This course is a study of the major writings of Howard Thurman. Howard Thurman, the mystic, prophet, poet, philosopher and theologian, who promotes the idea that out of religious faith emerges social responsibility. Thurman's understanding of the role of meditation and the contemplative life informed his every action. As a man of quiet spirit he found the unity in all living things, which created for him a harmony with nature, self, people and, more importantly, with God. Through his writings we will explore that harmony and center ourselves for a deeper spiritual journey.

**Thursdays from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., beginning January 23, 2014**

**Course Objectives:**

1. Participants will cultivate an awareness of the theology of Howard Thurman and the spiritual disciplines that inform his mysticism.
2. Participants will understand the connection between Thurman's theological praxis and his belief in the interconnectedness of all living things.
3. Participants will examine issues of race, ethnicity, social boundaries and their impact on faithful engagement in the world.
4. Participants will engage in a broad based self-examination of faith in the public square and how an authentic (self-identified) spirituality informs vital action.

**Note:**
While Thurman's theology is bottomed in a Christian perspective, his dialogical engagement with other faith traditions makes the study of his spirituality of particular interest to those desiring to break barriers in the search for common ground.

**Course Requirements:**

- Class attendance is a must. Excused absence will be granted, but more than two absences will result in a 10% lowering of the grade.
- Participation in class requires assigned readings and preparation to lead group discussion with a 15 minute overview of assigned topic.
- Preparation and delivery of classroom exercise in spirituality. Please see full outline for details. All written assignments must conform to Hartford Seminary writing guidelines.

*(Please check: [www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaperguide.pdf](http://www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaperguide.pdf))"
REQUIRED READING:


Course Outline: The Essential Writings of Howard Thurman (WS-627)  
Spring, 2014

January 23: Introduction to Howard Thurman the philosophy and influences that bottomed his understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things.

January 30: The man and the myth, Howard Thurman in his own words: we examine the influences that helped to mold his thought and action. 
**Required reading:** With Head and Heart: the Autobiography of Howard Thurman.

February 6: Thurman's understanding of the requirement to love as the basis of all relationships.  
**Required reading:** Jesus and the Disinherited

February 13: The unity of all living things.  
**Required reading:** The Search for Common Ground.

February 20: Discovering the light in darkness.  
**Required reading:** Luminous Darkness.

February 27: Finding wholeness in the present an examination of the religious insights of the Negro Spirituals.  
**Required reading:** Thurman's Deep River and the Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death.

March 6: Meditations of an Apostle of Sensitivity.  
**Required reading:** Deep is the Hunger: Meditations for Apostles of Sensitivity.

March 13: Meditations of an Apostle of Sensitivity.  
**Required reading:** Centering Moment

March 13: Assignment Due:

March 13, 2012. Each participant must write a commentary on one of the meditations from Thurman. Participants should think critically as they attempt to move outside their traditional boxes. As you immersed yourself in the meditation, what were your reflections, reactions and what resonated with your spirit? What, if anything, made you uncomfortable from your encounter with the thoughts embedded in the meditation? This personal reflection should be no more than 10 pages.
March 20: Meditations of an Apostle of Sensitivity.  
*Required reading:* The Inward Journey.

March 27: Meditations of an Apostle of Sensitivity.  
*Required reading:* Meditations of the Heart.

April 3: Sermons of the Apostle.  
*Required reading:* Thurman's The Growing Edge.

April 10: Understanding Thurman's Mysticism.  
*Required reading:* Mysticism and the Experience of Love; Mysticism.

April 17: Reading Week.

April 24: Understanding Thurman's Mysticism.  

May 1: Synergy and the role of spiritual awareness.  
*Required reading:* Disciplines of the Spirit. Final presentations and course wrap-up.

**Assignments Due:**

- Each participant will be required to present in class a reflection and/or insight on the readings for that session and be prepared to facilitate discussion of the books in review. Please have a copy of your presentation available for each participant in the class. Please limit your insights to 15 minutes.

- Each participant is required to keep a journal during this course and make entries as they discover the “aha moments” and clues into their own spiritual pilgrimage. Journals will be checked periodically throughout the course.

- Each participant is required to write a weekly prayer/meditation to be shared with fellow participants.

- Each participant must present a final term paper (due May 1st) on one or more aspects of Howard Thurman. How does Thurman’s understanding of the interconnectedness of life inform your ministerial context and/or how does it affect you personally? From this launching pad, examine the ways, if any, Thurman can be an asset in your future ministerial endeavors. Your topic must be reviewed with the instructor prior to beginning the term paper.
**ASSESSMENT**

10% Attendance  
20% Mid-semester reflection paper  
30% Class participation and engagement  
40% Final integrated paper/project. Details to be distributed in class.

**RECOMMENDED READING:**


