

The following was approved as the standard of online racial justice training by the Standards for Accreditation Committee of the Office of Vocation on November 27, 2023.

Racial Justice Courses (via [CHURCHx](#))

Purpose of Training

The development of this training was mandated at the 39th General Council 2006 that all active ministry personnel would receive training on racial justice towards becoming an intercultural church and hence promote reconciliation. In addition, the General Council in 2020 committed towards becoming an anti-racist denomination. As a result, this training has become a key hub to support both commitments, with the end goal towards dismantling systemic racism in the church/denomination.

This training will be delivered via the [CHURCHx](#) platform using both asynchronous and synchronous learning environments. The training will consist of two courses, each comprising five modules. Modules 1, 2, and 4 will be asynchronous, and Modules 3 and 5 will be synchronous.

Course 1 is mandatory for all ministers in The United Church of Canada. It is an introduction to racial justice and has three cohorts:

1. Indigenous and Racialized Ministers in North America
2. White Ministers in North America
3. Ministers Applying for Admission from Outside North America

Although strongly recommended to all United Church ministers, Course 2, "What Now: Action Plans to Dismantle Systemic Racism," is not mandatory.

The training aims to provide the participants with a space to reflect and to take actions to address the issues of racial justice in their ministry engagements. This includes engagement (1) within the scope of the participants' leadership capacity as ministers in their respective faith communities, and (2) in daily life experiences in society, both mainstream and in the margins.

Synopsis of Course 1: "[Mandatory Webinar on Racial Justice](#)"

This course will focus on raising awareness and widening one's knowledge of issues of racial justice. These will be examined at the personal level and in relation to other peoples we encounter within the church and in the public.

The course will provide a space to tell individual stories of racism from personal experience. For those in the Indigenous and racialized ministers group, these could be stories of victimization. For those in the White ministers group, these could be stories of personal encounter when they have witnessed racism, or how complicity with racism is part of White privilege. The session will also include a history of racism in Canada, including the dynamics of power based on White privilege. A model of the "circle of oppression" will also be examined.

Course 1 will also seek to widen the knowledge of racism among the participants. The White ministers group will explore the subject of White privilege. The Indigenous and racialized ministers group will explore other expressions of racism, including shadeism and in-group bias. Where appropriate, biblical examples will be named.

Since Course 1 is the mandatory component of racial justice education, we will be meeting in separate groups according to racial identities: one group of people who self-identify as Indigenous or racialized, and another group of people who self-identify as White. A third group will be for those in the process of applying to the Office of Vocation who are currently living outside North America. The rationale for this separation is based on the difference in learning needs between racialized people and White people. Because of their lived experiences, racialized people likely have different day-to-day realities from those of White people. At times, in past educational sessions, racialized people were often called on to “educate” White people about racism but did not necessarily have opportunities to do their own learning. And White people have sometimes felt that the need to self-censor because they did not want to say anything “wrong” in front of a racialized person, even if they had genuine questions about racial justice. As a result, not everyone was receiving the full educational experience.

Synopsis of Course 2: [“What Now: Action Plans to Dismantle Systemic Racism”](#)

Course 2 will focus on moving from the victimizing power of racism to creating, affirming, and transforming space. This space will be a place of reconciliation as defined by healthy intercultural relations. Planning how to create healthy intercultural relations in The United Church of Canada is the end goal of these sessions.

The course will emphasize the importance of naming the spaces impacted by power relations in The United Church of Canada, where transformation needs to happen. A vital part of this transformation towards healthy intercultural relations includes the redistribution of power.

Course 2 also aims to include strategic planning, using appreciative inquiry, on how to work towards equitable intercultural relations.

Unlike Course 1, Course 2 will combine the Indigenous and racialized group with the White group. Whereas the primary objective of Course 1 is to identify the issues and dynamics of systemic racism, the key emphasis of Course 2 is to explore the spaces of transformation, which will introduce the issues of equity and redistribution of power within the racial justice framework.

Course 1 does not quite take the participants deep enough where they are able to explore possible actions to respond to systemic racism. Course 2 would complete the learning circle, which is also known as the hermeneutical circle. In addition, while Course 1 provides the tools for individual understanding and awareness of systemic racism, Course 2 seeks to provide the tools for community responses to racial justice issues that affect ministering in diverse United Church contexts.

Pedagogical Approach

These online workshops attempt to be as interactive as possible, especially between participants. Except for necessary time spent on learning terms and their meanings to create a common language and understanding, the main focus is on transformative learning towards systemic change.

Training Outcomes

1. The participant will develop common and foundational awareness of racial justice issues.
2. The participant will deepen their shared analysis of racial justice issues.
3. The participant will identify that racism is grounded in White supremacy, and will build an understanding of the history and function of White supremacy to better inform and direct the work of racial justice.
4. The participant will build a collective capacity towards a system of healthy intercultural relations.
5. The participant will strengthen their collective resolve towards reconciliation through appreciative inquiry.

Training Outputs

A Course 1

- Module 1 Introduction to the course
- Module 2 Introduction to key terms
- Module 3 Racism in Canada (for Indigenous and racialized ministers and for ministers outside North America)
Racism in Canada and circle of oppression (for White ministers)
- Module 4 Impact of White privilege, culture of White supremacy, and colonial doctrines on systemic racism
- Module 5 Microaggression, detouring, and shadeism (for Indigenous and racialized ministers and for ministers outside North America)
Microaggression when talking about race (for White ministers)

B Course 2

- Module 1 Picturing Systemic Racism: Impact of power using the circle of oppression
- Module 2 Indigenous-Racialized Spaces and Equitable Spaces in an Intercultural Context
- Module 3 Building Capacity Using Appreciative Inquiry
- Module 4 The Value of Appreciative Inquiry to Racial Justice/Equity
- Module 5 A Personal Engagement Towards Racial Justice (or Racial Equity)