



**DRAFT**

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY**

**HSFT-8462.SP17**

**3 Units**

**Starr King School for Ministry ~ Graduate Theological Union**

**Spring Online 2017**

**Instructor Information:**

The Rev. Meg Richardson, Ph.D.

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925-951-3048 (cell)

Availability: Please email to set up a meeting in person or by phone, Skype or Google Hangout.

**Meeting Dates and Times:**

1/30/17 – 5/12/17 Spring Semester Online

**Course Description:**

This course begins with a discussion of recent historical developments in Unitarian Universalism and then extends back through time to the various antecedents of Unitarianism and Universalism in pre-Reformation Europe, all the way back to the early church and the Council of Nicea. Students will have the opportunity to explore Unitarian Universalist heritage, as well as different historical approaches. We will examine social location in relation to class, race, and gender identities, and how these enabled or impeded social justice advances. We will discover the origins of our faith by progressing from our known contemporary experience to the unknown, and perhaps unknowable. Along the way we will consider various theological developments within this tradition, as expressed through various identities and the challenges presented by new modalities of faith including Transcendentalism and Humanism. Sources will range from primary sources to anecdote, with an emphasis on articulating contemporary experience in the context of historical identity and experience.

In accordance with Starr King School for the Ministry's pedagogy, students will enter our learning community in a spirit of cultural humility and personal authenticity. Our personal lived experiences and academic sources will inform our investigation of Unitarian Universalist history.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Develop an understanding of the entire arc of history from modern Unitarian Universalism to its antecedents in the Radical Reformation and the Nicean Council.
- Achieve familiarity with central events and figures in Unitarian Universalist History
- Work with primary and secondary sources to understand historical disciplines.



- Develop critical tools to evaluate Unitarian Universalist history.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Articulate various movements that contributed to the development of Unitarian Universalism
- Familiarity with Unitarian Universalisms major events and figures.
- Ability to use various sources and frameworks to investigate historical issues in Unitarian Universalism.

### **Course Policies:**

Students are expected to complete all required reading and post on the Moodle, both as original posters and in reply.

Please contact the instructor regarding accessibility, including special needs or considerations.

### **Course Assignments:**

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE WORK:**

##### **Introduction Essay**

For this assignment, students will write a personal essay as an introduction and answer the following questions.

What is your history with Unitarian Universalism? Is there a place that is significant to your faith journey, and why? Name an individual who has been an important influence to your spiritual development, and how?

In addition, students should briefly discuss their backgrounds, their professional goals and how they would like to use what they learn in this class. Students have the option to either email the essay directly to the instructor, or to post it in the forum (the latter is encouraged, as this will give other class members a chance to get to know you as well). This essay should be brief and is due **Wednesday, February 1st**.

##### **Readings, Discussion, Help:**

There is required reading for each week, click on “Readings” in the Unit Summary.

There will be two opportunities to discuss the readings with the class each week. One will be the “Question for Unit X” “forum” which will invite you to respond to a discussion question relating to the unit content. There you will see and respond to other people’s responses in an asynchronous forum, so you can comment at your convenience and the discussion will accumulate throughout the week. In general, the discussion in the “Question for Unit X” forum will be among the students. The instructor will post a summary of the discussions during the subsequent unit.

The second “forum” is “Help with Reading.” Post here any questions of clarification or expansion you have regarding the materials you have been studying. The instructor will reply to each question, and students are also encouraged to reply, as they are able.



The requirement for online participation is that you make something that averages out to at least one posting for each unit, but these postings may include a response to the discussion question, a response to someone else's discussion, a question posed in the Help forum, or a response to someone's question in the Help forum. This is our opportunity to engage in a dynamic, collaborative approach to history.

To make sure you are getting what you need out of the readings, check out each unit's "Learning Outcomes for Readings." You can self-test your comprehension of the reading, and, if you need any additional help, post your question or dilemma to the Help Forum. In addition, I would like to assign students as partners or in small groups, for discussion of the readings, by Skype, Google Hangout, or over the phone.

### **LIVE CHAT:**

There will be four live chats scheduled during the semester. I will try to vary the times as much as possible to allow those with different schedules to participate. Participation will not be a requirement, given potential conflicts.

Topics for these chats will be driven by the interests of those who happen to be in the room.

### **FINAL PROJECT:**

There will be one final paper, due the final week of class. Please email the instructor to discuss topics and ideas for the project as you begin thinking about it. This may be a traditional academic paper on a topic of your choice, or a discussion of how historical events in Unitarian Universalist history affect present day controversies in this movement, or your vision for your religious leadership and lessons you can bring from Unitarian Universalist history and historical figures. It should be eight to ten pages of double spaced type, and conform to the Research and Citation guidelines presented on the Purdue OWL website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

### **Grading:**

Grading will be based 30% on participation on the Moodle, 30% on demonstrated preparation, and 40% on the final paper. Students are encouraged to take the class Pass/Fail in accordance with SKSM pedagogy: those who wish to receive a letter grade must indicate this in advance upon registration for the course.

### **Required Texts:**

As much as possible, readings will correspond with the Required Reading List of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Books to acquire and read:

Mark Harris, *[Elite: Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History](#)* (2010) ISBN-10: 1558965734 \$6.72 (Kindle Book)

Charles Howe, *[For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe](#)* (1997) ISBN-10: 1558963596 \$16.00



David Robinson, [\*The Unitarians and the Universalists\*](#) (1985) ISBN-10: 0313209464 from \$33.98

Ross, Warren, [\*The Promise and the Promise\*](#) (2001) ISBN: 9781558964181 \$9.99 (Kindle edition)

Additional readings, videos and supplemental articles will be provided by the instructor on the class Moodle.