

DALE P. ANDREWS FREEDOM SEMINARY

2023 COURSE GUIDE

Course Description and Core Components

This course offers an immersion experience for students who wish to engage and cultivate necessary prophetic voices with communities on the margins—communities contending against systemic injustices that directly impact children and youth. Biblical and theological assumptions justifying institutional complicity with oppressive systems will be challenged. Theological education in collaboration with public theology and contextual practice allow for direct engagement in communal struggles for social justice. This course will include contextual learning to facilitate collective organizing of churches and communities for justice-making.

Learning Goals and Learning Objectives

To reframe and transform religious leadership in view of the sacrality and integrity of children and youth in our commitments to justice-making. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate theological, biblical, and historical mandates and frameworks for child advocacy and child wellbeing ministries.
2. Identify theological foundations for justice and preaching ministries in the effort to build partnerships among faith communities and traditions, including interfaith communities.
3. Demonstrate contextualized learning that includes social analysis, interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., theological, biblical, historical, political, and experiential studies) and practices of ministry through a final project.
4. Describe models of nonviolent direct action organizing that lead to collective action for the justice of God through congregational praxis and public theology.

Questions We Will Explore

1. Who are we in justice work, God's work, in our communities? How are we advocates for a plumbline of justice in our communities? How do we measure justice?
2. What structures perpetuate poverty, mass incarceration, white supremacy, and other forms of systemic oppression that rob children of their safety, future potential, and their freedom to be children?
3. What theologies perpetuate poverty, mass incarceration, white supremacy, and other forms of systemic oppression that rob children of their safety, future potential, and their freedom to be children?
4. In what ways do our embedded theologies reinforce the subordination of children and youth?
5. Based on the readings and videos you viewed, what is a theology of child well-being, and how does it relate to a theology of child advocacy?
6. How can we move faith communities from solely engaging in charity to doing justice work and creating a nation/world that fosters the well-being of all children?
7. How can we develop strong and effective interfaith partnerships to seek the well-being of all children?
8. How do we listen to and learn from and with children and youth? What can we learn from their stories and leadership?

9. How can we work through collective nonviolent direct action organizing to disrupt and dismantle the cradle to prison pipeline?
10. How do we become partners WITH instead of planning programs FOR children and youth who are wounded by the structural violence of poverty, white supremacy, inadequate public education, zero tolerance discipline policies, and the cradle to prison pipeline?
11. How can resilient community be nurtured considering historical traumas that are meeting present trauma?
12. What biblical, theological, and historical resources exist in our traditions to curate theologies of child well-being?
13. What roles might children and youth play in the crafting contextual theologies of child well-being? How might we make space for these roles?
14. Young people under the age of twenty-four are the most diverse generation in American history. What are the theological implications for the reality that these Black and brown youth are more likely to experience poverty, homelessness, food insecurity and violence?
15. How might a theological vision of child well-being inform and national public policy and power-building agenda?
16. Our faith traditions rely upon theological precepts tying small children, their presence, and their nurture with the hope and future of the community. In these traditions, leaders speak of this as the “promise of progeny.” A seminal, yet simple, sacred text is shared by Jewish and Christian communities and recorded in Isaiah 11:6. In it, signs of a peaceable and thriving future, where even natural enemies abide side-by-side, is ushered in by a flourishing toddler. How might we strengthen the tie between the promise of progeny, early childhood development and community thriving?

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Please note, some faculty may establish different or additional requirements, and each faculty will provide specific due dates.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are essential for the success of the student and the course. Students are expected to actively participate in all DAFS sessions and all Proctor Institute sessions. Some professors may require that students keep daily reflection notes in a journal.

Critical Reflection Paper

What surprised you? Challenged you? What did you find most helpful? Disturbing? Prophetic? How does the reading push you to change, to redefine ministry, to work in new ways? What questions would you like to ask the author? What questions did the book raise considering the last two years?

Using the questions above, write a three-page reflection paper on each required text (see “Required Texts and Resources” section below):

Let Your Light Shine
The Measure of Our Success
Thus Far on the Way, Freedom Faith
The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans
“Toward a Theory of Child Well-Being”

And the two sermons:

“When Children Lead” and
“Seen and Not Heard”

Be prepared to engage the content of these texts on Monday, July 17, during the DAFS session. Reflection papers due to your professor before July 11 or the date assigned by your professor.

Please note a critical reflection paper is not a book review. It is *descriptive*, *interpretive*, and *evaluative* of the reading(s):

- a. **It is descriptive.** It describes and identifies what the writer is saying (it succinctly states what the main points are, that is, what is the writer’s thesis)
- b. **It is interpretive.** It gives YOUR interpretation of the meaning of the author’s thesis, or rather it presents your understanding in your words of what the writer means. Here is where you explain how you understand the author and/or text.
- c. **It is evaluative.** It evaluates both the strength(s) and weakness(es) of the author’s arguments/assertions. If you disagree with the author, you must do more than just provide your opinion. Your disagreement must be substantiated by (a) another author you read, (b) research you have done, (c) your own lived experience.

Project Proposal and Final Project

Develop and present a Final Project Proposal at the discretion and date set by the instructor of record at your institution. Required elements of the plan must be discussed and approved by your instructor and must articulate your distinctive contribution to the children’s movement.

Produce a Final Project framed by the course core components, learning goals and objectives, questions we explore, and discussions. This can be a collaborative group project or individual. Due on the date set by the instructor of record at your institution.

The final project must emphasize:

- Listening to and learning from and with children and young people on the margins
- Working / partnering with those struggling with oppression vs. programs for or to
- Addressing systemic, structural oppression vs. individuals only
- Engaging in justice rather than charity

Examples of past projects include:

- Initiating a listening circle and restorative justice process, including a website, to deal with conflict around race/class bias against youth in the neighborhood
- Creating a triptych of paintings with a companion narrative exploring experiences of young people, structures of oppression and possibilities for hope as model for listening to young people and redefining youth ministry
- Creating an ongoing listening circle process for transgender youth in partnership with a community youth center
- Designing partnership for work around gardens, food culture, memories and art with young folks and their families near Latino community center
- Creating booklist, training curriculum and support process for work with parents considering transracial adoptions through local adoption agency
- Omari Booker and Karla McKanders listened to immigrant children and then wrote a children’s book about what they heard and saw
- Seminary/Proctor partnership video created for participating seminary

Required Texts and Resources

Students are expected to come prepared for each class session. This course will require an informed class interaction and the timely completion of all assignments. Your personal schedule must allow you to keep up with the due dates for readings and other assignments. All readings are to be completed before attending the Proctor Institute so you can fully engage in the sessions and seminarian discussions.

Bold text below indicates the author will be participating in the 2023 Proctor Institute.

Required Texts

Blount, Reginald and **Virginia Lee**, editors. (2019). *Let Your Light Shine: Mobilizing for Justice with Children and Youth*

Edelman, Marian Wright. (1993). *The Measure of Our Success*

Linder, Eileen. (2006). *Thus Far on the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy*

Pace, Courtney. (2019). *Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall*

Raghavan, Ramesh and Anna Alexandrova, "Toward a Theory of Child Well-Being," *Soc Indic Res* (2015) 121:887-902

Wright, Almeda. (2017). *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*

Required Multimedia Resources

[CDF website](#), including "[Keep Moving Forward](#)" video

["Something Inside So Strong"](#), CDF Freedom Schools® program

Short [video about Proctor](#) made by Vanderbilt Divinity School seminarian Quentin Cox

["A Nightmare in Broad Daylight,"](#) Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall

Riverside Church, Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, "[Seen and Not Heard](#)"

First Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, "[When Children Lead](#)"
(see "Appendix" below for additional sermons by Dr. Wilson)

2023 Proctor Institute Teaching Faculty

Rebecca (Becky) Davis, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte, Associate Professor of Christian Education, founding chair of Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network; 2018 ENRICH Educator of the Year, Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators, RDavis@upsem.edu

Mary Love, Adjunct Professor of Christian Education, Hood Theological Seminary, author of *Learning through Symbolism and Celebration, An Annotated Bibliography of Afrocentric Resource*,. mlove@hoodseminary.edu

Lorena Parrish, DAFS Co-Dean, Associate Professor of Urban Ministry, Wesley Theological Seminary; Director of the Community Engagement Institute and Center for Public Theology, and Co-Director, Wesley's Children and Youth Ministry and Advocacy Certificate Program, lparrish@wesleyseminary.edu

Patrick B. Reyes, DAFS Co-Dean, Sr. Director of Learning Design, Forum for Theological Exploration, host of the Sound of the Genuine podcast, author of *The Purpose Gap and Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community and Surviving to Adulthood*, preyes@fteleaders.org

Christophe Ringer, Associate Professor of Theological Ethics and Society, Chicago Theological Seminary; author, *Necropolitics: The Religious Crisis of Mass Incarceration in America*. christophe.ringer@ctschicago.edu

Tiffany Trent, Chair of Theatre & Drama and Associate Professor, Univ of Michigan, and Adjunct Faculty, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, TTrent@mtso.edu; Chair and Associate Professor, Theatre and Drama, University of Michigan, tutrent@umich.edu.

Appendix

Additional Resources

[“I Am Not Your Negro”](#) (video)

James Baldwin’s [“Letters from a Region in My Mind”](#) in the New Yorker (essay)

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, selected sermons and presentations on child well-being

2019, Proctor Institute: [“Whose Sanctuary is This Anyway?”](#)

2021, Festival of Faiths: [“We Don’t Allow Black Children to be Children”](#)

2022, Rainbow Push Annual Conference Keynote: [“Diary of a Black Church Kid”](#)

2022, Garrett Seminary Opening Convocation: [“The Children’s Sermon”](#)

2022, Riverside Church: [“Prayer Partners”](#)

Civil Rights | Watch Makers: Women Who Make America on Women in the Civil Rights *Eyes on the Prize* documentary series (video)

Andrews, Dale P. (2002). *Practical Theology for Black Churches*.

Andrews, Dale P. and Robert London Smith Jr., editors. (2015). *Black Practical Theology*.

Baldwin, Lewis and Victor Anderson, editors. (2018). *Revives My Soul Again: The Spirituality of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Barber II, William J. (2016). *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*.

Crutchfield, Carmichael. (2020). *The Formation of a People: Christian Education and the African American Church*.

Brooks, Adrian. (2015). *The Right Side of History: 100 Years of LGBTQ Activism*.

De La Torre, Miguel. (2018). *Burying White Privilege: Resurrecting a Badass Christianity*.

Daley-Harris, Shannon. (2016). *Hope for the Future: Answering God’s Call to Justice for Our Children*.

Douglas, Kelly Brown. (2021). *Resurrection Hope: A Future Where Black Lives Matter*.

Ellison, Gregory. (2020). Editor, *Anchored in the Current*; (2017) *Fearless Dialogues*; (2013). *Cut Dead but Still Alive*.

Enns, Elaine and Ched Myers. (2021). *Healing Haunted Histories*. (2009) *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Volumes I and II*.

Fluker, Walter. (2018). *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America*.

Francis, Leah Gunning. (2015). *Ferguson & Faith: Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community*.

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth. (2011). *Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families*.

Garza, Alicia. (2020). *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart*.

Harding, Vincent. (2010). *Hope and History*. (2008). *Martin Luther King Jr.: The Inconvenient Hero*.

Harvey, Jennifer. (2019). *Raising White Kids*.

Heschel, Abraham. (1962, 2001). *The Prophets*.

Hicks, Derek S. (2012). *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*.

Janssen, Denise, editor. (2015). *Educating for Redemptive Community*

Kaba, Mariame. (2021). *We Do This 'Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*.

Khan-Cullors, Patrisse and Asha Bandele. (2017). *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*.

Lightsey, Pamela R. (2015). *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology*.

Marbury, Herbert. (2015). *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in the African American Quest for Freedom*.

Menakem, Resmaa. (2021) *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies*.

Moss III, Otis. (2015). *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair*.

Myers, Ched with Matthew Colwell. (2012). *Our God Is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice*.

Parker, Evelyn. (2010). *The Sacred Selves of Adolescent Girls: Hard Stories of Race, Class, and Gender*.

Pearse, Angie. (2010). *Doing Contextual Theology*.

Reyes, Patrick. (2021). *The Purpose Gap*. (2016) *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community, and Surviving to Adulthood*.

Ross, Rosetta E. (2003). *Witnessing & Testifying*.

Secours, Molly. (2020). *White Privilege Pop Quiz: Reflecting on Whiteness*.

Sheppard, Phillis. (2011). *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology*.

Salvatierra, Alexia. (2014). *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World*.

Smith, Linda T. (2012, revised 2nd ed.). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

Stevenson, Bryan. (2014). *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.

Taylor, Mark Lewis. (2015, revised and expanded, 2nd ed.). *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*.

Thurman, Howard. (reprint, 1949). *Jesus and the Disinherited*.

Washington, James M. (2001 ed.). *A Testament of Hope*.

West, Traci. (2019). *Solidarity and Defiant Spirituality: Africana Lessons on Religion, Racism, and Ending Gender Violence*. (2006) *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*.

Wimberly, Anne. (2005). *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*.

Wolf, Janet. (2019). *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship available from the [Children's Defense Fund's store](#)*

Wong, Kent, Ana Luz Gonzalez and James M. Lawson Jr. (2016). *Nonviolence and Social Movements: The Teachings of Rev. James M. Lawson Jr. ([CDF online bookstore](#))*

Wright, Almeda. (2017). *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*.