

Syllabus - Children and Family Ministries

ED 4213

3 Units

Starr King School for the Ministry - Graduate Theological Union

Fall 2021

Instructor Information:

Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme

sprudhomme@sksm.edu

Office Hours: By appointment at calendly.com/sprudhomme/30min

Meeting Dates and Times:

Thursdays 9:40-12:30 Pacific Time

Online Synchronous

Zoom Meeting

<https://sksm-edu.zoom.us/j/7687677422>

Meeting ID: 768 767 7422

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,7687677422# US (San Jose)

Course Description:

A broad introduction to the theory and practice of religious education and children and family ministries, with an emphasis on Unitarian Universalist congregations. Topics include history and philosophy of Unitarian Universalist children's religious education and ministry, teaching methods and learning processes, human development, innovations in religious education for children and youth including multigenerational ministries and worship-centered models, and collegial relationships and professional standards for religious educators. Coursework includes a field placement in a local congregation's religious education/children and family ministries program (2-3 times/month), readings, weekly journaling, periodic written assignments, discussions, and a final project of significance to the student's future ministry. Geared toward M.Div. students. Hybrid. Relates to Thresholds 7&1, and MFC competencies 3&7. Maximum 12 students.

Learning Outcomes:

After engaged participation and successful completion of this course, students will

- Be able to articulate a philosophy of religious education rooted in the theological heritage of their tradition and Starr King School's values of educating to counter oppressions and create just communities.
- Be able to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of a congregation or other ministry site as an educating community.
- Have applied their philosophy of religious education, knowledge of effective teaching methods, and knowledge of human development to create and provide primary leadership for at least two educational experiences in their field placement site.

- Demonstrate familiarity with the history of liberal religious education, several educational learning theories, contemporary curriculum resources, best practices for collegial relationships, and professional standards for religious educators within the UU tradition.
- Have identified two or three areas of for future inquiry, study, and practice.

Course Policies:

- Absences - one week's absence is permissible when you alert the instructor. Additional absences can be negotiated with the instructor in extreme situations.
- Academic Conduct see <https://www.sksm.edu/current-students/statement-academic-integrity-misconduct/>
- Plagiarism see <https://www.sksm.edu/plagiarism/>
- Notice to Students About Your Privacy (FERPA) see <https://www.sksm.edu/academics/policy-statements/ferpa-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/>
- Disability Policy see <https://www.sksm.edu/resources/student-handbook/starr-king-policies/students-with-disabilities-policy/>

Course Assignments:

- (1) **Field Placement in a Local Congregation**—Each student will need to arrange a field placement in a local congregation where you will be teaching or leading a group of children or youth approximately two - three times per month. While religious education spans a lifetime, seminarians generally have very little practice working directly with children and youth and more opportunities to work with adults. (If your life experience is an exception to this, let me know and we can negotiate something that meets your learning goals). Therefore, in the supportive context of this course you are encouraged to work with children or youth. Please speak with me before the semester begins if you want my assistance finding your field placement. You will be asked to journal about your experiences. Twice during the semester you will present a reflection on an educational experience you led and connect it to your philosophy of religious education, knowledge of effective teaching methods, and knowledge of human development, as well as future areas of inquiry, study, or practice that it points you to.
- (2) **Weekly participation in engaging the course readings, class discussions, and class openings**—You will be expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and having prepared some questions for discussion. You will be expected to lead a class opening at least once during the semester.
- (3) **Periodic Written Assignments**—There will be several written assignments to synthesize or apply course material during the course of the semester.
- (4) **Final Project**—Final projects have two parts: 1) A statement of your philosophy of religious education rooted in the theological heritage of your tradition and Starr King School's values of educating to counter oppressions and create just communities. 3 pages maximum. 2) A project that builds upon your learning in the course and is of use to you in your future ministry. Some examples from past students include developing a sermon series on religious education, developing a program or curricula for a congregation, writing a paper on a particular aspect of religious education drawing on two or more

theorists. Your final project should demonstrate significant engagement with one or more thinkers and concepts we have read in the course.

Grading: This course will be evaluated based on Starr King School for the Ministry's narrative evaluation. If you require a grade, the instructor must be notified by the end of the second week of class. All assignments should be submitted through Moodle.

Required Texts:

Articles in *Reader for Introduction to Liberal Religious Education*. A Graduate Level Course for Unitarian Universalists. (provided by professor)

Bellevance-Grace, Karen. *Full Week Faith: Rethinking Religious Education and Faith Formation Ministries For Twenty-First Century Unitarian Universalists*, 2013.
<https://fullweekfaith.weebly.com>

Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee. *Essex Conversations*. Boston: Skinner House, 2001. ISBN: 9781558964143 \$16 UUA Bookstore

Foster, Charles R. *Educating Congregations*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994. ISBN: 978-0687002450 \$15

Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me a People*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. ISBN: 978-0664240523 \$16

Hurd, Tracy. *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*. Boston: Skinner House, 2006. ISBN: 9781558965003 \$15 UUA Bookstore

LREDA Resources: From Starting to Parting – Supporting Education and Music Staff in UU Congregations: https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/s/starting_to_parting.pdf; Best Practices for Employment of Religious Education Professionals (Revised July 2021) <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BzCoyoQ1hMQtlj7xNBWruzb-g9AGxxZfLsxTq5fejCQ/edit#heading=h.704145eqxjmk>; the Religious Education Credentialing Program. <https://www.lreda.org/ResourcesCredentialing>; LREDA Code of Professional Practices <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HgLGUVYNXvJIcsyvj40JI7biICagI6MtDxkKVYN6xOk/edit>

Middleton, Betty Jo. *To Touch Inward Springs: Teaching and Learning for Faith Development*. Bloomington, IN: IUUniverse, 2015. ISBN: 9781491773581 \$17.95 UUA Bookstore

Patton, Sally. *Welcoming Children with Special Needs*. Boston: UUA, 2004.

http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lfd/welcoming_children_specialneeds.pdf

Spencer, Laura. *The Mosaic Project Report: An Assessment of Unitarian Universalist Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color and Latina/o and Hispanic and Multiracial/Multiethnic Descent*. Boston: UUA, 2009. http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/idbm/mosaic/0904_report.pdf

Sweeney, Kimberly. *The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation*. New England Region of the UUA, 2017. https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/the_death_of_sunday_school_and_the_future_of_faith_formation_ksweene_y_june2017.pdf

Widening the Circle of Concern. Boston: UUA, 2020, chapter on Educating for Liberation: <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/educating-liberation>

Optional Texts and those for further exploration:

Aron, Isa. *Becoming a Congregation of Learners*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2002.

DeVries, Mark, *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. ISBN 0830833617 \$14

Erslev, Katie Tweedie. *Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2004.

Faber, Adele & Elaine Mazlish. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*. New York: Perennial Currents, 2004.

Groome, Thomas H. *Christian Religious Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995,1999.

Miller, Lisa. *The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015.

Nieuwejaar, Jeanne. *The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 1999.

Wilkerson, Barbara, ed. *Multicultural Religious Education*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1997.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Note: the instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule as she sees fit; if changes are made, efforts will be made to consider student needs and communicate changes in a timely manner)

Week 1- Sept 9	<p>General Topic: Introduction and a Brief History of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education Theory and Practice</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “A Short History of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education” by Eugene B. Navias, in the <i>Reader</i>. 2. Introduction and Chapter One in <i>To Touch Inward Springs</i> by Betty Jo Middleton.
Week 2	SKSM closed in honor of Yom Kippur
Week 3- Sept 23	<p>General Topic: It’s More Than Just the Basement</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church</i> by Maria Harris. (Read part one, skim parts two and three) 2. <i>William Ellery Channing on Religious Education</i> <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today’s discussion of the readings</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience:_____</p>

<p>Week 4- Sept 30</p>	<p>General Topic: Educating Congregations</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Educating Congregations</i>, by Charles Foster 2. “Margin and Center,” by Tracey Robinson-Harris, in <i>Essex Conversations</i> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Evaluate your congregation using Foster’s lens. No more than 7 pages double-spaced.</p> <p>Questions to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the times and places in your congregation where people are engaged in what you would call “religious education?” Include classes, study groups, special programs, new member orientation, certain worship services, etc. Be specific. <p>How effective are these? And how do you decide what is effective?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What events are central to your congregation’s life over the year? Calendar year; religious events, seasonal events’ occasional events; unexpected events this year or other years. <p>How does the community prepare for central events? How do they reflect on them?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Where in the life of the congregation—classes, worship, administration, social justice, service, fellowship setting - are children, youth, and/or adults encouraged to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for religious meaning, make a connection to history, stories, • hymn, art? • Listen for intentions? • Find clues as to ways they can respond to the call of their faith in the situation? 4. Go back to the list of events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which events bind the generations? • Which create patterns of partnership among people typically separated from one another by age, gender, ethnicity, social class, occupation, or other factors? • Which nurture hospitality for strangers in and beyond the life of your congregation? • Which hinder the building of community among church members? 5. Foster sees four education tasks in community building (which I have adapted to Unitarian Universalism): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmitting the vocabulary • Sharing the stories of faith • Nurturing interdependent relationships
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing a “faith-full” life <p>6. Take one event from your time line. Identify how and where the four educational tasks are found.</p> <p>7. What are the most valuable insights or inspirations have you gained from today’s readings in regards to your congregation?</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 5- Oct 7</p>	<p>General Topic: Educating to Counter Oppression and Create Just and Sustainable Communities – Factors to Consider in Multicultural, Anti-Oppressive, and Justice Seeking Congregations</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starr King’s ECO philosophy and educational philosophy 2. Welcoming Children with Special Needs by Sally Patton http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lfid/welcoming_children_specialneeds.pdf 3. The Mosaic Project Report: An Assessment of Unitarian Universalist Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color and Latina/o and Hispanic and Multiracial/Multiethnic Descent by Laura Spencer http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/idbm/mosaic/0904_report.pdf 4. Widening the Circle of Concern, chapter on Educating for Liberation: https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/educating-liberation <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. “For the Generations to Come,” by Susan Suchocki Brown, and “Education as Liberation” by Rebecca Parker in <i>Essex Conversations</i>. 6. “Choosing a Social Justice Project,” by Jacqui James, in the <i>Reader</i>. <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today’s discussion of the readings</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 6- Oct 14</p>	<p>General Topic: Learning and Teaching in Liberal Religious Education – Part I</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chapters two to six in <i>To Touch Inward Springs</i> by Betty Jo Middleton. 2. “The Teacher as Spiritual Guide” by Roberta M. Nelson, in <i>Essex Conversations</i>. 3. “The Method is the Message” by Angus MacLean, in <i>Reader</i> <p>Prepare: Write one or two pages reflecting on the readings as they interact with your</p>

	<p>own experience and questions. What did you discover? What appeals to you or excites you? Has it impacted your vision for religious education in any way? If so, how? What questions does this session raise for you? Bring this with you to class.</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 7- Oct 21</p>	<p>General Topic: Learning and Teaching in Liberal Religious Education – Part II</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chapters nine to sixteen in <i>To Touch Inward Springs</i> by Betty Jo Middleton. 2. “Creative Midrash,” by Sherry H. Blumberg, in the <i>Reader</i> 3. “It’s Elementary, My Friend. It’s Child’s Play,” by John Tolley, in <i>Essex Conversations</i> 4. Online research – do a search for “effective teaching” or “instructional methods” or “teaching methodology.” Choose one article that you found particularly helpful. Bring the web address to share with the class. <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today’s discussion of the readings</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 8- Reading Week</p>	<p>One-page proposal for your final paper or project is due next week.</p> <p>The first part of your project does not need a proposal – It is a statement of your philosophy of religious education rooted in the theological heritage of your tradition and Starr King School’s values of educating to counter oppressions and create just communities. 3 pages maximum.</p> <p>The second part of your final project should demonstrate significant engagement with one or more writers and concepts we have read and discussed in the course. It must include at least one resource from beyond the required reading – the GTU library has great resources for local and distance students. Some examples are a 12-15 page paper, an outline of a sermon series with one completely written out, an adult or youth religious education curriculum for a workshop, or something of the like. It needs to demonstrate your learning and integration of course materials and should cite them accordingly. It should be conceived of as something useful to you in your ministry.</p> <p>Your one-page proposal must indicate the following: (A) Your topic and methodological approach (B) Some of the references you will be using, and (C) What (if any) your concerns are.</p>

<p>Week 9 – Nov 4</p>	<p>General Topic: Human Development/Faith Development</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook</i> by Tracy Hurd. 2. “Gabriel Moran’s Theory of Religious Education Development,” by Makannah Elizabeth Morris, in the <i>Reader</i>. <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving</i> by Lisa Miller <p>Prepare: Create a chart representing the stages of faith development at different ages. Bring it with you to class for discussion.</p> <p>Final Project proposal due today.</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 10 – Nov 11</p>	<p>General Topic: Models of Religious Education and Faith Development in UU Congregations</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chapters seven and eight in <i>To Touch Inward Springs</i> by Betty Jo Middleton 2. “Outside the Box” by Susan Davison Archer in <i>Essex Conversations</i>. 3. <i>The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation</i> by Kimberly Sweeny. https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/the_death_of_sunday_school_and_the_future_of_faith_formation_ksweeney_june2017.pdf <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Sunday School is Dead – Long Live Sunday School” by Greg Stewart in <i>Essex Conversations</i>. <p>Prepare: Write a description of the model of religious education and faith development used in your church. Is it the same for children? Youth? Adults? Reflect on the model in light of today’s readings. No more than 5 double-spaced pages. Plan ahead for this assignment as it may require an interview with a religious education committee member or religious education professional in the congregation.</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 11 – Nov 18</p>	<p>General Topic: Curriculum and Content</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow, in <i>Essex Conversations</i>. 2. Explore Tapestry of Faith curriculum resources https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry, Our Whole Lives Curriculum https://www.uua.org/re/owl, and Coming of Age

	<p>https://www.uua.org/worship/holidays/coming-age. Also independent UU curriculum writers at http://www.uucards.org</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Full Week Faith by Karen Bellavance-Grace https://fullweekfaith.weebly.com 4. Familiarize yourself with the Safe Congregations Handbook and read the sections on religious education and children and youth ministry. https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. View “The Death of Sunday School: Trends and Changes in Religious Education” by Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwT2RIbdf0g 2. “Useable Truth,” by Richard Gilbert in <i>Essex Conversations</i> <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today’s discussion of the readings Opening: _____ Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>SKSM Closed for Thanksgiving/Thanksgiving</p>
<p>Week 13 – Dec 2</p>	<p>General Topic: Multigenerational Worship Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Draft. Common Worship—Why and How? The UUA Commission on Common Worship;” <i>Reader</i> 2. “Intergenerational Worship in Unitarian Universalist Communities” by Ginger Luke; <i>Reader</i> 3. “Intergenerational Worship Suggestions” by Kathie Davis Thomas, <i>Reader</i> 4. Explore the resources here: https://www.uua.org/worship/multigenerational 5. Watch some of the videos from the video course emerging from Sophia Fahs Sunday 2016 on Multigenerational Worship https://vimeo.com/172582812 <p>Prepare: Write a brief rationale for multigenerational worship after reading the assigned material (250 words or less). Bring with you a list of at least 20 experiences of being human that are shared across the generations and could be raised up in worship.</p> <p>Opening: _____ Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 14 – Dec 9</p>	<p>General Topic: Youth and Young Adult Ministry Read/View:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “What Youth Want” by Logan Harris, <i>Essex Conversations</i> pp. 99-121 2. Choose two webinars from https://www.uua.org/pacific-western/youth-ministries/webinars and view them. (View more if you like!) 3. Explore the resources at https://www.uua.org/middle-school, https://www.uua.org/youth, and https://www.uua.org/young-adults. 4. Familiarize yourself with Blue Boat at https://www.uua.org/blueboat

	<p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It</i> by Mark DeVries <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today's discussion of the readings</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
<p>Week 15 – Dec 16 (Make up week due to Yom Kippur falling on a Thursday)</p>	<p>General Topic: Collegial Relationships and Professional Standards for Religious Educators</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From Starting to Parting – Supporting Education and Music Staff in UU Congregations: https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/s/starting_to_parting.pdf 2. Best Practices for Employment of Religious Education Professionals (Revised July 2021) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BzCoyoQ1hMQtIj7xNBWruzbg9AGxxZfLsxTq5fejCQ/edit#heading=h.704l45eqxjmk 3. Familiarize yourself with the Religious Education Credentialing Program. https://www.lreda.org/ResourcesCredentialing 4. LREDA Code of Professional Practices https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HgLGUVYNXvJIcsyvj40JI7biICagI6MtDxkKVYN6xOk/edit <p>Prepare: Bring with you one discussion question for today's discussion of the readings</p> <p>Opening: _____</p> <p>Reflection on leading an educational experience: _____</p>
	<p>Final Projects Due Dec 17</p>

Other Resources

Boys, Mary C. *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions*. Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press 1989.

Coles, Robert. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton-Mifflin 1991.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum 1994.

Groome, Thomas H. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. The Way of Shared Praxis*. San Francisco: HarperCollins 1991.

Hawkins, Thomas R. *The Learning Congregation: A New Vision of Leadership*. Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press 1997.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge 1994.

Moore, Mary Elizabeth. *Teaching From the Heart*, new ed. Harrisburg: Trinity Press 1998.

- Nelson, Roberta M. *Claiming the Past, Shaping the Future: Four Eras in Liberal Religious Education 1790-1999*. Liberal Religious Education Association 2006.
- Orr, David. *Earth in Mind. On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Washington, DC: Island Press 1994.
- Palmer, Parker *To Know As We Are Known*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Wickett, R.E.Y. *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press 1991.

Out of print, may be available from ministers or in church libraries:

- Fahs, Sophia Lyon. *Today's Children, Yesterday's Heritage*
- Frediani, Judith, ed. *Curriculum Mapping: A Guide to Unitarian Universalist Curricula*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association 1996. Updated, available online at www.uua.org.
- Gilmore, John, ed. *Unitarian Universalist Selected Essays 1996*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association 1996.
- Harris, Maria. *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching*. San Francisco: Harper & Row 1987.
- Hollerorth, Hugo J., Editor. *Stone House Conversations*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association 1979.
- Liberal Religious Education Journals
- Report of the Religious Education Futures Committee to the UUA Board of Trustees*. Boston Unitarian Universalist Association 1981.
- Rosen, Harold. *Religious Education and Our Ultimate Commitment: An Application of Henry Nelson Wieman's Philosophy of Creative Interchange*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America 1983.
- Spoerl, Dorothy Tilden. *The Creative Process and Religious Education*. Boston. Unitarian Universalist Association, 1964.

Assignments and due dates:

Discussion question, bring to class Sept 23

Evaluate your congregation using Foster's lens, due Sept 30

Discussion question, bring to class Oct 7

Reflection paper, due Oct 14

Discussion question, bring to class Oct 21

Chart representing stages of faith development at different ages, bring to class Nov 4

Final project proposal, due Nov 4

Models paper, due Nov 11

Discussion question, bring to class Nov 18

Rationale for multi-gen worship, due Dec 2

20 experiences with spiritual significance across the ages, bring to class Dec 2

Discussion question, bring to class Dec 9

Discussion question, bring to class Dec 16

Final project in two parts, both due Dec 17