

Our Living UU History and Heritage

*Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, VA
Spring 2016*

Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister

Information

Class Meeting Times: Mondays 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

March 1
March 8
March 15
March 22

Meeting Place: UUCR Sanctuary

Materials:

Buehrens, John A. *Universalists and Unitarians in America*. Boston: Skinner House, 2011.
OPTIONAL

Bumbaugh, David E. *Unitarian Universalism: a narraige history*. Chicago: Meadville Lombard Press, 2000. OPTIONAL

Cordes, Ron. *Long Strange Journey*. 6 DVDs (summary UU history)

Harris, Mark. UU History (pamphlet): PACKET

Meyer, Carol D. *our unitarian universalist story*. Unitarian Universalist Assocation, 1996:
Handouts 3, 5, 9, 10
Resources 1, 3, 4, 5 . PACKET

Peterson, Polly. *Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarian and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century*. Boston: UUA, 2010. OPTIONAL (weekly readings)

Any notebooks, journaling materials, etc. you may wish to bring

(materials available from UUA bookstore; online www.uua.org; follow links to bookstore)

Contact Information:

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Outline of Course

Meeting One: March 2

Defining history
 Overview of UU History
 (Some) History of Unitarian Universalism since 1961

Meeting Two: March 8

American Unitarianism: Channing to ca. 1900

Meeting Three: March 15

American Universalism: Murray to ca. 1900

Meeting Four: March 24

Toward merger: Unitarianism and Universalism Social Justice
 Humanism
 Unitarian Universalism at UUCR: writing your congregational history
 (History of Unitarian and Universalism in Virginia)
 (Where did we come from: Unitarianism and Universalism before creation of American
 Denominations)

Class Covenant, suggestions only

1. I agree to respect confidentiality. Anything of a personal nature that I hear in this room stays in this room. (If I want to underline confidentiality of my sharing, I will feel free to do so.)
2. Respecting the overall structure of class sessions, as I participate in conversation I will remain careful to allow equal time for all class participants.
3. I will engage in active listening while others are talking. This includes focussing on the speaker (note-taking to recall points for later discussion permitted) and no cross-talking.

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Materials for Week 2: American Unitarianism: Channing to 1961

1. Read any handouts from Class One:

- Resource 5: Unitarians and Universalists: if time limited, focus on sections on Unitarian
- Handout 10: Unitarian Views on Human Nature: statements about Unitarian values
- Resource 4: The Web Extends to England: this is background to Unitarianism before it traveled to the United States

2. Check out the online *Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography*. There's a link from www.uua.org\uuuhs, or just google from uua.org. I don't want to kill too many trees copying articles, but as you wish, read and/or print articles on:

- William Ellery Channing
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Theodore Parker
- Margaret Fuller

3. Read the essay, "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Birth of Transcendentalism," from *Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarian and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century* by Polly Peterson. See questions at end of essay.

4. Yet more reading:

- *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism*, ed. Conrad Wright. Three pivotal sermons, by Channing, Emerson, and Parker.

- David Bumbaugh. *Unitarian Universalism: a narrative history*. p. 95 - 140 for history of Unitarianism in America.

4. Many of you may have other resources on the Transcendentalists: if you have any favorite readings, essays, books, etc. by Emerson, or Henry David Thoreau, or Margaret Fuller, and others, bring these to class. If you wish, take some time in class to describe this work, why you like it, what it means to you as a Unitarian Universalist (I recall reading *Walden* for the first time in 11th grade English class: what an amazing essay.)

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Materials for Week 3: American Universalism: Murray 1770 to Merger 1961

1. Read information about Universalist on handouts from Class One.

2. Check out the online *Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography*, mentioned last week. There's a link from www.uua.org/uuhs, or just google from uua.org . I don't want to kill too many trees copying articles, but as you wish, read and/or print articles on:

- Hosea Ballou
- Clara Barton
- P.T. Barnum
- Horace Greeley
- Benjamin Rush
- Thomas Whittemore
- Elhanan Winchester
- Olympia Brown

3. Read the essay, "Judith Sargent Murray and American Universalism" from *Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarian and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century* by Polly Peterson.

4. For yet more reading, see

- David Bumbaugh. *Unitarian Universalism: a narrative history*. p. 141-184 for history of Universalism in America.

-Frank Schulman. *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History*. Boston: Skinner House, 2004

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Materials for Week 4: Before Unitarianism (1825); Toward Marger (1900-1961)

1. Review any information on earlier handouts about the early phase of Unitarian movement: the Radical Reformation, for example. See also the new handout, ‘Unitarian Origins in Poland and Transylvania’
2. Review any information on earlier handouts about our denominations in the 20th century before merger. Notice in particular information about humanism. Also, who was James Luther Adams? You might also note the decline of Universalism: what happened, what went ‘wrong?’
3. Now that you know UU history from 1961 forward, can you see in the first half of the 20th century any roots of the issues in race relations we discussed in the first class of this course?
4. We will allow some time in class session four to address ‘anything you’ve always wanted to know about Unitarian Universalism but were afraid to ask.’
5. **Finally, to share with everyone, by invitation, bring to class the ‘theme’ you have found which identifies or explains the history of Unitarian Universalism (recall: article by Mark Harris: his theme is ‘heretics’)**