

Deconstructing Racism: How Did We Get Here ?

**A Seminar Presented for First Presbyterian Church
October 26 to Nov 30, Mondays, 6:00-8:00 PM**

Facilitators: Linda Beatrice Brown and Marilyn Wolf

Course Description:

The seminars will introduce and make familiar that history that forms the background to the activities in Greensboro NC that led to the opening of the city's public accommodations, and to the end of "Jim Crow" in Greensboro in 1964. The classes will provide learning experiences that create in participants a deeper understanding of the Civil Rights Movement as it evolved in Greensboro, through the use of selected short texts from African American Literature. The dates of the texts will range from the unknown origins of the spiritual's composition to the 1960's, and will include passages from such writers as Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells Barnett, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King. The course will introduce a variety of experiences that vary from exposure to African American spirituals, poetry, and essays and include group discussions and guest speakers. We will examine our response to the material in a way that expands our knowledge of the history, depth and pervasive power of systemic racism and oppression in our country. We will also ask questions which invite the self-reflection needed to build a personal foundation for our work in the pursuit of justice and equality for all.

Course Goals

By looking at three major periods of American history: the institution of slavery; the Reconstruction and the movement to gain civil rights, the course will attempt to clarify how we arrived at the movement of the 60's, and finally the sit-ins and beyond in Greensboro. We want to increase our understanding of how we have arrived today at this pivotal and critical time.

Ultimately we want to be inspired by knowing more about the experience of those who have walked the path of seeking justice before us. We examine the literature as a way into the hearts and minds of those experiencing this effort. We want to know how faith, hope and love can be taught by standing up for what is right, and how peace can prevail within such a challenge.

Course Structure

Seminar I- Introduction to the course :The Institution of Slavery:

Understanding White supremacy as a tool

Part I- The life of the enslaved and their literature

Part II- Spirituals and slave narratives

Seminar II- The Failure of Reconstruction

Part I- a brief history

Part II- the literature of resistance

Seminar III- The Movement to Transform

Part I- The rebirth of resistance in the 60's

Part II- Beyond the 60's.

Participants are encouraged to explore the reading list. However, *Belles of Liberty* by Linda Beatrice Brown, gives us an important look into the Movement in Greensboro, and James Baldwin's, *The Fire Next Time*, is a passionate and intense statement from a major spokesperson of the Civil Rights Movement.