

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (NONWESTERN)
Religious Studies 386/875, University of Kansas
Fall, 1998 7:00-9:30 p.m. Wednesdays 108 Smith
Tim Miller, instructor

The American alternative religions--sometimes called sects or cults--have been an important part of the American religious experience for centuries. This semester we will examine many of these movements, specifically ones that do not have explicit foundations in Christianity or Judaism, in an attempt to understand their teachings and practices as well as their relationship to the larger culture.

For the purposes of this course, the movements we will study have been arranged into somewhat arbitrary groupings. These groups of movements, listed below, will constitute the organizational framework of the course. The order of topics on this list may vary from the order in which we will actually study the movements in class since the schedule may be altered to take advantage of guest speakers and other special resources.

Class requirements: Regular attendance (required), completion of one major paper (due October 21, 1998), and completion of an in-class final examination at 7:00 p.m. on December 16, 1998. Details are provided in the supplementary packet of materials in the William J. Moore (Religious Studies) library.

The textbook and other required readings:

T. Miller, ed., *America's Alternative Religions* (abbreviated AAR)
J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (library reserve)
Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions* (library reserve)
Additional readings on library reserve

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Introduction to the course and some definitions
Reading assignment: AAR, Introduction
2. East Indian religions in America: Krishna Consciousness, Transcendental Meditation, Siddha Yoga, Rajneesh, Ananda Marga, Baba Lovers, Self-Realization Fellowship, Vedanta
Reading assignment: AAR, chapters 17-19; Melton, pp. 271-279; Needleman, pp. 22-25 ("Hinduism") and chapter 3; library readings 1-4 (Rajneesh, Gelberg, Maharishi, Chopra)
3. Buddhism: Zen, Nichiren Shoshu, Tibetan
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 16; Melton, pp. 263-270, 307-314; Needleman, chapters 2 and 7; library readings 5-6 (Mitchell, Trungpa)
4. Sikhism and Radhasoami: Sant Mat, Eckankar, 3HO, the Divine Light Mission

Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 37; Melton, pp. 258-262, 280-286; library readings 7-8 (Twitchell, Cameron)

5. Asian versions of Christianity: the Unification Church, the Local Church
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 20; Melton, pp. 249-257; library reading 9 (*Outline of The Principle*)
6. Middle Eastern religions: Islam, Sufism, Baha'i, Gurdjieff, Subud
Reading assignment: AAR, chapters 21-25; library readings 10-11 (Shah, Bahá'u'lláh)
7. Spiritualism, Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, modern Gnosticism, and the New Age Movement
Reading assignment: AAR, chapters 31, 33, 35-36; Needleman, chapter 6; library reading 12 (Blavatsky)
8. American originals: Scientology, the Farm, UFO groups, psychedelic religions
Reading assignment: AAR, chapters 38, 40-41; library readings 13-15 (*What Is Scientology?*, Gaskin, Clark)
9. African American liberation movements: Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement, Black Jews, Black Muslims, Voodoo, Divine Spiritual Churches, Rastafari, Santería
Reading assignment: AAR, chapters 26-30; library readings 16-17 (Muhammad, Owens)
10. Native American new religions.
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 39; library reading 18 (Gill)
11. Magick and folk traditions: witchcraft, neopaganism, and ceremonial magick.
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 34; library reading 19 (Adler)
12. Satanism.
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 42; library reading 20 (LaVey)
13. A note on Aum Shinri Kyo
Reading assignment: library reading 21 (Kisala)
13. The people: who are the members of new religions, and why do they join? Who are the leaders, and what are they up to?
Reading assignment: AAR, pp. 6-7; library reading 22 (Rochford)
14. The anti-cult movement: deprogrammers and other opponents of new religions; religious liberty vs. the "brainwashing" hypothesis.
Reading assignment: AAR, chapter 43; Melton, pp. 335-393
15. Concluding reflections
Reading assignment: Needleman, chapters 10 and 11

NOTE WELL! Further instructions, readings, and other required materials, including specific class requirements, are on reserve in the Moore library. You are required to obtain that material; it is hereby incorporated into this syllabus.

CLASS MATERIALS

Religious Studies 386/875
New Religious Movements (Nonwestern)
Fall, 1998

1. Class requirements and instructor information
2. List of readings on reserve in the library
3. Ecumenical suggestions and infallible decrees
4. Grading policies and standards
5. Term project instructions and requirements

CLASS REQUIREMENTS
Religious Studies 386/875

1. Regular class attendance and thorough and timely reading of assigned materials are essential. Attendance is required; details of the attendance policy are spelled out below under "Ecumenical Suggestions and Infallible Decrees."
2. Each student will be required to study in depth one religious movement or a topic related to one or more movements and to compose a written report of that study--a substantial term paper. This requirement will be discussed in class early in the semester; there will be several ways of pursuing it, such as reading extensively in the scriptures or other documents of a particular group, visiting several services and/or meetings of a particular group, or closely observing the spiritual exercises of a group. This project will be due. Topics will be assigned early in the semester.
3. Each student will be required to take an in-class final examination at the regular time scheduled by the university. No examinations will be given early.

Your instructor: Tim Miller, Professor of Religious Studies

Office: 11 Smith Hall

Hours: 6:30-7:00 p.m. Wednesdays or by appointment or chance. I will usually also be available after class.

"I have drawn the ESSENCE and the SUBSTANCE of the Kingdom from their fondest imaginations and I have brought them through the process of Tangibilization and Materialization. I have TANGIBILATED and MATERIALIZED the ESSENCE and the SUBSTANCE of your fondest imagination of heaven as imagined by the most conscientious and sincere religions."

--Father Divine

Readings on reserve in the library

The following readings are on reserve as a single packet in the William J. Moore (religious studies) library.

1. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, *Tantra Spirituality and Sex* (San Francisco: Rainbow Bridge, 1976), pp. 25-47.
2. Stephen J. Gelberg, "The Call of the Lotus-Eyed Lord: The Fate of Krishna Consciousness in the West," in *When Prophets Die: The Postcharismatic Fate of New Religious Movements*, ed. T. Miller (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 149-164.
3. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Science of Being and Art of Living* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), pp. 53-56.
4. Deepak Chopra, *Creating Affluence: Wealth Consciousness in the Field of All Possibilities* (San Rafael, California: New World Library, 1993), pp. 88-92.
5. Stephen Mitchell, ed., *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha: The Teaching of Zen Master Seung Sahn* (New York: Grove, 1976), 3-25.
6. Chögyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1973), 13-28.
7. Paul Twitchell, *The Tiger's Fang* (New York: Lancer, 1969), 11-23.
8. Charles Cameron, ed., *Who Is Guru Majaraj Ji?* (New York: Bantam, 1973), 9-24.
9. *Outline of The Principle, Level 4* (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1980), xvii-xxvi.
10. Idries Shah, *The Sufis* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), 12-37.
11. *The Light of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'i Publishing Trust, 1982), 31-56.
12. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (London: Theosophical Publishing Co., 1888), v. I., pp. 7-8, 13-34, 269-82.
13. *What is Scientology?* (Los Angeles: Bridge Publications, 1992), 3-5, 141-146, 156-160.
14. Stephen Gaskin, *Monday Night Class* (San Francisco: Book Publishing Co., n.d.), unpaginated.

15. Walter Houston Clark, "Religious Aspects of Psychedelic Drugs," *California Law Review* (1968), pp. 86-99.
16. Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam No. 2, 1965), pp. 31-33, 51-55, 64-67, 84-85.
17. Joseph Owens, *Dread: The Rastafarians of Jamaica* (London: Heinemann, 1976), pp. 256-80.
18. Sam D. Gill, *Native American Traditions* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1983), 144-166
19. Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon* (Boston: Beacon, revised edition, 1986), 94-135.
20. Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (New York: Avon, 1969), 21-35, 66-74, 114-118.
21. Robert Kisala, "The AUM Spiritual Truth Church in Japan," in *Wolves within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, ed. Anson Shupe (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 33-48.
22. E. Burke Rochford, Jr., "Surrendering to Krishna: Devi's Story," from *Hare Krishna in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985), pp. 87-122.

ECUMENICAL SUGGESTIONS AND INFALLIBLE DECREES:

The basic rules, and some advice for doing well in class

To begin with, I will presume that you have read this and every document and handout pertaining to the class. Ignorance of the rules is no excuse!

Attendance is required, and you must be in class for the whole class period to be counted present. Each absence in excess of one will result in a lowering of your grade by 5% of the possible points in the course. Also, certain announcements and modifications to previously distributed documents may be made orally in class (e.g., deadlines may be changed, or new readings assigned); you are fully responsible for having all classroom information whether you attend or not.

Order in the classroom: The majority of students in the class want to learn from it, and in past semesters many have told me that they resent inattentive behavior on the part of others. Talking or whispering, reading, writing notes to the person next to you, coming in late or leaving early, and other such things distract me and make it difficult for others to hear or learn. KU isn't junior high; please don't make me be a disciplinarian. Behavior which I find distracting to the point that I call one or more individuals down for it will be counted as an absence (see attendance policy, above). Repeated disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior is deemed Academic Misconduct in university regulations, and in severe cases could lead to your disenrollment.

Deadlines: Class assignments must be turned in by the announced deadlines; exceptions will be made only under compelling circumstances. In no case will materials be accepted after the last day of classes. Students submitting assignments after that date will be graded incomplete and their work will be evaluated after the end of the semester. Students whose work must be resubmitted because of their failure to follow instructions will normally be graded incomplete; their work will be evaluated later. Your instructor also reserves the right to grade such nonconforming submissions "F." Materials submitted or resubmitted late are subject to receiving lower grades--usually a penalty of one letter grade.

Self-expression: This is a university course. I assume that you have a good working command of English and will expect you to demonstrate that in your written work. No one whose writing is not clear and whose grammar and spelling are not solid can expect to get a grade as high as "C."

Help! Believe it or not, the first job of faculty members is to help students. Please feel free to contact me in person or by telephone at my office; you can find me there most afternoons. Please do NOT, however, call me at home.

GRADING POLICY

Point totals will be assigned to the project and the examination. Students earning 90% or more of all possible points will be graded A; 80%, B; 70%, C; 60%, D. It is my goal to assign grades which, over several semesters, approximate the university average for undergraduate courses, which is in the vicinity of 2.4 to 2.5 on a scale in which 4.0 = A. Thus a curve may be applied which may modify the 90-80-70-60 standards; but a curve will be applied only if it improves students' grades.

Approximately 60% of the grade will be based on the final examination; 40% will be based on the project.

The university has, alas, placed obstacles in the way of the posting of grades at the end of the semester. Leave a postcard at the time of the final examination if you're in a hurry to know your grade. Grades will not be disclosed by telephone or in person.

The secret formula for getting a good grade in this class: Attend every session and pay attention. Read and digest all assigned readings. If you don't understand something, ask. Assimilate all the content of the course. Do a thoughtful immersion project. If you haven't done all of these things, please don't complain about your grade.

FAIR WARNING: Plagiarism or other academic misconduct at any time during the term means failure in the course. Plagiarism includes directly quoting a written or oral source in a paper without attribution, or submitting a digest or lightly revised version of another's work as one's own. Other academic misconduct includes falsification of sources in a paper, cheating on an examination, participating in any way in falsification of attendance records, or other such things.

All work turned in must be strictly your own, save for limited direct quotations in a term paper, which quotations must be indicated and clearly and fully credited. The KU pamphlet, "Academic integrity at the University of Kansas," available through the Office of Student Affairs, is hereby incorporated into this class syllabus.

TERM PAPERS AND ESSAY EXAMINATIONS: STANDARDS FOR SUBJECTIVE GRADING

A. The grade of A is reserved for work of distinction, work that does much more than simply meet the basic requirements of the assignment. There are many ways to achieve distinction. Among them are creative use and integration of a strong body of source material; unusually clear and forceful writing; superior thoroughness in coverage of the topic; especially thorough research; and creative, thoughtful approaches to the topic.

B. The grade of B goes to work that meets the requirements in good, competent fashion but without unusual distinction. A B term paper reflects good research and clear analysis; it is clearly written and grammatically and technically correct; it conforms to class instructions regarding format, documentation, and the like for the assignment. A B examination shows good basic knowledge of both reading assignments and classroom material without major errors.

C. The grade of C is assigned to work that has considerable merit but that also contains significant shortcomings. Among the problems that can produce a grade of C are noteworthy errors of fact or interpretation; failure to follow specific instructions for the assignment carefully; unclear or grammatically unsound writing; failure to demonstrate use of a good range of sources; failure to exhibit substantial depth or breadth of knowledge of the material involved; production of a polemic, a piece of advocacy or a testimony of faith instead of objective, scholarly analysis; and other such things.

D. The grade of D is reserved for papers with serious and multiple errors. The errors are of the sort described just above, but more serious in nature and/or number than would be the case in C work. Papers written so unclearly that the reader has trouble following the argument of the writer are often graded D.

F. The grade of F is assigned only when the errors are so substantial as to invalidate the assignment. When the writer fails utterly to address the topic at hand, or shows very substantial ignorance of it, or fails to write readily comprehensible English, an F is the appropriate grade.

There are, obviously, judgment calls to be made in the gray areas between these categories. One overall governing principle is that grades in my courses are relative, or curved. In a typical semester, perhaps 10% of written assignments would receive the grade of A, 35% B, 40% C, 10% D, and 5% F. Overall course grading usually follows a similar pattern. Generally, if your grade is not as high as you would prefer, you are not competing successfully with certain other students.

symbols used for marking papers

THE TERM PROJECT

Our classroom work and readings are intended to cover a wide range of American religious movements. In the pursuit of learning in depth as well as breadth, each student will be required to study in depth one movement or one topic pertaining to the course.

The investigation can take any one of several forms. It can consist of a single intensive personal exposure (an all-day retreat, for example); a series of shorter exposures (attendance at several worship services and other meetings); individual experiments aimed at approximating alternative religious experiences (such as working with one's dreams); reading extensively in the scriptures and other documents of a specific group; or some other comparable in-depth study. If possible, ten to fifteen hours of actual contact with the group and people in it should be involved; that contact should be supplemented with appropriate reading.

After the contact and reading have been completed, each student will be required to report on the project. In most cases that will consist of a written paper which should include a detailed account of the study itself (a diary, perhaps, of the experience, when personal contact is made) as well as a critical analysis of the experience and group as a whole. If your report is in diary form, you should record when, where, and on what occasions you visited meetings of the group or spoke with members. Report your observations factually; then provide some interpretation of them. What did you learn from the project? Did the group conform to your preconceptions about it? Were there inconsistencies in what you saw? What other evaluative and interpretive remarks can you offer?

Although your report may be based primarily on personal observations, it is good to ground your impressions in standard material. If the textbooks for the class cover your group, read the relevant passages before beginning the project. If not, get similar reliable background elsewhere (ask if you need help on that). You should read the general and theoretical chapters in the textbooks before writing the report, trying to make sense of what you have seen in light of standard interpretations and theories concerning new religious movements.

In every case you must make your sources of information clear. When you are using diary form, make it clear in your text where your information came from. If it came from your personal observation, note its time and place. If it came from an interview, name the person interviewed and date the contact. If information came from a written source, provide a standard footnote. Consult a style manual if you are not sure about proper footnote form.

Remember that propaganda is rife in the world of new religions. Works published by religious groups and by their enemies are often biased and can contain erroneous "facts." Part of your task is to slice through propaganda to actual facts.

I encourage you to speak with me about the project if you have questions. I hope that this project will provide each student with an awareness of the teachings and practices of a single group in

much greater depth than can be achieved simply through the reading of textbooks.

Projects will be assigned to students individually through personal consultation.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE TERM PROJECT

The goal of the term project assignment is threefold. In this assignment the student will be expected to learn to do an original investigation using library research, interviews, survey research, and/or personal observations. The student will be expected to write (or present in other acceptable fashion) a presentation of his or her findings. Finally, the student will be expected to learn to present research findings in good form, using appropriate tools of documentation (such as footnotes).

1. Definitions: a term paper is an exposition of research, written in essay form and in your own words. "Research" means consulting several sources; research materials can include books, articles, interviews, and personal observations.
2. This assignment calls for a short but solid paper, one approximately 1500 to 2000 words in length. Pack as much factual material as possible into the paper. Vague ramblings are not very useful in advancing one's argument.
3. Stick to your assigned topic. If you have trouble finding material on it, see your instructor; do not change your topic unilaterally. Papers not on your assigned topic will not be accepted.
4. Style and clarity of presentation are important. Good papers are carefully written and use correct English; they are easy for the reader to follow. Use proper form, following standard style manuals.
5. Give credit where credit is due. Footnote sources completely, using standard form. Notes may be placed at the bottom of each page or at the end of the paper. All sources, written and oral, must be credited. Include a separate bibliography at the end of the paper. Papers lacking adequate documentation will be graded "F." All direct quotations must be cited; so must all substantial pieces of information not directly quoted but gleaned from an identifiable source. It is essential that the reader of the paper know the source of each significant datum. For samples of proper footnote form, see below. For further information see any standard style book.
6. Proofread your paper carefully. Errors of fact, spelling, typing, or grammar detract significantly from a paper's impact, and will therefore have an adverse effect on your grade.
7. Collegiate term papers should always be typewritten, double-spaced. Submit an original typescript, not a photocopy. Avoid dot-matrix printing if possible. Just to be safe, keep a rough draft or disk copy until your paper is returned.
8. Be sure to observe the due date listed in the course syllabus. Late papers will receive lowered grades if they are accepted at all.

9. If you have trouble finding enough material on your topic, ask for help *before* the due date so that your topic can be changed or research help can be provided.

10. How many sources do you need to consult and cite? Several. The thoroughness you display in covering your topic will have an important impact on your grade.

Examples of proper footnote form:

1. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 128-29.

2. Karl J.R. Arndt, "The Harmonists and the Mormons," *American German Review* 10 (June, 1944): 6.

3. Interview with Father Patrick O'Malley, Church of the Awakening, Kansas City, Missouri, June 19, 1988.

An abbreviated guide to religious terminology and usage

A.D. "Anno Domini," i.e., "In the year of the Lord." The word "Domini" makes a theological claim (that Jesus is Lord); a more neutral and generally accepted usage is C.E., "Common Era."

Altar. A raised platform or table for religious sacrifices or other ceremonial use. Note correct spelling (*not* alter).

B.C. "Before Christ." The word "Christ" (=Messiah) makes a theological claim (that Jesus was the Messiah); a more neutral and generally accepted usage is B.C.E., "Before the Common Era."

Bible. Literally "book"; principal book of sacred writings for Christians and Jews. Always capitalized, but not underlined or italicized although a book title. Similarly names of individual books within the Bible are not underlined or italicized. The adjectival form is "biblical"; capitalization is optional.

Canon. Literally "rule" or "list." (1) Law of the Catholic Church. (2) The list of the saints. (3) An official in the Roman Catholic or Episcopal church. (4) A part of the Catholic Mass. Note correct spelling (not cannon).

Clergy, clergyman, clergymen. Ordained religious professional(s). Originally a Christian usage, now used in other religions as well. "Clergy" is a collective noun and often used with a plural verb.

Minister. Literally "servant"; noun commonly used to denote member of the clergy in Protestantism.

Pastor. Literally "shepherd"; used to describe a Catholic priest or Protestant minister who oversees a parish.

Priest. Member of the clergy authorized to perform the sacraments; term widely used in liturgical churches and in some nonchristian religions.

Rabbi. Literally "master"; authoritative teacher in Judaism.

Evangelical. (1) Conservative Protestant. (2) Having to do with the Gospel. (3) Certain Lutherans.

Evangelism, evangelistic. In Christianity, work aimed at making converts; literally, preaching the gospel.

Prophet. Inspired person who speaks for God. Note spelling (not profit).

Prophecy (noun). A pronouncement made by a prophet.

Prophecy (verb). To give a prophecy.

Reverend. Adjective describing a member of the clergy. NOT a title. Correct usage is exactly the same as the correct use of the term "honorable" to address or describe a judge. On first reference, write "the Reverend Barbara Harris," "the Rev. Barbara Harris," or "the Rev. Ms. Harris," not "Rev. Harris" or "the Rev. Harris." On second reference the "Rev." should be omitted: "Harris" or "Dr./Ms./Miss/Mrs. Harris," as appropriate.

Spiritualism, spirituality. These once interchangeable terms now have distinct meanings. Spirituality has to do with a person's spiritual quest or outlook. Spiritualism is a religion whose best-known distinction is a belief that the living can communicate with the dead.

A common error in usage not specific to religious studies:

Such nouns as criteria, data, phenomena, media, and graffiti are all grammatically plural forms and require plural verbs. (The respective singulars are criterion, datum, phenomenon, medium, and graffito.)