

North Central College MLK Day Teach-In Sessions

Monday January 18, 2021

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9:00 am sessions:

Allyship to advocacy to activism: A student led discussion on turning ideas into action

Presenters: Haven Denson, Undergraduate Student; Milia Harris, Graduate Assistant - Center for Social Impact

Description: The events of 2020 have sparked a wave of interest in learning and doing more about injustice and discrimination in our communities; however, conversations around these topics can often feel complicated. Drawing from the student-initiated Activism Resource Center through the Center for Social Impact, student leaders will share their experiences and lead an interactive dialogue around the journey from allyship to advocacy to activism. Participants will learn the importance of social movements, ways to get engaged in the process, and methods for turning ideas into effective action.

Silence is not an option: Using interrupter phrases to promote anti-racism

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer K. Shah, Assistant Professor of Education

Description: Can you name a time when you were silent against racism? Do you wish you had spoken up? What stopped you? Would you know what to say now? The first part of this workshop will target reasons why some of us cannot think on our feet when we experience everyday forms of racism and share interrupter phrases we can use in future instances. If time allows, we will practice these using these phrases. Resources to continue the work will be shared.

Writing and speaking that matters: A rhetorical perspective on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's communication, life, and work

Presenters: Kelli Jeanne Ling, Instructor of Communication, Rev. Keith Kelsey-Powell, Pastor of Davis Junction United Methodist Church, Dr. Megan Sullivan, Associate Professor of Rhetoric, Boston University

Description: The presenters will discuss why ethics in public speaking is still vital and why Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" civil rights speech continues to resonate with modern audiences, especially when related to the Black Lives Matter movement and social progress. Dr. King's words help us to understand and appreciate the ethical considerations of speaking out and how words have power. He reminds us to stay true to our values of equality and confronting of racism through intellectual discourse as well as appropriate non-violent social agitation.

Moving beyond solidarity and toward anti-racism in STEM

Presenter: Dr. Joanna Weremijewicz, Assistant Professor of Biology

Description: Recently, academics across the world have united with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) in their calls to eliminate racism and improve diversity within STEM fields on Twitter using hashtags like #BlackintheIvory and #BlackinNature. To make substantive change, it is important to

move beyond standing in solidarity and toward anti-racist actions in our workspaces. Unfortunately, STEM fields are often wrongly considered to be “neutral” because numbers and molecules are not associated with color. The presenter will use the paper “Ten simple rules for building an anti-racist lab” by Chaudhary and Berhe (2020) to lead this discussion to identify racism in STEM and provide ways for us to combat it.

10:00 am sessions

Being Black American at a predominately White institution

Presenter: Mikel Mays, Undergraduate Student

Description: The presenter will share his experience growing up as a Black man in the suburbs. He will describe his experiences striving to create a better life and learning at a predominately White institution. He will introduce a call of action on how to support change and increase awareness of issues happening on colleges campuses and in other communities. Lastly, he will give you tactics on how to support minority students in academic organizations.

Racial reconciliation: A process, not an event

Presenter: Dr. Sohinee Roy, Associate Professor of English

Description: The lecture will draw on South Africa's racial history and attempts at racial reconciliation to argue that reconciliation is not accomplished through a single event such as public apology, or truth commission. Instead, racial reconciliation is a dynamic and unending process of acknowledging the consequences of difference in experience of shared history so that a positive racial dynamic can be created. The presenter will examine the role of apology, reparations, and symbolic gestures in the reconciliation process. In addition to South Africa, the presenter will also draw on previous, albeit rare, attempts at reparations in the United States.

Breaking the silence about the white supremacist violence that ended reconstruction's advances and created the Jim Crow south

Presenter: Dr. William C. Barnett, Associate Professor of History

Description: Many American students learn of the successes of 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights activists fighting against segregation, but few understand the disturbing origins of the Jim Crow society they challenged. Many Americans mistakenly assume voting restrictions and segregation began when slavery ended, because they never learned about Black voting during Reconstruction that sent more Black men to Congress in the 1870s than in any decade until the 1970s. But in a mistaken effort to depict American history as a story of steady progress, educators often fail to examine the Reconstruction era of racial progress, its violent reversal through Jim Crow and parallels to today.

Supporting men of color: Understanding the needs and how to encourage engagement on campus

Presenters: Stephania Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs; Augustine DeBacco, Assistant Director of Residence Life; Khadeil Ergas, Graduate Assistant - Multicultural Affairs

Description: The challenges men of color face in higher education nationally are reflected at North Central College. Some of those challenges include degree attainment, lack of mentorship, and low levels of engagement. This presentation will provide the context to understand the needs of men of color on

college campuses, initiatives driven by the Office of Multicultural Affairs to offer support, and ways to further encourage engagement and involvement, especially in our new virtual climate.

11:00 am sessions

Lessons learned: Race & the criminal justice system

Presenters: Dr. Raleigh Blasdel, Assistant Professor of Sociology, students from Race and the Criminal Justice System course

Description: Students from the Fall 2020 "Race & the Criminal Justice System" sociology course will share their final projects from the class and discuss both the meaning of and inspiration for the creative artifact, as well as teach a short lesson related to that topic. The professor will facilitate dialogue between the students and the audience.

Understand yourself to be a better leader: Exploring self-identity, values and leadership

Presenter: Margaret Stacy-Duffy, Assistant Director of Career Development, Daniel Wallace, Undergraduate Student

Description: In this interactive workshop, the presenter will focus on the topic of leadership development through the lens of a strong sense of self as well as a strong sense of values. By exploring personal identity and social group identity, the goal is that participants will be able to more clearly see themselves as a leader, with a foundation to grow in their multicultural competency. Participants will explore self-identity as it relates to social-identity groups as well as privilege and oppression; identify personal values and how they relate to self-identity; and explore connections among self-identity, personal values, and leadership development.

"It's always the right time, to do the right thing." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Presenter: Danielle Langford, Instructor of Business and Communication

Description: The above quote by Martin Luther King Jr., is timeless. It speaks to ALL of us at time when both division and unity is beckoning at our spirits. The presenter will allow attendees the opportunity to expound on it through discussion, examples, and vehicles used to be sources of doing the right thing, primarily focused on academics. The presenter will also explore why students respond to a simple, yet powerful quote.

The evolution of underrepresented minorities' identities in the American education system

Presenter: Cierra Desmaratti, Undergraduate Student

Description: This lecture focuses on the struggles African-Americans and Latinos have faced in obtaining the freedom to obtain an equal education at higher institutions from the 1900s to the present day. The presenter will explore how the identity and barriers of these groups evolved and how educators can implement policies and support systems that will increase the retention of these groups in higher education and in prestigious fields such as STEM. Attendees will discuss URM's personal experiences in higher education, the motivations of URM students and faculty for obtaining a degree, and what solutions need to be created at North Central and other schools to attract and retain this population.