pages 59-73

February 4, Week Four

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 4, pages 48-62
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 2, pages 10-34 [remind me of the disclaimer before you read this chapter]
Moral Traditions, Chapter 4, pages 46-58

February 11, Week Five

Proposal due with confirmed project location
Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 5, pages 63-87
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 3, pages 35-44
Moral Traditions, Chapter 6, pages 74-89

February 18, Week Six

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 6, pages 88-102
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 4, pages 45-72
Moral Traditions, Chapter 2, pages 17-31

February 25, Week Seven

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 7, pages 103-120
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 5, pages 73-106
Moral Traditions, Chapter 3, pages 32-45

March 4, Week Eight

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 8, pages 121-135
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 6, pages 105-131
Moral Traditions, Chapter 7, pages 90-105

March 11, Spring Break

March 18, Week Nine

Reading due: Living Faith, Chapter 9 & Epilogue, pages 136-158
Spiritual Activist, Chapter 7, pages 132-158
Moral Traditions, Chapter 8, pages 106-116

March 25, Week Ten

Reading due: Spiritual Activist, Chapters 8 & 9, pages 159-195

April 1, Week Eleven

Reading due: Spiritual Activist, Chapter 10 & Conclusion, pages 196-227

April 8, Week Twelve

Project papers due

April 15, Week Thirteen

Presentations

April 22, Week Fourteen

Presentations

April 29, Exam Week – if we have already finished our presentations, we won't need to meet this week

Course follow-up: If anyone is particularly engaged with his or her topic and would like the opportunity to continue working on an extended project after the semester is over, we can work on setting up an internship for credit for the spring semester. Please let me know as soon as possible if you might like to pursue this option.

Just a few outside activities of interest:

“Selma” – new movie release

Western Studies Institute Conference – January 22 – 23, 9 am – 4 pm (several panels)

Partners in Spirit-Led Action (AFSC) – January 23, 6 pm potluck & 7 pm presentation

Elias Hicks Workshop – February 28 – two part workshop (February 29 Meet for Learning)

Race & Worker Justice (SFIWJ) – March 26, 8 am – 9:30 am

Note regarding conduct: I do not expect any academic conduct issues at all, but felt obligated to include the below. What is far more important to me is how we engage with one another in the class and how we represent ourselves in the community. Social justice issues and the related work can be challenging, particularly within an interfaith context, and I think the crucial point to remember is to be respectful of others at all times, perhaps most importantly when we disagree.

Academic conduct: Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.