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## Instructor Information

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**Instructor**: William F Schulz

**Email**: williamfschulz@yahoo.com

## Course Information

**Prerequisites**: NA

**Class Days/Times:** Intensives dates. Any expected online live calls or sessions.

| Dates | Times | Purpose | Location |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7/9/18-7/13/18 | 8:30-5pm | Intensives session | ML Chicago Campus |
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**Note:** This course will meet entirely online via Populi and Zoom from 8/22-12/5. All course work will be completed PRIOR to Intensives.

**Course Description:** Religious humanism has exerted enormous influence over contemporary Unitarian Universalism. Even those who do not consider themselves “humanists” in their theology or philosophy have absorbed many of its principles. Those who identify as humanists range from hard-edged skeptics for whom rational/scientific thought is the only way to approach religious questions to naturalistic seekers for whom traditions such as Buddhism, paganism, feminism, etc. may provide the primary focus of their pilgrimages. No matter what the form such humanisms take, however, we who minister to their adherents must appreciate both the sources and the manifestations of humanist religion.

**Course Management System:** All MLTS courses use Populi as their online platform. You will be automatically placed into the Populi sites for your courses when you register. For technical support related to Populi, contact Valencia Penn-Hargrove at [vpennhargrove@meadville.edu](mailto:vpennhargrove@meadville.edu)

## **Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to do three things:

* First, it will provide a broad survey of the intellectual and religious history of humanism from the ancient Greeks to David Hume with “deep dives” into 19th century skepticism; the rise and flourishing of religious humanism within Unitarianism and Universalism from the Free Religious Association to the 1933 Humanist Manifesto; and contemporary African American humanism. Along the way we will also touch on such topics as the history of the Ethical Culture movement and humanistic existentialism.
* Second, we will explore key theological and philosophical conundrums central to a humanist world view with an eye toward helping students gain clarity on their own views of such questions as what are appropriate sources of religious knowledge; are there limits to science; is there a difference between sacred and secular realms; what is the role of personal experience in the religious quest; is “God” a meaningful concept; is there such a thing as a “humanist ethic;” what might be the nature of a humanist spirituality; what is a humanist response to mortality, etc.
* Finally, the course will address how to minister to those who understand themselves as humanists, no matter the minister’s own religious perspective.

## **Couse Methodology**

The course will be taught through a combination of presentations by the instructor; dialogical interchanges among students and between instructor and students; class presentations by students of the biographies of key figures in humanist history [see course requirements below]; and presentations via Zoom by the Rev. Amanda Poppei, Senior Leader of the Washington Ethical Society, on the history of the Ethical Culture movement; via Zoom by the Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister of All Souls UU Church in Kansas City, on contemporary religious humanism within the context of Unitarian Universalism; and in person by Dr. Sharon Welch on a humanist feminist spirituality.

## Required Texts:

Though this list appears long, most of the readings themselves are very short and accessible online or on Populi. The two Pinn books and the books by Schmidt and Schulz are all available through libraries or Amazon

* Pinn, Anthony B., *African American Humanist Principles: Living and Thinking Like the Children of Nimrod* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. xiii-60.
* Pinn, Anthony B., *By These Hands: A Documentary History of African American Humanism* (New York: New York University Press, 2001). **The following selections only:**
  + Jones, William R., “Religious Humanism: Its Problems and Prospects in Black Religion and Culture,” pp. 25-51
  + Harris, Duchess, “Nineteenth-Century Black Feminist Writing and Organizing as a Humanist Act,” pp. 55-66
  + Van Deburg, William L., “Frederick Douglass: Maryland Slave to Religious Liberal,” pp. 83-96
  + Allen, Norm R., Jr., “Humanism in Political Action,” pp. 147-60
  + Hurston, Zora Neale, “Religion, from Dust on a Road,” pp. 171-182
  + Walker, Alice, “The Only Reason you Want to Go to Heaven Is That You Have Been Driven Out of Your Mind,” pp. 287-298
  + An African-American humanist Declaration,’ pp. 319-326
* Schmidt, Leigh Eric, *Village Atheists: How America’s Unbelievers Made Their ways in a Godly Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), Introduction (pp. 1-24) and **any one of the following four chapters**
* Schulz, William F., *Making the Manifesto: The Birth of Religious Humanism* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2002)
* Welch, Sharon, “Spirituality Without God” [Populi]
* **Additional readings (articles, websites) posted to Populi.**

The Wiggin Library reserves at least one copy of every required and recommended text listed. During the semester prior to Intensives, course reserve books circulate for three weeks and can be mailed to your home address. During Intensives, course reserve books circulate for one week and are subject to recall. Course reserve lists can be accessed and requested here: [http://www.meadville.edu/library-and-archives/course-reserves-and-mfc-reading-list/.](http://www.meadville.edu/library-and-archives/course-reserves-and-mfc-reading-list/.%20) This course’s reserve list can be found via Populi.

E-mail the library at [library@meadville.edu](mailto:library@meadville.edu) for any questions

## **Assignments:**

All students will be expected to…

(1) Complete the assigned reading [see “Required Reading List” below] and demonstrate familiarity with that list through participation in class discussion [20% of final grade].

(2) Post by June 15, 2018, under “Discussions” on Populi a self-introduction and a brief description of your interest in the course, including your knowledge of or “relationship to” humanism.

(3) Prepare a 15-20 minute oral presentation for class of the biography and humanist principles of a key humanist selected from the list below [see “Biography” below]. You must make your selection by June 10, 2018 and communicate it to the instructor at [williamfschulz@yahoo.com](mailto:williamfschulz@yahoo.com). *Selections will be claimed on a first come, first served basis.* This oral presentation must then be transformed into a 10-12 page double-spaced written paper submitted to the instructor no later than August 15, 2018 [50% of final grade].

(4) Prepare a 5-page double-spaced paper responding to the question, “What do I value about religious humanism and where, if anywhere, do I differ from a humanist perspective in my own understanding of religion or theology?” This too is due no later than August 15, 2018 [30% of final grade].

## **Biography**

An important feature of the course will be student presentations scheduled throughout the week on key and especially interesting figures in humanist history, both within the Unitarian and Universalist traditions and beyond. You must select someone from the list below and communicate your choice to williamfschulz@yahoo.com no later than June 10, 2018, to give yourself enough time to do the necessary research. Selections will be awarded on a first come, first served basis so if you are drawn to a particular person, it will behoove you to make your selection early.

Review the list below and the links to brief bios of each person to determine which one is of most interest to you. In most cases the bios provide suggestions for research materials to consult in developing your presentation. In addition, John Leeker, Associate Director of Meadville Lombard’s Library and Archives (http://www.meadville.edu/who-we-are/faculty-staff-and-trustees/staff/biography/john-leeker/) is prepared to advise you and help you access materials, order books, etc. Contact him at jleeker@meadville.edu.

You must develop a 15-20 minute class presentation that tells us about the individual’s life and explains their significance to humanism, including, for example, what their contributions were to humanist history; why they considered themselves humanists; what form their humanism took, etc. (Though you should have this largely researched and prepared before you arrive in Chicago for the course, all students will be released from class the afternoon of Monday, July 9, to work in the ML library on your presentations.) This class presentation must then be turned into a written 10-12 page double-spaced paper due no later than August 15, 2018 [see below for “Policy on Late Papers.”]

**Here are you choices of biographical subjects:**

1. Francis Ellingwood Abbott (<http://uudb.org/articles/francisellingwoodabbot.html>)

2. Leon Birkhead (<http://uudb.org/articles/leonmiltonbirkhead.html>)

3. Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon (<http://uudb.org/articles/eleanorelizabethgordon.html>) and Mary Augusta Safford (<http://uudb.org/articles/maryaugustasafford.html>) [the Iowa Sisterhood]

4. William R. Jones (<https://www.danielharper.org/yauu/2012/08/william-r-jones-a-brief-appreciation/>)

5. Abner Kneeland (<http://uudb.org/articles/abnerkneeland.html>)

6. Elizabeth Brent Lee and Alfred McLung Lee (<http://uudb.org/articles/alfredmcclunglee.html>)

7. Lewis McGee (<http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/mls_mcgee>)

8. Carolyn Parco (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carolyn_Porco>)

9. Kenneth Lee Patton (<http://uudb.org/articles/kennethpatton.html>)

10. Charles Francis Potter (<http://uudb.org/articles/charlesfrancispotter.html>)

11. Ernestine Rose (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernestine_Rose>)

12. Dorothy Tilden Spoerl (<http://uudb.org/articles/dorothytildenspoerl.html>)

13. Kurt Vonnegut (<https://imagejournal.org/article/kurt-vonnegut/>)

14. Alice Walker (<http://www.beliefnet.com/wellness/2007/02/alice-walker-calls-god-mama.aspx>)

15. Frances Wright (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Wright>)

| Assignment | Due Date | Brief Description | Point Value |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First Assignment | 6/15/2018 | Post under “Discussions” on Populi a self-introduction and a brief description of your interest in the course, including your knowledge of or “relationship to” humanism. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Presentation Topic Due | 6/10/2018 | Email your presentation topic to the instructor. *Selections will be claimed on a first come, first served basis.* | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Reading and Class Participation | 7/9/2018 | Complete the assigned reading [see “Required Texts” above]and demonstrate familiarity with that list through participation in class discussion | 20% |
| Class Presentation of a Humanist’s Biography | 7/9/2018 | Click or tap here to enter text. | 50% |
| Paper derived from oral presentation of a Humanist’s Biography | 8/15/18 | Your oral presentation must then be transformed into a 10-12 page written paper [doublespaced] | See above |
| Paper on Your theology related to humanism | 8/15/2018 | Prepare a 5-page double-spaced paper responding to the question, “What do I value about religious humanism and where, if anywhere, do I differ from a humanist perspective in my own understanding of religion or theology?” This too is due no later than August 15, 2018 | 30% |

## **Policies**

### Late**/Incomplete Policy**

Regular, substantive, and prompt participation and activity online (on Zoom calls and discussions) is required for successful completion of the course. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate with the instructor if you have an emergency that requires you to miss a deadline. Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per week late. Assignments received more than two weeks past the original due date (unless cleared with the instructor in advance and an alternate deadline negotiated) will be given a grade of 0/F. Incompletes will not be given except in the case of true, unanticipated emergency, at the instructors discretion.

### Statement Regarding Accommodation

Meadville Lombard is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, they should contact the Sr. Director of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Michael Brown ([mbrown@meadville.edu](mailto:mbrown@meadville.edu)) (312) 212-0673. Please note that classroom accommodations cannot be provided without an approved Accommodations Form.

### Student Handbook

Your MLTS Student Handbook is the primary source for information and policies regarding your successful completion of coursework. Please consult the Student Handbook version that governs your entering year at Meadville. [Click here to locate the current Student Handbook (link opens in new window)](http://www.meadville.edu/current-students/handbooks-policies-and-forms/).

### Add/Drop **Policy and Dates**

Students must contact the Director of Student Records in order to add or drop a course after the registration period has ended. The student will complete a Drop/Add Form (available in the Student Handbook) and submit this to the faculty and Registrar within 10 business days from the start of the term.

### Academic Integrity Statement

Students are expected to be familiar with MLTS Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at MLTS, and the school’s covenant requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the VP of Faculty and Student Affairs. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found on the  [MLTS](http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml) Student Handbook.