Special Programs
Justice and Peace Studies

Concern for Justice and Peace and interest in the way religion has both encouraged and resisted positive social change can be found throughout the Iliff curriculum. Justice and Peace courses approach movements for social change not only in the context of scripture and tradition, but also through those disciplines that foster social analysis: political theory, economics, sociology, and the study of social change. Students evaluate strategies to counter the ways in which the tools of injustice are used to create interlocking, self-justifying and damaging systems.

Building upon strong spiritual foundations, the program supports Iliff’s commitment to education that responds to the challenges of race and racism, class and economic exploitation, sexism/heterosexism, and militarism. The world’s diversity and the challenges of sharing power between dominant and non-dominant cultures are explored from faith perspectives. Students are encouraged to explore and develop personal and community strengths of spirit, which have carried social activists through their struggles against great odds. Adjunct faculty who teach Justice and Peace and Social Change courses often include experienced community activists and other justice and peace workers who bring their expertise and experience to the classroom.

The Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program

Through cooperative efforts with the Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program (BSFP) at Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs, Iliff is able to offer credit for a two-year program in Spiritual Formation that prepares and certifies students as a Spiritual Director. The Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program may be added to the MDIV, MASJE, MAPSC, or MTS degrees as elective credit. Similar opportunities to earn Iliff elective credit for participation in other select spiritual direction training programs are available. For program details, please see the Master’s Student Handbook or contact the Dean of the Chapel.
Veterans of Hope Project

The Veterans of Hope Project is an interdisciplinary initiative on religion, culture and participatory democracy. The VOHP was founded in 1997 by late activist-historians Vincent and Rosemarie Freeney Harding and is based on the campus of the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, CO where Vincent was a faculty member for nearly a quarter of a century.

During the 1960s, the Hardings worked in the southern freedom movement as representatives of the Mennonite Church and as an “advance team” for civil rights organizations that were planning major desegregation campaigns. After years in the South, Rosemarie and Vincent devoted their lives to organizing in a variety of peace and justice struggles and to teaching, counseling, and writing about the history and potential of our nation as a multicultural democracy.

The Veterans of Hope Project was initially founded as a project to document and share the life histories of veteran activists. Its work has evolved over the years to include significant intergenerational, international and arts-based community projects – all focused around the role of spirituality, hospitality, compassion and culture in social justice work.

During this time when many in our country are offering a profound critique of state violence against unarmed Black and Brown citizens, and when people of all backgrounds are joining together in protest of the unwarranted killings, we remember the questions that Vincent and Rosemarie (and Grace and Jimmy Boggs, Anne Braden, Victoria Jackson Gray Adams, Dolores Huerta, Ruby Sales and many of our other veterans) consistently asked of us – “What kind of country do we want to create? What beauty can we imagine for ourselves, our children and nation? What greater sense of community can we develop together out of the ashes of our distress? How can we take better care of ourselves and each other?”

In collaboration with Iliff and other community partners, the Veterans of Hope Project responds to and creates opportunities to share the wisdom and resources of our activist network with a younger generation. We are
especially committed to raising the voices of marginalized communities and recognizing the value of indigenous cultural and spiritual values for the healing work of social justice organizing.

Vincent passed away in May 2014 and Rosemarie died in March 2004. Their daughter, Dr. Rachel Harding and niece, Ms. Gloria Smith, together with coworkers, family, friends and supporters, continue the work of the Veterans of Hope Project. For more information, please contact Ms. Gloria Smith through the Veterans of Hope Project Office at gsmith@iliff.edu. Please also visit www.veteransofhope.org.

Courses at Affiliate Institutions

Students are encouraged to consult advisors about appropriate courses at the University of Denver and Denver Seminary. To cross-register, a student must be enrolled as a full-time degree student at Iliff. Cross-registration is not available in the summer quarter. Cross-registration procedures are explained in the Master’s Student Handbook. More information about cross-registration is also available from the Registrar.