

Course on Reparation to be Taught at UWI

A course on reparation, looking at the issue of compensation for slavery in the Caribbean, will shortly be offered at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona.

The course is being designed by Lecturer in the Department of Government in Political Philosophy and Culture, Dr. Clinton Hutton. Speaking at a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) Think Tank recently, Dr. Hutton informed that the curriculum will examine the argument for reparation within a historical context. He said it is important to educate the Caribbean population about the issues of slavery and reparation, as many young people still do not see a connection between themselves and their enslaved ancestors. "In other words, they are unable to feel empathy for their own ancestors," he stated, noting that the same lack of feeling displayed for our ancestors is the same that the Europeans had towards black people. Dr. Hutton said that during his lectures, some students have argued that the reason their foreparents were enslaved was because they were uneducated. He argued, however, that some of the people, who came across the Middle Passage, were state makers, scientists and highly skilled persons. "In fact, the reason for Europeans going to Africa was that Africa was rich in tropical agriculture and not because of the physical makeup of our ancestors," he stated. "We need to walk through the passages that our ancestors walked, and we can only do that if we educate ourselves," he added. Education, Dr. Hutton argued further, will also generate a bigger and growing political voice to support the work of the National Commission for Reparations (NCR). "I have no doubt that if the people are educated they will begin to think differently," he said. Last year, the NCR was reconvened under the leadership of UWI Professor Verene Shepherd, to among other things, advise the government on the case for reparation and to recommend the form or forms, which reparations may take. The Commission is also mandated to receive testimony from the public and from experts with the aim of guiding a national approach to reparations. Source: JIS