

# U, U, & UU the Good the Bad and the Ugly

UUCB Winter/Spring course 2017

This course will engage participants in the examination of our Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist history and polity. This class will examine some of the more important events of our UU past since moving to the United States with brief descriptions of the separate pasts before moving to the US. Participants will listen to brief readings each week which will then invite them into focused discussion as to gain a better understanding of the material. Our weekly lessons will also have short bios of those who have shaped our faith for the good or bad.

## Session 1: Unitarians

Activity	Minutes
Opening	15
Activity 1: The Baltimore Sermon	30
Activity 2: The Dedham Decision	25
Activity 3: The Iowa Sisterhood	25
Wrap Up Jeopardy	20
Closing	5

### Welcome and Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice in deep respect for the mystery and holiness of life, in honor and gratitude for those who have gone before, with love and compassion for those who dwell among us, and with hope and faith for the generations to come.

### What Will Happen in this class:

Before we begin with each of our activities I will briefly explain our VAST Unitarian history before coming to the United States and how Unitarianism landed here. This brief overview is mostly to teach class participants that both of our Unitarian and Universalists roots are rich and deep despite many thinking that we are a new religion. After our brief history we will begin with our activities.

### Activity 1: The Baltimore Sermon

\* Give background on William Ellery Channing

\*Highlights from The Unitarians and The Universalists

<http://archive.uuworld.org/2005/02/lookingback.html>

- \* Pass out highlights taken from sermon that illustrate the main points
- \* Questions:
  - \* What was your childhood idea of God
  - \* What was your childhood idea of Jesus
  - \* What are your current thoughts on the unity of God
  - \* What are your current thoughts on the divinity of Jesus
  - \* What profession of faith would shock you (much like Channing did) today as a UU?

### **Activity 2: The Dedham Decision**

- \* What is the Dedham Decision?
- \* Pass out parts to the group, give them a few minutes to organize a small play
- \* Questions:
  - \* What made this decision so important to the town/church?
  - \* How does this decision play out in our current church structure?
  - \* When has this type of scenario played out for you in your church or family?
  - \* How might we use this case to examine our own actions in our current political climate?

### **Activity 3: The Iowa Sisterhood**

\* Have pictures of the following women on a power point playing as a slide show in background

Mary Augusta Safford, Eleanor Gordon, Florence Buck, Mary Collson, Caroline Julia Bartlett Crane, Adele Fuchs, Marie Jenney Howe, Ida Hultin, Mary Leggett, Rowena Morse Mann, Mila Tupper Maynard, Amelia Murdock Wing, Marion Murdock, Anna Jane Norris, Margaret Titus Olmstead, Elizabeth Padgham, Gertrude Von Petzhold, Helen Grace Putnam, Eliza Tupper Wilkes, Helen Wilson, Celia Parker Woolley

- \* Ask if anyone has ever heard of the Iowa Sisterhood?
- \* Tell the story of the Iowa Sisterhood
- \* Share specific stories of Mary Augusta Safford and Eleanor Gordon and Eliza Tupper
- \* Ask the group when have they remembered ever begin pioneers for any cause?
- \* Has anyone ever been a pioneer for anything in our congregation?
- \* What can we do today to honor the legacy of the Iowa Sisterhood
- \* What can we do today to raise communities?

### **Jeopardy!**

#### **Extinguish the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community or the fire of commitment, these we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

## Session 2: Universalists

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
Opening	15
Activity 1: John Murray, Father of Universalism	30
Activity 2: Universal Salvation/Treatise on Atonement	25
Activity 3: Women in Universalism	25
Wrap Up Jeopardy	20
Closing	5

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### **What Will Happen in this class:**

Before we begin with each of our activities I will briefly explain our VAST Universalist history before coming to the United States and how Universalism landed here. This brief overview is mostly to teach class participants that both of our Unitarian and Universalists roots are rich and deep despite many thinking that we are a new religion. After our brief history we will begin with our activities.

### **Activity 1: John Murray Father of Universalism**

- \* Tell the story of John Murray
- \* Pass out parts to the Sand Bar story from UU World as told by Elizabeth Strong <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/stories-universalist-history>
- \* Questions:
  - \* If God saves all souls, why do good?
  - \* Have you ever been called to do something that you did not want to do?
  - \* Do you view the story of the sand bar as a miracle or not?

### **Activity 2: Universal Salvation/Treatise on Atonement**

- \*Ask group if they understand where Universal Salvation came from
- \* Talk about Hosea Ballou and the Treatise on Atonement
- \* Questions:

- \* What does the 1<sup>st</sup> Principle mean to you?
- \* What did you know about sin as a child?
- \* What have you heard about Jesus as he relates to sin?
- \* How do you view sin now?

### **Activity 3: Women in Universalism**

- \*Tell the story of Olympia Brown, Mary Ashton Livermore, and Agusta J Chapin
  - \* How are their stories different from the stories of the Iowa Sisterhood?
  - \*How do we see their stories playing out in our community?
  - \* How do their stories compare with our current political climate?

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## Session 3: Unitarian Universalists

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
Opening	5
Activity 1: Consolidation	20
Activity 2: White Controversy over Black Empowerment	25
Activity 3: Our Principles and Purposes	20
Wrap Up Jeopardy	15
Closing	5

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### **What Will Happen in this class**

#### **Activity 1: Consolidation**

- \* Tell the story of the Consolidation
- \* What changes did each group have to make?
- \* What were the losses?
- \* What were the gains?

Pass out pipe cleaners, one color to represent Unitarians, one other color to represent Universalists, have each participant shape their image of each (5 min) ask participants to share with the group. How might their creations be different if they were representing what UU looks like to them today?

#### **Activity 2: The White Controversy over Black Empowerment**

- \* Hand out timeline of controversy to each participant
- \* Pass out a few selections from The Premise and the Promise
- \* Explain the story of the empowerment controversy

Questions:

- \* Were you present for or identified as UU at the time of any of the events?
- \* Had you heard anything about the events
- \* How did it make you feel at the time?
- \* How does it make you feel now?
- \* How can we relate this controversy to our current political climate?
- \* How can you be a voice for others in your own congregation?

### **Activity 3: Our Principles and Purposes**

- \* Pass out selections from The Premise and the Promise
- \* Talk about the story of the first try at consolidation
- \* Talk about each principle and purpose and ask for thoughts from the group
- \* Questions:
  - \* What does the word Creed make you think of?
  - \* Have you been a part of creedal religions in the past?
  - \* If you were to change anything about our Purposes, what would it be?
  - \* If you were to change anything about our Principles, what would it be?

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## Session 4: Congregational Polity

Activity	Minutes
Opening	10
Activity 1: What Is Polity?	25
Activity 2: Cambridge Platform	25
Activity 3: Covenantal Community	30
Jeopardy	20
Closing	5

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### What Will Happen in this class:

Participants will leave this class with a better understanding of Unitarian Universalist congregational polity and how our polity is different from many other faiths.

### Activity 1: What is Polity?

- \* Share definitions of Polity with group
- \* Ask group if they can think of other places that have such polity
- \* Did their childhood religions have polity?
- \* What did the structure of their old religion look like?
- \* What are the pros/cons about having congregational polity?

### Activity 2: Cambridge Platform (Boo Ya)

- \* Pass out excerpts of the story of the Cambridge Platform from my UUHP class resources
- \* Ask class to read the excerpts aloud
- \* What does the Cambridge Platform look like today?
- \* In what ways do we live into the Cambridge Platform today?
- \* What parts of the platform do we no longer practice?

### **Activity 3: Covenantal Communities**

- \* Ask participants what covenant means to them
- \* Did they ever participate in a different faith that subscribed to covenants?
- \* What does covenant look like in our church community?
- \* What does covenant look like with our neighbors whom we disagree?
- \* Are there unspoken covenants?
- \* How do we repair a broken covenant?

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