



## **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY**

**HSFT-8162.FA20**

**3 Units**

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

**Fall Online 2020**

### **Instructor Information:**

The Rev. Meg Richardson, Ph.D.

[mrichardson@sksm.edu](mailto:mrichardson@sksm.edu)

510-845-4705 (office)

925-951-3048 (cell)

Availability:

Please email to set up a meeting in person or by Zoom or by phone, or message through Moodle.

### **Meeting Dates and Times:**

Fall 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 expressions 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. Evaluation is based on demonstrated preparation, weekly posts on the Moodle, and a final paper or project: projects must be approved in advance. Students who take the course for a grade, instead of Pass/Fail, are required to submit a 25 page paper with original research.



This course relates to the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship competencies 6 and 7, and the Starr King Thresholds 4 and 6.

### **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 Universalism's major events and figures.
- Ability to use a variety of sources and frameworks to investigate historical issues in Unitarian Universalism.

### **Course Policies:**

Students are expected to post a personal introduction, complete all required reading and post on the Moodle weekly, either as original posters or in reply. Students are encouraged to post by Friday of each unit, to create space over the weekend to prepare for the following unit. Posting earlier in the week creates more opportunities for others' engagement and feedback.

Students will be assigned to small groups, to complete an initial assignment and to support each other with the assigned readings.

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

We honor our ancestors and place our work in context by citing sources and connecting our ideas to those who have done this work before us. Students are expected to follow the guidelines for academic integrity found in SKSM [policies](#).

### **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 **Tuesday, September 8th**.

### **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 second “forum” is “Help with Reading.” This is for any questions of clarification or expansion regarding the materials you have been studying, also any broken links. 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, students will be assigned to small groups, for discussion of the readings, by email, Zoom or other platforms.

### **LIVE CHAT:**

There will be four live chats scheduled on Zoom during the semester. These will be scheduled by students’ initiative. Participation will not be a requirement, given potential conflicts. If possible, a recording will be posted to the Moodle on VoiceThread.

### **FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT:**

There will be one final paper, or project, due the final day of class, **Friday December 18<sup>th</sup>**.

Please email the instructor to discuss topics and ideas for the paper or project as you begin thinking about it.

If you are taking this course for a GRADE instead of the recommended Pass/Fail option, you are required to submit a 25 page research essay which draws on primary sources and is organized around a clear thesis. This is aligned with the requirements for the Unitarian Universalist Seminarian History Prize: everyone currently enrolled in an MDiv program, graduates from 2016 or later, and/or current Candidates for Ministerial Fellowship are eligible to compete for this



prize, which is offered every three years by the [Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society](#). This year a new prize will be offered for three new biographical entries for the [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#). The subjects must be chosen in consultation with the site [editor](#), and more details will be announced by UUHHS this semester. Three biographical entries written for [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#) will also be acceptable as a final paper for this class.

If you are taking the class Pass/Fail, you have three choices:

You may submit a 20-25 page research essay which would be eligible for submission for the Seminarian History prize using primary source research, or one to three biographical entries for [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#)

OR a 10-15 page reflection paper discussing how historical events in Unitarian Universalist history affect present day controversies in this movement, or your vision for your religious leadership and how it is informed by Unitarian Universalist history and historical figures

OR a final project, to be approved IN ADVANCE. An example of a successful final project is a card game designed to be used with teenagers to teach them UU History.

Your paper should be double spaced lines of text, 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 small group work, 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 to the Registrar, [SKSMRegistrar@sksm.edu](mailto:SKSMRegistrar@sksm.edu) in advance upon registration for the course and cc the instructor, [mrichardson@sksm.edu](mailto:mrichardson@sksm.edu).

### **Required Texts:**

As much as possible, readings will correspond with the Required Reading List of the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee. All the required texts are from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's list.

Please read books with \* IN ADVANCE. 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

Dan McKanan, ed. [A Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism Volume One: From the Beginning to 1899](#) (2017) ISBN: 9781558967892 \$20.00



\*Dan McKanan, ed. [\*A Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism Volume Two: From 1900 to the Present\*](#) (2017) ISBN: 9781558967915 \$20.00 Read all introductory materials and skim the readings. This is to give students a head start on the first month of readings.

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

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

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