

HIS 191: Cults, Chakras, and Crunchy Granola:
New Age Religions in America
Summer Session B1 2019, Mon.–Thurs., 1–4 PM, Meliora 205
University of Rochester

Instructor: Daniel Gorman Jr., dgormanj@ur.rochester.edu
Office Hours: Fridays, 10 AM–12 PM, Rush Rhees 312 (New Stacks)
Course Librarians: Kristen Totleben (History), ktotleben@library.rochester.edu
Joe Easterly (Acting Religion & Classics Librarian), jeasterly@library.rochester.edu
Course Library Guide: <http://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/his191cultschakras>

Introduction

This course looks at religious practices during the “New Age,” roughly from 1950 to the present, as United States residents explored traditions beyond Christianity and Judaism. Examples of “new” traditions included yoga, Reiki, reincarnation, spirit communication, immigrant religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, and Native American religions. Often the media splits the New Age into two parts — the happy, shiny “Age of Aquarius,” emphasizing self-improvement and peace, and the grim “Age of Cults,” referring to events such as the Manson murders, the Jonestown massacre, and the Waco siege. Over the next four weeks, we will combine the lecture and seminar formats as we explore seventy years of eclectic religious history.

We will begin with an overview of U.S. religious history, including the esoteric and metaphysical traditions that laid the groundwork for the New Age. We will also discuss the definitions of “cult” and “new religious movement.” For the remainder of the course, we will dig into topics such as alternative medicine, libertarian politics, consumerism, and cultural appropriation. Here are some questions we’ll consider: (1) How might we define religion in America beyond a focus on Christianity? (2) What is the relationship between secularism and religious belief? (3) Why is the term *cult* controversial, and what term(s) might we use in its place? (4) How do consumerism and libertarian politics affect New Age practices? (5) What is the relationship between New Age religions and alternative medicine? (6) Finally, how have white Americans, in particular, engaged in cultural appropriation? **Your assignments will include a five-page research paper, two one-page response papers, five seminar questions posted to Blackboard, and a five-page ethnographic report, plus class participation.**

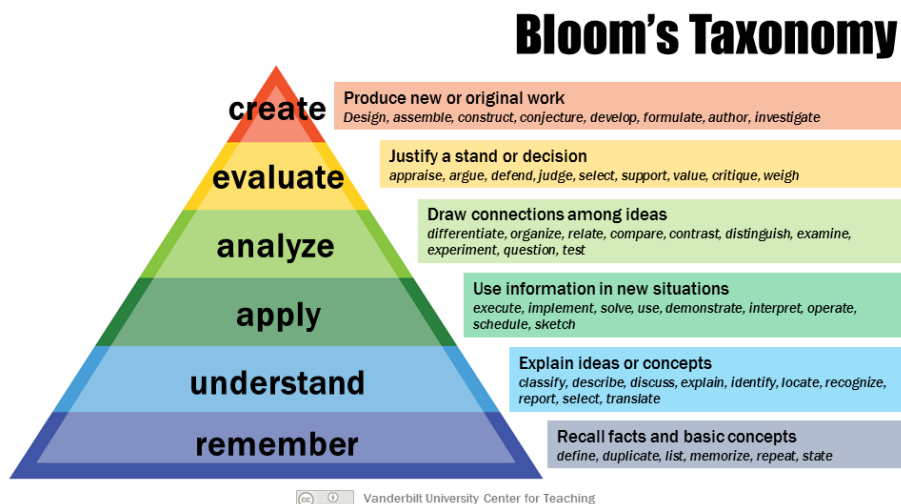
This class takes a **secular approach to religion**. In other words, as your teacher, I will not argue that any single religion is “true,” “correct,” or “complete,” nor will I make arguments for or against the existence of a god, gods, spirits, or other supernatural beings. Instead, I will focus on the **empirical — observable or recordable — and experiential aspects of religion**. Examples of such aspects include literature, rituals, dance, texts, music, films, art, language, food, tools, and buildings. Despite our empirical approach to questions of the supernatural, we will critically examine forms of religious behavior that cause harm to individuals. We will discuss during class the challenge of analyzing religions in an objective way.

The secular study of religion treats religion like any other topic you might study. No question is out of bounds. Nonetheless, I ask that you maintain a level of civility in the classroom. Religion inspires strong reactions.

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop cultural fluency in New Religious Movements (NRMs).
- Be familiar with major U.S. religious developments of the twentieth century.
- Know about some of the challenges in writing religious history.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning informs the structure of this course.



Source: Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, acc. Apr. 30, 2018,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vandycft/29428436431/>, CC-BY-2.0.

What are your goals for the course? Write your goals for the semester here.

Intellectual Honesty

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. As first-year students, students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. All written work, however, must be done independently and not in collaboration with one another. To gain appropriate help for your essays, I encourage you to consult the staff of the College Writing, Speaking, & Argument Program. Your papers will require footnotes/endnotes and a “Works Cited” section, following the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, format. The Chicago Manual is accessible via the River Campus Libraries’ Voyager catalogue: <http://www.library.rochester.edu/>.

Please place the following honor pledge in every paper you submit: “I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own.”

Accommodation Statement

If you have a disability for which you require an academic accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the Office for Disability Resources and me. We will work together to make appropriate accommodations. Access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations.

The director of disability resources is Amy Wight (amy.wight@rochester.edu). The access coordinators are Pamela Spallacci (pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu) and Elizabeth Carpenter (elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu). The access specialist is Jen Proseco (jennifer.proseco@rochester.edu), and the access assistant is Anne Staab (anne.staab@rochester.edu). The Office of Disability Resources is located in Taylor Hall, can be reached via telephone at 585-276-5075, and maintains a website at <http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/>.

I have tried to select audio-visual materials for this course that have transcripts and/or closed captioning, but this was not always possible. Should you have any questions or concerns about accessing the course's media, please let me know.

Religious Holidays: Should you have a religious observance during the summer session, tell me and we can make arrangements for you to make up any missed work. Since this is a course about religious history, you are invited to talk about your holiday, if you wish, during class!

Safe Space Policy and Other Student Resources

I believe in the importance of campus safe zones, where students feel free to ask any question on their minds, and where they feel respected, valued, and welcomed. Tell me your preferred name and pronouns. When we discuss controversial or upsetting topics in class, I will give you advance warning of this sensitive material, although I encourage you to stay and talk about it. If you have a personal issue pressing upon you, I am available to listen and connect you to relevant campus resources. Please note that, as an instructor, I am a mandated reporter, but I can help you get in touch with confidential resources on or off campus. I will not accept discrimination or harassment of any form in my classroom.

The following resources are available to help University of Rochester students:

- Blackboard Help: http://www.rochester.edu/blackboard/student_notice.html
- CARE Network: <https://www.rochester.edu/care/>
- Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL):
<http://www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/index.html>
- College Center for Advising Services (CCAS): <http://www.rochester.edu/college/ccas/>
- Interfaith Chapel: <https://www.rochester.edu/chapel/about/contact.html>
- I.T. Center: <http://www.rochester.edu/it/itcenter/>
- Public Safety: <http://www.publicsafety.rochester.edu/>
- River Campus Libraries: <http://www.library.rochester.edu>
- Sexual Misconduct and Title IX: <https://www.rochester.edu/sexualmisconduct/index.html>
- Student Food Pantry: Contact the Burgett Intercultural Center to access this resource.
<https://www.rochester.edu/college/bic/about/contact.html>
- University Counseling Center: <https://www.rochester.edu/uhs/ucc/>

- University Intercessor: <https://www.rochester.edu/intercessor/>
- University Health Service: <https://www.rochester.edu/uhs/primary-care/contact-uhs/>
- Writing, Speaking, & Argument Program: <http://writing.rochester.edu/help>

Course Assignments and Grading

Please purchase, rent, or obtain via long-term library loan the following four books.

Gooch, Brad. *Godtalk: Travels in Spiritual America*. New York: Knopf, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-0679447092. **Note:** *Godtalk* is out of print, but you can obtain cheap copies of it from Alibris (<https://www.alibris.com>) and Abebooks (<https://www.abebooks.com>), two used book websites. Some copies on Alibris are as cheap as \$1!

Hull, Akasha Gloria. *Soul Talk: The New Spirituality of African American Women*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0892819430. **Available at the UR Barnes & Noble.**

Rorabaugh, W.J. *American Hippies*. Cambridge Essential Histories. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1107627192. **Available at the UR Barnes & Noble.**

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0520273672. **Available at the UR Barnes & Noble.**

Assignments: (1) Primary Source Research Paper (30% of semester grade): Students will select a notable New Age practitioner or event, and write a five-page research paper that incorporates at least five primary sources, two of which can come from the primary sources we read in class. Working with librarians, students will identify newspaper, television, and/or Internet sources related to their topic. This paper will be due on the last day of class, and students will give short five-minute presentations on their topic. The paper will be graded out of 100 points.

(2) Short Response Papers (20% of semester grade, or 10% each): Every week in Weeks One and Two, students will write a one-page, single-spaced response paper, discussing the primary and secondary sources of their choice. Each paper will be graded out of 100 points.

(3) Five Seminar Questions (5% of semester grade): Students must write five discussion questions (each roughly a paragraph in length) based on their homework readings and post them to the course Blackboard discussion forum (located under “Course Tools” in the left-hand toolbar). These questions can be written at any point in the semester. Each question will be graded out of 20 points, adding up to a possible total of 100 points.

(4) Ethnographic/Interview Report (25% of semester grade): Students will identify and visit a Rochester religious site where a New Age tradition is practiced, and write a five-page report about the visit. You must confirm the location with me in advance. A strong paper will convey a student’s observations and impressions of the site and incorporate concepts from course readings and discussion. Alternatively, students might interview the expert of their choice (with professor approval) about New Age religiosity. This report will be due on the Friday of Week

Three. Each report will be graded out of 100 points. Papers that receive at least a B will be considered for inclusion in the web project *Digitizing Rochester's Religions*, made in conjunction with the Digital Scholarship Lab.

(5) Course Participation (20% of semester grade): Mandatory course attendance (unless you have a doctor's note or family emergency); active participation in discussions; completion of course readings; and bringing notes about readings to class. Course participation will be graded out of 100 points.

Peer-to-peer instruction will be a key part of this course. While I encourage students to read everything assigned each night, I understand that life can get in the way, especially in the summer session. For this reason, each student will be responsible for presenting notes on a particular reading or readings in class the next day. Students should identify key persons, events, concepts, and/or trends. We will combine our reading notes into a course Google Doc that, as the semester progresses, will yield a timeline of American New Age history.

For assignments graded out of 100 points, I use the following scale:

A: 93–100. A-: 90–92. B+: 87–89. B: 83–86. B-: 80–82. C+: 77–79. C: 73–76. C-: 70–72. D+: 67–69. D: 63–66. D-: 60–62. E: Failure (59 or below).

For more information on the undergraduate grading scheme, please see: Grading Schemes — AS&E, Office of the University Registrar, <https://www.rochester.edu/registrar/grading/scheme.html>.

Calendar of Classes and Assignments

Note: This syllabus includes the homework assignments due each day, as well as primary sources and audio-visual material we'll discuss in class. You are **NOT** required to read the primary sources in advance.

Week 1

M 7/1: Introduction — Syllabus, Thinking about Religion, and Early American Religion

Read Before Class: I will post these readings to Blackboard a week before class starts:

- Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (2007), Introduction, 1–18.
- Brad Gooch, *Godtalk* (2002), Introduction, xv–xxiii.
- Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*, 2nd ed. (2012), Preface to the Second Edition and Introduction, “Spirituality in the Making,” xi–24.

Article we'll discuss in class:

- Claire Gecewiz, “‘New Age’ beliefs common among both religious and nonreligious Americans,” *Pew Research Forum*, Oct. 1, 2018: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/01/new-age-beliefs-common-among-both-religious-and-nonreligious-americans/>.

T 7/2: American Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries — Visit by Caitlin Davie from the Writing, Speaking, & Argument Program

Read Before Class:

- Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 5th ed. (2013), Chapter 8, “Homesteads of the Mind: Belief and Practice in Metaphysics,” 183–202.
- Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, Chapters 1–3 (divided among students).

Primary sources we’ll discuss in class:

- Anagarika Dharmapala, “Our Duty to the Peoples of the West,” *Maha Bodhi Journal* 35 (Sept. 1927), vipassana.com/resources/dharmapala/an79.php.
- Anagarika Dharmapala, “The Religion of Religions,” *Maha Bodhi Journal* 36 (Jan. 1928), vipassana.com/resources/dharmapala/an3.php.
- Swami Vivekananda, “Hinduism as a Religion,” paper from the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, https://parliamentofreligions.org/sites/default/files/Vivekananda_0.pdf.

W 7/3: “Cults” or New Religious Movements? — Visit by Rev. Dr. C. Denise Yarbrough, Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at the University of Rochester

Read Before Class:

- Wendy Kaminer, *Sleeping with Extraterrestrials: The Rise of Irrationalism and Perils of Piety* (1999), Introduction, 3–17.
- Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (2000), Chapter One, “Overrun with Messiahs,” 3–24.
- Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, Chapters 4–7 and Epilogue (divided among students).

Article we’ll discuss in class:

- Matthew Schmalz, “Why the label ‘cult’ gets in the way of understanding new religions,” *The Conversation*, Apr. 10, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/why-the-label-cult-gets-in-the-way-of-understanding-new-religions-94386>.

By the end of class: Students will choose their tentative research paper and ethnography topics, although if they need to adjust their topics later, they may do so.

R 7/4: No class — Independence Day holiday.

I will have office hours on Friday, July 5, despite the July 4 holiday.

Weekend Homework:

- **Submit your first response paper via Blackboard by Sunday, July 7, at 11:59 PM.**
- Read **all** of W.J. Rorabaugh’s *American Hippies* (2015) for Monday.

Week 2

M 7/8: The Hippy Era: From Flower Power to Charles Manson — Visit by Librarian Kristen Totleben

Read Before Class:

- W.J. Rorabaugh, *American Hippies* (2015).

Primary sources we'll discuss in class:

- *Environments 3: Totally New Concepts in Stereo Sound* (1971), Side 1: "Be-In (A Psychoacoustic Experience)." **Note:** The Numero Group has made the *Environments* recordings available as an iOS app (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/environments/id1294132065>), as an iTunes digital download, and on Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/album/27Kq9u0UEeqzLyRiTUyfuB>). **Please bring headphones or ear buds to class, if you have them.**
- "Charles Manson's Trial Testimony, Parole Statements, Writings, and a Doodle," from Prof. Douglas O. Linder's Famous Trials website, University of Missouri Kansas City: <https://www.famous-trials.com/manson/253-testimony>.

T 7/9: Libertarian Hippies, Playing Indian, and Individualist Movements

Read Before Class:

- "Burning Man 1997: An ABC Nightline Investigation," *ABC Nightline* (American Broadcasting Company, 1997), uploaded to YouTube by "Burning Man Project" on July 21, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5P9Bin4JLc>. **Note:** This video has automated subtitles that are fairly accurate.
- Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (1998), Chapter 6, "Counterculture Indians and the New Age," and Conclusion, "The Grateful Dead Indians," 155–91.
- Rebecca Kneale Gould, *At Home in Nature: Modern Homesteading and Spiritual Practice in America* (2005), Preface, Timeline, Introduction, and Chapter One, "Conversion," xiii–37.
- Philip Jenkins, *Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality* (2004), Chapter 6, "Brave New Worlds, 1925–1950," Chapter 7, "Before the New Age, 1920–1960," and Conclusion, "Real Religion?" 113–53, 245–55.

Primary sources we'll discuss in class:

- Stewart Brand, "The Purpose of The Whole Earth Catalog," *Whole Earth Catalog* (Fall 1968): www.wholeearth.com/issue/1010/article/196/the.purpose.of.the.whole.earth.catalog.
- Stewart Brand, "We Are As Gods," *Whole Earth Catalog* (Fall 1968): www.wholeearth.com/issue/1010/article/195/we.are.as.gods.
- Burning Man Festival:
 - *Building Burning Man* 1, No. 1 (1991): https://z9hbb3mwou383x1930ve0ugl-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/BBM_1991.pdf.
 - *Burning Man Journal* (2007): https://z9hbb3mwou383x1930ve0ugl-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/BMnewsletter_07.pdf.
 - *Black Rock City Tip Sheet* (2013): <https://z9hbb3mwou383x1930ve0ugl-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Tipsheet2014.pdf>.
- Excerpt from *In the Light of Reverence* (Bullfrog Films and Native American Public Telecommunications, 2001).

- Available to rent from the Sacred Land Film Project on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/inthelightofreverence>.
- PBS *POV* has an archival website with additional information about the film: <http://archive.pov.org/inthelightofreverence/>.
- Excerpt from *The Source Family* (2012; available on Netflix).
 - The film can be streamed through the University of Rochester Libraries' subscription to Kanopy. Search for "The Source Family" in the library catalog, and you will find a catalog entry with a link to the film.

W 7/10: Yoga and Hinduism in America — Visit by Dr. Douglas Brooks, Professor of Religion at the University of Rochester

Read Before Class:

- Philip Deslippe, "The Swami Circuit: Mapping the Terrain of Early American Yoga," *Journal of Yoga Studies* 1 (2018): 5–44.
- Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation – How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (2010), Chapters 6 and 8–11, 109–29, 151–218.
- Mark Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice* (2010), Chapter 9, "T. Krishnamacharya and the Mysore Āsana Revival," 175–210. **Note:** Singleton's writing is challenging, so feel free to skim if you get stuck.

Primary sources and media we'll discuss in class:

- Theos Bernard, Excerpt from *Hatha Yoga: The Report of a Personal Experience* (1943): <https://terebess.hu/english/Theos-Bernard-Hatha-Yoga.pdf>.
- Ram Dass, Excerpt from *Be Here Now* (1971).
- Indra Devi interview: <https://www.hinduismtoday.com/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=1084>.
- Richard Hittleman clips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1FoK5XG8mk>.
- B.K.S. Iyengar, Excerpt from *Light on Yoga* (1966).
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Excerpt from *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (1968), mmy.klemke.de/M3000005.pdf.

R 7/11: Buddhism and Other Eastern Religions in America — Visit by Sensei Rafe Martin of Endless Path Zendo

Read Before Class:

- Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, Chapter 9, "East Is West: Patterns of Expansion and Contraction," 207–35.
- **Skim:** Allen Ginsberg, "Buddhism and The Beats," <https://allenginsberg.org/2017/07/s-j-15/>, <https://allenginsberg.org/2017/07/sunday-july-16/>, <https://allenginsberg.org/2017/07/sat-j-22-buddhism-beats-ginsberg-1993-q/>.
- Bernie Glassman and Jeff Bridges, Excerpt from *The Dude and the Zen Master* (2012).
- Take a look at the website for Endless Path Zendo (Rochester, N.Y.) before Mr. Martin's visit: <https://www.endlesspathzendo.org/>.

- Begin reading Akasha Gloria Hull, *Soul Talk: The New Spirituality of African American Women* (2001), although we won't discuss it in class today.

Primary sources we'll discuss in class:

- “Buddhism in Japanese-American Internment Camps,” Buddhism Case Study — Minority in America, Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project (2018), https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/files/hds-rlp/files/minority_religion_buddhism.pdf.
- Alan Watts, Excerpt from *Behold the Spirit: A Study in the Necessity of Mystical Religion* (1972).

I will have office hours on Friday, July 12.

Weekend Homework:

- **Submit your second response paper via Blackboard by Sunday, July 14, at 11:59 PM.**
- Read **all** of Hull, *Soul Talk*, over the weekend, along with the additional readings for Monday.
- Don't forget to work on your ethnography and research papers!

Week 3

M 7/15: African American Spirituality and New Religious Movements

Read Before Class:

- Margarita S. Guillory, *Spiritual and Social Transformation in African American Spiritual Churches: More than Conjurers* (2018), Introduction, “Protest or Accommodation: Political Engagement in African American Religion,” and Chapter 5, “After the Storm: The Response of African American Spiritual Churches to Shifting Landscapes in Post-Katrina New Orleans,” 1–8, 122–56.
- Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (2011), Chapter Two, “Celebrity Spirit: The Incorporation of Your Best Life,” 51–81.
- Hull, *Soul Talk*.

Primary sources we'll discuss in class:

- Arthur H. Fauset, Excerpt from *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults of the Urban North* (1944).
- The interviews from Hull's *Soul Talk*.

T 7/16: Neopaganism — Visit by Rauncie Ryan, Pagan Chaplain at the Rochester Institute of Technology

Read Before Class:

- Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (1979), Part One.
- Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, Chapter 10, “Fundamentals of the New Age: Present-Time Pluralism and Postpluralism,” 237–69.

- Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (2004), Chapter Four, “The 1960s Watershed Years,” 67–88.

Primary sources we’ll discuss in class:

- Phyllis Currott, Excerpt from *Book of Shadows* (1998).
- Don Lattin, “Pagans at Parliament Irk Orthodox,” *The Spartanburg Herald-Journal*, Sat., Sept. 4, 1993,
<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=HtYpAAAIBAJ&sjid=I88EAAAIBAJ&pg=5953,1223079&dq=phyllis+currott&hl=en>.
- ALisa Starkweather, “Birthing Awake the Dream,” in *Women, Spirituality, and Transformative Leadership: Where Grace Meets Power* (2012), 151–55.
- ALisa Starkweather et al., The Red Tent Temple Movement website:
<http://redtenttemplemovement.com/about/>.

W 7/17: Scientology, the Urantia Book, and UFO Veneration

Read Before Class:

- Lawrence Wright, *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, & the Prison of Belief* (2012), Introduction, Chapter Two, “Source,” and Epilogue, ix–xiii, 20–78, 354–65.
- Brad Gooch, *Godtalk*, Chapter 1, “‘He’s Only a Thought Away’: Sleuthing *The Urantia Book*,” 3–61.
- Review the website for the Heaven’s Gate movement: <http://heavensgate.com/>.

Primary sources and media we’ll discuss in class:

- Edward L. Ayers, Nathan D.B. Connolly, and Brian Balogh, “Close Encounters: UFOs in American History,” *Back Story with the History Guys* Episode 0218 (Virginia Humanities), Sept. 21, 2018.
 - Audio: <https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/close-encounters/>.
 - Transcript: https://www.backstoryradio.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2018/09/ufo_repack_master-1.pdf.
- William Cooper, Excerpt from *Behold a Pale Horse* (1991).
 - The Internet Archive has a plain HTML version:
https://archive.org/stream/BeholdAPaleHorse_267/BillCooper-BeholdAPaleHorse.txt.
- Excerpt from Alex Gibney, *Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief* (HBO Documentary Films, 2015).
 - A DVD of the film is available to rent from the Art & Music Library (call number BP605.S2 G65 2015). It is also available on HBO Go and HBO Now.
- L. Ron Hubbard, Excerpt from *Dianetics* (1950).
- Excerpt from *The Urantia Book* (c. 1924–55), <https://www.urantia.org/urantia-book/read-urantia-book-online>.

R 7/18: Jonestown and Rajneeshpuram

Read Before Class:

- Gaiutra Bahadur, “The Jonestown We Don’t Know,” *The New York Review of Books*, Dec. 21, 2018, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/12/21/the-jonestown-we-dont-know/?printpage=true>.
- “Remembering Jonestown: Survivor Recalls Horror of Notorious Guyana Commune,” *All Things Considered* (NPR), Nov. 17, 2003: <https://www.npr.org/2003/11/17/1509317/remembering-jonestown>. **Note:** NPR has not provided transcripts for the three podcasts on this page.
- Jonathan Z. Smith, “The Devil in Mr. Jones,” from *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (1982).

Media we’ll discuss in class:

- Excerpts from *Wild Wild Country* (Netflix, 2017).

I will have office hours on Friday, July 19.

Due Friday, July 19: Submit your ethnographic or interview report via Blackboard by 11:59 PM.

Weekend Homework:

- Work on writing your final research paper, in addition to the readings for Monday.

Week 4

M 7/22: Alternative Medicines, Drugs, and Wellness

Read Before Class:

- Brad Gooch, *Godtalk*, Chapter 2, “Two Translations: Deepak Chopra and Gurumayi Chidvilasananda,” 63–152.
- Lisa Miller, “Measles for the One Percent: Vaccines, Waldorf schools, and the problem with liberal Luddites,” *The Cut*, May 29, 2019, <https://www.thecut.com/2019/05/measles-for-the-one-percent.html>.
- Anna Peele, “Marianne Williamson Wants to Be Your Healer-in-Chief,” photographs by Alex Welsh, *The Washington Post*, Mar. 3, 2015, A15, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/02/19/feature/self-help-author-marianne-williamson-wants-to-be-your-healer-in-chief/>.
- Trysh Travis, “Self-Help in America: A Project for Moral Perfection,” *The American Historian* (Aug. 2017), <https://tah.oah.org/august-2017/self-help-in-america-a-project-for-moral-perfection/>.
- Benjamin E. Zeller, “Totem and Taboo in the Grocery Store: Quasi-Religious Foodways in North America,” *Religion and Food, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 26 (2015): 11–31.

Primary sources and media we’ll discuss in class:

- The Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital website: <https://www.bensonhenryinstitute.org/>.
- Rhonda Byrne, Excerpt from *The Secret* (2006).

- Carlos Casteneda, Excerpt from *The Teachings of Don Juan* (1968).
- Elizabeth Gilbert, Excerpt from *Eat Pray Love* (2006).
- Terry Gross and Michael Pollan, “‘Reluctant Psychonaut’: Michael Pollan Embraces the ‘New Science’ of Psychedelics,” *All Things Considered* (NPR), May 15, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=611225541>.
- Don Miguel Ruiz, Excerpt from *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* (1997).
- Tara Westover, Excerpt from *Educated* (2018).

T 7/23: Expanding Consciousness: Psychics and Reincarnation

Read Before Class:

- Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit*, Chapter Seven, “New Ages for All,” and Coda, “The New New Age,” 394–516.
- Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (2010), “Tuning the Body,” 90–118.

Primary sources we’ll discuss in class:

- Shirley Maclaine, Excerpt from *Out on a Limb* (1983).
- Jane Roberts, Excerpt from *The Seth Material* (1970).
- Jennifer Weigel, Excerpt from *Psychics, Healers, & Mediums: A Journalist, a Road Trip, and Voices from the Other Side* (2017).

W 7/24: Waco and the New New Age

Read Before Class:

- Dorothy Kim, “The Alt-Right and Medieval Religions,” Christianity and the Alt-Right in America, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs (Georgetown University), Nov. 5, 2018, <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/the-alt-right-and-medieval-religions>.
- David Thibodeau and Leon Whiteson, *A Place Called Waco: A Survivor’s Story* (1999), Chapter 8, “On Rape, Abuse, and Guns,” and Conclusion, “The Double Helix,” 107–31, 343–49. **Content Warning:** The author discusses sexual assault at length in Chapter 8.
- Catherine Wessinger, “‘Culting’: From Waco to Fundamentalist Mormons,” *Religion Dispatches*, July 3, 2009, religiondispatches.org/culting-from-waco-to-fundamentalist-mormons/.
- Catherine Wessinger, “The deaths of 76 Branch Davidians in April 1993 could have been avoided – so why didn’t anyone care?” *The Conversation*, Apr. 13, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/the-deaths-of-76-branch-davidians-in-april-1993-could-have-been-avoided-so-why-didnt-anyone-care-90816>.

Primary and secondary sources we’ll discuss in class:

- William Cooper, Excerpt from *Behold a Pale Horse* (1991).

- “‘I’m Weird, but I Get Results’: Have You Met This Wizard on the Subway?” *The New York Times*, May 26, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/26/nyregion/david-person-brooklyn-wizard.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>.
- Erin Griffith, “Venture Capital is Putting Its Money into Astrology,” *The New York Times*, April 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/15/style/astrology-apps-venture-capital.html?module=inline>.

R 7/25: Final Presentations and Course Summary

Due Today: Submit your research paper via Blackboard by the start of class (1 PM).

Primary sources and media we’ll discuss in class:

- Materials from the 2018 Parliament of the World’s Religions.
- The Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Jesus Christ, The Bearer of the Water of Life: A Christian Reflection on the New Age* (2003), Section 4, “New Age and Christian faith in contrast,” and Section 5, “Jesus Christ offers us the water of life”:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interrelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html.

There will be no office hours on Friday, July 26, as the course is over. Enjoy the rest of your summer!