Seattle University

Course Number and Title: STMA 592, section 03

Unitarian Universalist History and Thought

Term and year: Winter 2006

Credits: 3

Instructor's Name: the Rev. Dr. Gretchen Woods

Department Approval:

Begins: Saturday, January 14: 9AM – 5PM Sunday, January 15: 9AM – 2:30PM Friday, February 10: 6PM - 9PM Saturday, February 11: 9AM – 5PM Sunday, February 12: 9AM – 5PM

Course Description: A survey of Unitarian history, Universalist History, and history of the Unitarian Universalist Association, focusing particularly on memes, historiography, and major trends in theology.

Prerequisites and Helpful Information: Graduate level scholarship expected. The more the student reads the texts before this intensive class, the better prepared to integrate the information and understanding of the material.

Texts:

Universalism in America: A Documentary History of a Liberal Faith. ed. Ernest Cassara. Boston: Skinner House, 1984. ISBN 0-933840-21-7 Historian Ernest Cassara sketches the intriguing course of this religious movement throughout the first two centuries o the denomination's existence up to the merger with the Unitarians in 1961.

Black Pioneers in a White Denomination (third edition) by Mark D. Morrison-Reed. Boston: Skinner House Books, 1984. ISBN 1-55896-250-6 Through the stories of two pioneering black ministers – Egbert Ethelred Brown, founder of the first Unitarian Church in Harlem, and Lewis A McGee, who started the Interracial Free Religious Fellowship in Chicago's black ghetto – the Reverend Morrison-Reed provides insight into the disturbing and widespread problem of racism in religion.

<u>The Unitarians and the Universalists by David Robinson.</u> Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985. ISBN 0-313-20946-4 David Robinson has skillfully woven together historical accounts of the two denominations – indicating relationships without blurring differences.

The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association by Warren R. Ross. Boston: Skinner House Books, 2001. ISBN 1-55896-418-5... here is the compelling institutional tale of two like-minded but separate religious bodies electing to unite and move into the future together. Features important figures in Unitarian and Universalist history, highlights key leaders in the consolidation process, and chronicles significant aspects of the work of the UUA since 1961.

Leaping From Our Spheres: The Impact of Women on Unitarian Universalist Ministry ed. Gretchen Woods. Boston: UU Minister's Association, 2000. Though neither complete, nor comprehensive, this brings together the stories and visions of women who have been in the second wave of women into the Unitarian Universalist ministry.

A Stream of Light: A Short History of American Unitarianism. Ed. Conrad Wright. Boston: the Unitarian Universalist Association, 1975. ISBN 0-93340-14-4... five generations of Unitarian history come together in this revealing study prepared for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the American Unitarian Association in 1825.

<u>Unitarian Universalism: a narrative History.</u> David E. Bumbaugh. Chicago: Meadville Lombard Press. 2000. ISBN 0-9702479-0-7. Overview of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism from their beginnings in Europe to the end of the 20th century.

All books should be obtainable from the UUA Bookstore at uua.org, except for *Leaping from Our Spheres*, which is available from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association at uuma.org. There will be no time for articles. Optional readings are included in the information from the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff and are part of the grid of expectations for the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Extended Course Description:

Beginning with the origins of the basic memes of Unitarianism and Universalism, then working systematically through the history and thought of these two separate denominations which merged in 1961, this class will then examine the history of the fully merged (-or not) Unitarian Universalist Association. This will take into account historiography, as well as history. Necessary for all candidates for Unitarian Universalist ministry facing the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

Teaching Philosophy and Methodology: After an initial lecture and exploration of the material as initially understood, students will be expected to offer regular presentations through the next four days. These will be both written and presented to the class. A seminar approach will include discussion and inclusion of outside reading from the MFC as well.

Liberal Arts Core Outcome:

C: Understanding Values and Beliefs

Students will be able to do the following:

AIC1 Acquire a sense of history that includes a time line of the major philosophical or religious movements in the great civilizations, and that pays respect to both the uniqueness of any given time period as well as the timeless nature of many human questions.

Program Learning Outcomes for Religious Studies

A student of religion and philosophy can realize these general program outcomes:

Program Learning	Specific Learning	Means of Assessment
Outcomes for	Outcomes for This	
Religious Studies	Course	
(2002-2004 Catalog page 107)		
1. Comprehend the cultural foundations, visions, origins, histories, major literary expression, and teachings of religious or philosophical systems through understanding theological positions, either as ethical and social teachings of major world religions, primarily Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Native American traditions; or by becoming familiar with teachings of major schools of Western philosophy.	1. Comprehend the specific foundations, origins, memes, and teachings of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism since 1961.	1. A major paper, up to 25 pages, which indicates the overarching vision the student has developed of this religious movement, so that s/he may be prepared to offer that to any future congregant.
2. Identify and clarify one's own position, on theology, spirituality, morality, or philosophy of life, and goals in relation to historical spiritual traditions or important philosophical traditions.	2. Understand one's own theology and how it relates to the history and polity of Unitarian Universalism	2. A short paper, up to five pages, which succinctly states how one understands one's self as a Unitarian Universalist in context of the larger movement.
3. Apply values and knowledge of spiritual and philosophical traditions to personal, social, political, international, economic, multicultural, or interfaith situations through collaboration bringing about connections among people, with the environment, and with transcendent realities; or cultivation of new insights about our relatedness as humans.	3. Become clear about which movements within the three religious groups (Unitarian Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist) have the most power for the individual student.	3. Should be part of the long paper.
4. Examine Western and	4. Learn how Unitarians in	4. Class conversation

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Eastern spiritualities or	particular brought Eastern	
teachings of Eastern schools of	philosophy and spirituality to	
philosophy through	the western hemisphere	
exposure to spiritual practices		
and values of the major		
Western and Eastern religious		
traditions; or exposure to the		
thought of Eastern schools of		
philosophy.		
5. Experience some of the	5. Worship beginning each	5. Students will provide
prayer practices of some	class will provide opportunities	worship after the first class
spiritual traditions or interact	to experience the material more	-
with a philosophical tradition	deeply	
through engaging in		
community rituals, personal		
reflective prayer,		
contemplation, and meditation;		
or engaging with one's life's		
mission.		
6. Explore ethical approaches	6. A specific lecture in Moral	6. Discussion in class
arising from theological or	Decision-Making using the	o. Discussion in class
philosophical systems through	Unitarian Universalist Purposes	
comparing applied ethical	and Principles	
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positions (ethics of medicine,		
business, and ecology); or		
studying philosophical and		
ethical systems of thought.		

Assessment and Evaluation:

This is an intensive graduate level course that will follow a seminar process, hence no quizzes. The long paper will be due at the end of the class; the short one in the middle. Most of the grade will come from the long paper, with the short one providing insight into one's own process through the course. Each student will be expected to engage in class discussions.

Each student must attend all of every class, or the class is forfeit. There is no other way to provide a decent experience otherwise. This is also important because each student is expected to provide insights in the class discussions. Students will be expected to assist in the creation and presentation of worship at least once during the class.

This is an insane way to offer this material, but it seems the only option at this point. I am open to student input to assist this process.

About the Instructor: The Rev. Dr. Gretchen Woods has a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA; a Master of Religious Studies from John Carroll University in Cleveland Heights, OH; and a Doctor of Ministry

from Northwest Theological Union (now the Ecumenical Institute) at Seattle University in Seattle, WA. She was born in Pennsylvania, raised on the Jersey shore, and crisscrossed the country several times during her adult life. She taught at Northwest Theological Union and Wesley Theological School in Washington, DC, She just completed four years of a three-year term as Continuing Education Representative for the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. She has two grown sons and a grown foster-daughter, two huskies, and a life companion. In her copious free time, she sings with Confluence: the Willamette Valley GALA Mixed Choir and reads science fiction.

Course Outline:

Saturday, January 14: 9AM – 5PM Need to have read Bumbaugh

Worship

Introductions

Preliminary lecture on UU origins

Review of current understandings from students

Lunch

Major memes of Universalism

Major memes of Unitarianism

Q&A, plus preparation for Saturday

Sunday, January 15: 9AM – 5PM

Need to have read Robinson

Worship

Review from previous day and questions from readings

Specifics of Universalism: introduction of timeline

Further exploration of memes, etc.

Major historical and theological trends

Lunch

Specifics of Unitarianism: continue timeline

Further exploration of memes, etc.

Major historical and theological trends

Q&A, plus preparation for Sunday

Friday, February 10: 6PM – 9PM

Need to have read Ross

Worship

Specifics of merger

Difficulties of 1970's and 1980's, including BAAC, BAWA, and Vietna

Introduction of emergent issues

Friday, February 10: 9AM – 5PM

Worship

Determination of topics for papers

Effect of Women's Movement on worship, spirituality, and organizational

Development

Questions/ clarifications

Lunch

Presentation of reflection papers

Saturday, February 11: 9AM – 5PM

Worship

Presentation of reflection papers

Lunch

Presentation of reflection papers

Preparation for final class

Sunday, February 12: 9Am – 5PM

Worship

Discussion of major themes, review of theological movements

Evaluation

Closure