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# Perspectives on Peace

University of Dayton

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# NEWS



*Friday December 19, 2014*

## Perspectives on Peace

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social justice issues; the author of *Dead Man Walking*, which was made into a movie that received four Academy Award nominations; and a celebrated playwright.

All three talks are free and open to the public. Tickets are not required. Parking is available without a permit in B and C lots only. Parking in any other campus lot requires a permit.

"This year's series brings us a diverse group of scholars, activists and artists dedicated to a common theme — 'Perspectives on Peace,'" said Kathy Webb, University of Dayton dean of libraries and Speaker Series committee chair. "This semester's speakers have been nationally recognized for their contributions to their fields. I am confident that their presence on campus will initiate purposeful and critical discussion within our community concerning faith, race relations and social justice. They each offer different perspectives that will engage our students, faculty, staff and community in harmony with the mission of the University of Dayton."

The Speaker Series for the University of Dayton's spring semester kicks off at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26, in the Kennedy Union ballroom with Sr. Jamie T. Phelps, O.P., discussing "The MLK Legacy and Its Contemporary Implications for the Social Justice Mission of the Local and Global Church." Phelps, the University's annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commemorative speaker, is the former director of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies and the Katherine Drexel Professor of Systematic Theology at Xavier University of Louisiana. She also is a founding member of the Washington-based National Black Sisters' Conference and the Institute for Black Catholic Studies. The event also will offer a tribute to the life and contributions of the Rev. Paul Marshall, S.M., former University of Dayton rector who died earlier this year.

The second Speaker Series event features Sr. Helen Prejean discussing her ministry against the death penalty and her best-selling book, *Dead Man Walking*, which was made into a movie by the same title that received Academy Award nominations. Prejean's talk, at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, in RecPlex is part of the University's Rites. Rights. Writes. Initiative. A book signing will follow Prejean's talk.

"As Pope Francis has designated 2015 a Year of Consecrated Life worldwide, Sister Helen's work reminds us that lifelong engagement in service and awareness of critical social issues is an essential part of our growth and contemplation of what it means to be human," said Richard Chenoweth, Graul Endowed Chair in the Arts and Languages. "Her visit to campus is an excellent opportunity for students, faculty and the campus community to learn first-hand about commitment that goes far beyond the ordinary."

Chenoweth said exploration of Prejean's work is a key component of the First-Year Arts Immersion Experience and offers opportunities to look at her work from a variety of academic perspectives.

The final series event of the spring semester — 7 p.m. Thursday, March 26, in the Kennedy Union ballroom — features playwright, actor and professor Anna Deavere Smith and her brand of theatre that highlights community, character and diversity in America. Smith, who received a National Humanities Award from President Barack Obama in 2012, visited people across America using Walt Whitman's idea to "absorb America and inspiration" and performs vignettes of them to re-create a diversity of emotions and points of view on controversial issues. Smith's goal is to bring "people across the chasms" of what she calls the "complex identities of America."

For more information on the series, contact the University of Dayton's provost's office at 937-229-2245. For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391.