

Grawemeyer Awards

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About Gary Dorrien, winner of the 2017 Grawemeyer Award in Religion

Renowned ethicist's latest book focuses on early history and influences of Black Social Gospel

Gary Dorrien is the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and Professor of Religion at Columbia University. An Episcopal priest and lifelong athlete, Dorrien is the author of 17 books and approximately 275 articles that range across the fields of ethics, social theory, theology, philosophy, politics, and history. Philosopher Cornel West describes him as “the preeminent social ethicist in North America today,” and philosopher Robert Neville describes him as “the most rigorous theological historian of our time.”

Dorrien's book, *The New Abolition: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel*, earned Dorrien the 2017 Grawemeyer Award in Religion. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, jointly with the University of Louisville, awards the \$100,000 prize to honor and publicize creative and significant insights into the relationship between human beings and the divine.

Dorrien's other acclaimed publications focus on economic democracy, social ethical theory, and American politics. His book *Social Ethics in the Making*, a comprehensive interpretation of social ethics as an academic field and a tradition of public discourse, won the Choice Award as the outstanding book in ethics of 2009. More recently, Dorrien published a critique of Barack Obama's presidency titled *The Obama Question: A Progressive Perspective* and lectured extensively on this topic.

Dorrien is a recent past president of the American Theological Society and has a long record of involvement in social justice organizations. His book, *Imperial Designs*, grew out of his extensive lecturing against the United States' invasion and occupation of Iraq. His book, *Economy, Difference, Empire: Social Ethics for Social Justice*, features his lectures on economic democracy, racial and gender justice, and anti-imperial politics.

He has taught in recent years as the Horace De Y. Lentz Visiting Professor at Harvard Divinity School and as the Paul E. Raither Distinguished Scholar at Trinity College. He also previously served as the Parfet Distinguished Professor at Kalamazoo College, and served as Dean of Stetson Chapel. Dorrien holds a B.A., *summa cum laude* from Alma College, an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary, an M.A. and Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Union Graduate School.

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