

New Religious Movements: Myths and Reality.

Instructor David Mihalyfy – dmihal@saic.edu
Office hours by arrangement.

Course Description:

Over the past 40 years, social scientists have intensively studied New Religious Movements (NRMs), whether small groups centering around a charismatic leader, diffusive spiritualities found at the yoga studio or New Age bookstore, or long-standing traditions and practices only recently imported by immigrants. Because of the unavoidable influence of media sensationalism, research has examined not only brainwashing, conversion, and recovered memories, but also the larger contexts in which these concerns arose: perception and stigmatization of some NRMs as "cults", the rise of anti-cult networks and cult member deprogramming, and the "Satanic panic" of the 1980s.

Through selected major scholarship, primary sources, and ethnographies of present-day NRMs produced through 3-4 term-time site visits, students will move beyond popular stereotypes and reflect on the nature and function of NRMs. Sources will include literature from Chicago NRMs, the Errol Morris documentary *Tabloid*, and the memoirs of controversial cult deprogrammer Ted "Black Lightning" Patrick.

This course is primarily discussion-based and will implement the model of dynamic, respectful humanistic inquiry found in much scholarship and expected for all assignments. Some classes will also include instructor presentations on common writing issues and *ad hoc* group composition and editing, often with peers' work as a basis.

Course Objectives:

Through this course, you will be able to:

- Familiarize yourself with several historically important NRMs, a range of contemporary NRMs found in Chicago, and some major areas of research on NRMs.
- Begin to think through ethical issues surrounding the selection of NRM-related topics for discussion, as well as artists' claimed expertise on and depictions of NRMs.
- Develop interpersonal skills to respectfully engage and learn from people who think differently from you.
- Recognize and reproduce linguistic registers suitable for academic and professional contexts.
- Judiciously formulate descriptive analyses and tease out key assumptions, tensions, and implications, all the while avoiding or carefully distinguishing related evaluations and normative claims.
- Collegially evaluate descriptive analyses and theoretical frameworks in light of thoroughly-investigated particular examples.
- Construct viable research questions that would significantly advance the current state of knowledge.
- Synthesize and prioritize information and effectively communicate it to others.

Prerequisites:

Required is the maturity to analyze and discuss a range of practices and beliefs without being dismissive or derogatory.

Credit:

SAIC adheres to a credit/no credit grading system. In order to earn credit for this course, you must:

- * Receive credit for at least 11 of the 14 weekly in-class reading responses (i.e., receive ‘no credit’ on 3 or fewer reading responses).
- * Submit all assignments on time and in a satisfactory state (i.e., showing clear and sustained engagement with assigned reading and following assignment rubrics).
- * Demonstrably respond to written requests for improvement, in the case of unsatisfactory work.

Attendance:

Timely attendance at all classes is required, as stated in the 2013-2014 SAIC Bulletin (p. 56):

Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time. Any necessary absences should be explained to the instructor. Students who are ill should contact their faculty member... For an extended absence due to illness, contact Health Services. Notification is then sent to all instructors informing them of the student’s absence. For other extenuating circumstances contact the Academic Advising Office.

Please note that the written notification does not excuse a student from classes. The instructor gives credit to students officially enrolled in a course only if they have responded adequately to the standards and requirements set... Also note that if a student registers late for a class (during add/drop) the instructor counts the missed classes as absences and the student is responsible for assignments during those missed days.

Attendance will be tracked through the weekly in-class reading responses, which are administered for 10 minutes at the very beginning of class. A reading response cannot be made up, so arriving more than 10 minutes late or being absent from class will result in a ‘no credit’ response, more than 3 of which will result in failing the course.

Assignments (Overview):

Along with the 3-4 term-time site visits (occurring roughly once a month), assignments are fairly evenly distributed over the course of the semester:

- Weekly in-class reading responses (14 in total, 8-10 min. of writing per week).
- *Tabloid* descriptive analysis (1-2pp. due Sun. Sept. 14th) and revision (1-2pp. due Mon. Sept. 22nd).
- *Every Secret Thing* scholarly conversation contribution (3-4pp. due Sun. Sept. 28th).
- Contemporary Chicago NRM possible research directions outline (1-3pp. due on Mon. Oct. 27th or Nov. 3rd, 10th, or 17th).
- “You as an NRM scholar” position paper (3-4 pp. due on Mon. Nov. 24th).
- Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp. due Mon. Nov. 24th).
- Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper (8-10 pp. due Thurs. Dec. 11th).

In accordance with the goals of a First Year Seminar, assignments will be exercises in humanistic inquiry and the linguistic register suitable for academic and professional contexts. The assignments are set up in “building block” fashion in fairly discrete stages: students formulate their own descriptive analyses (*Tabloid* descriptive analysis), then begin to deploy descriptive analyses in a scholarly conversation (*Every Secret Thing* scholarly conversation contribution, “You as an NRM scholar” position paper), and lastly feel out and produce a larger contribution to scholarship (Contemporary Chicago NRM possible research directions outline, research paper outline, and research paper).

Please consult the final pages of the syllabus for more detailed information about all assignments and the range of pre-screened contemporary Chicago NRMs to which students will make 3-4 term-time site visits .

Course Policies:

- **Texts:** Students should read all assigned texts **before** the given class, and bring to class either hard or electronic copies of every text so that they can refer to them during discussion.

- **Cell Phone:** Cell phones should be turned off and put out of sight for the entirety of class.

- **Electronics:** Because of the volume of electronically-available material, students may bring electronic devices to class for consulting texts. Because they frequently foster distraction and disengagement from discussion, electronic devices should be demonstrably closed or set to the side when not actively used for consulting texts. Violations will result in a private request to bring only hard copies of texts to future classes. Electronics may be used for writing the weekly in-class reading responses.

- **Academic Honesty:** Students should produce their own work and responsibly cite the work of others. More information on this can be found in the Flaxman Library document “Avoid Plagiarism - Quick Guide” (available at http://www.saic.edu/media/saic/pdfs/campusresources/academicadvising/plagiarism_quickGuide.pdf). Plagiarism will result in the notification of relevant administrators, and can have consequences that include a failing grade in the course, student conduct proceedings, and suspension or expulsion from SAIC, as has been detailed in the 2013-2014 Student Handbook (pp. 85-86) (available at http://www.saic.edu/media/saic/pdfs/lifeatsaic/newstudentorientation/PO03062014_Handbook_Student_rights_v1.pdf).

- **Accommodations:** The website of SAIC’s Disability and Learning Resource Center (available at <http://www.saic.edu/lifeatsaic/wellnesscenter/disabilityandlearningresourcecenter/resourcesforfaculty/>) outlines the required procedure for accommodation of disabilities:

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) by phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to all of your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave.

Campus Resources:

- **Writing:** Students should remember that the Writing Center is available for academic help (as is detailed on <http://www.saic.edu/lifeatsaic/academicadvising/writingcenter/>):

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center [B1-03, 112 S. Michigan Avenue]. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process...

To schedule an appointment, use our online sign-up system... For questions, contact 312.345.3588 or wcenter@saic.edu... Monday through Thursday, from 4:15 to 7:15, a tutor will be available to work solely with walk-in students. Though it may appear that the schedule is full during these times, please stop by to see if our walk-in tutor is available to work with you.

- **Counseling:** Students should remember that Counseling Services is available for any number of wellbeing issues (as is detailed on <http://www.saic.edu/lifeatsaic/wellnesscenter/counselingservices/>):

Currently enrolled degree-seeking SAIC students may receive up to 16 sessions of free, confidential counseling and psychotherapy.

Students may schedule an appointment by calling 312.499.4271. Appointments can also be made in person at 116 South Michigan Avenue on the 13th floor. Regular Counseling Services hours are 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. A psychotherapist will typically see students for an intake session within a few days of initially contacting Counseling Services. Students who are determined to be in crisis will be seen as soon as possible, perhaps immediately.

Required Texts:

Out of respect for student budgets, no texts are required for purchase and almost all assigned texts can be found online or as coursesite pdfs.

Because of the large amount of material assigned from each, however, *Analyzing Social Settings* (4th ed.), the *Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, and Haruki Murakami’s *Underground* are not available in full as pdfs for all required sections. Instead, all are on reserve in hard copy at Flaxman Library, as is a DVD of Errol Morris’s *Tabloid*.

That said, Murakami’s *Underground* may be worth purchasing, considering that its price is reasonable and the reserve copy may be inconvenient to use; many pages are assigned for a single class at the very end of the semester and people may end up fighting over that copy.

Course Schedule:

Week 1.

*** Mon. Sept. 1st - NO CLASS – Labor Day. ***

Week 2.

Mon. Sept. 8th – Introduction.

In-class Screening: Errol Morris’s *Tabloid* (2010).

Questions: How does Joyce McKinney perceive the religious group in which Kirk Anderson participated, and to what degree do her perceptions seem justified? Are her actions to make him leave intelligible, and why? What does Morris think of McKinney’s self-awareness, and how does he convey his thoughts to the viewer? What relation if any does this have to McKinney’s perceptions of Kirk Anderson and the religious group to which he belongs?

Week 3.

Mon. Sept. 15th - The Brainwashing Controversy (1 of 3).

DUE: *Tabloid* descriptive analysis (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu by 5pm Sun. Sept. 14th).

Readings:

- Robert Jay Lifton, M.D., “What is ‘Brainwashing’?”, “Research in Hong Kong”, “Re-education: Dr. Vincent”, and “Varieties of Response: Apparent Converts”, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of “Brainwashing” in China* (New York, [NY]: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 3-7, 8-15, 19-37, and 117-132.
- Edward Hunter, “Ahoy! The Brain”, *Brain-washing in Red China*, new and expanded ed. (New York, [NY]: Vanguard Press, 1953), 3-12.

- John Lofland, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland, “Evaluating Data Sites” (selections), “Getting In” (selections), and “Getting Along”, *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth – Cengage, 2006), 15-18, 21-32; 33-47, 51-53; and 54-80. (coursesite pdf of 54-80, otherwise ON RESERVE)

Questions: In what historical contexts did concerns about brainwashing arise? According to Lifton and Hunter, what are signs of brainwashing? According to Lifton, what factors contribute to brainwashing, and are some factors more important than others? According to Lifton, how successful is brainwashing in the short-term and the long-term, and why? To what does Hunter compare the brainwashing process? Is Hunter consistent in his descriptions of brainwashing, or does he vary them?

Week 4.

Mon. Sept. 22nd - The Brainwashing Controversy (2 of 3).

DUE: Revision of *Tabloid* descriptive analysis (1-2pp.) (bring hard copy to class along w/corrected original; also email an electronic copy to dmihal@saic.edu).

Guests: Discussion of fieldwork challenges.

Readings:

- Margaret Thaler Singer, “Coming Out of the Cults,” *Psychology Today* 12.9 (January 1979): 72-80 and 82.
- Eileen Barker, “Choice or Brainwashing?” (selections), “Suggestibility” (selections), and “Susceptibility”, *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* (Oxford, [UK]; New York, NY: B. Blackwell, 1984), 138-148; 189-196 and 203-204; and 205-231.
- J. Gordon Melton, “Brainwashing and Cults: The Rise and Fall of a Theory” (10 December 1999; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.cesnur.org/testi/melton.htm>).
- “Unification Movement,” in *Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed., edited by J. Gordon Melton et al. (Farmington Hills, [MI]: Gale, 2008), 808-810.
- John Lofland, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland, “Logging Data” (selections) and “Developing Analysis” (selections), *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth – Cengage, 2006), 81-95, 98-117; and 201-217. (ON RESERVE)

Questions: According to Singer, what factors define the experience of cult members? Is she consistent in her descriptions of cults, or does she vary them? What definition of brainwashing does Barker use, and how does she determine if brainwashing occurs in the Unification Church settings that she observed? In what ways do Singer and Barker respond to the earlier work of Lifton? Does your perception of this scholarly conversation match the description of Melton, and why or why not?

Week 5.

Mon. Sept. 29th – The Brainwashing Controversy (3 of 3).

DUE: *Every Secret Thing* scholarly conversation contribution (3-4pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu by 5pm Sun. Sept. 28th).

Guest: Presentation on recent developments in the Unification Church.

Readings:

- William Carlsen, “The Kidnapping That Gripped the Nation,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (published 4 February 1999; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/The-Kidnapping-That-Gripped-the-Nation-Heirss-2948846.php#page-1>).

- “Patty Hearst’s Kidnapping,” *CNN.com* (published 3 February 2014; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/03/us/gallery/patty-hearst/>).
- “Patty Hearst kidnapped by SLA – from the archives,” *CBSnews.com* (news broadcast of 4 February 1974 posted 4 February 2014; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/patty-hearst-kidnapped-by-sla-from-the-archives/>).
- “The Patty Hearst Kidnapping Drama,” *YouTube* (news broadcast of 12 February 1974 posted 13 April 2014; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3FcDDoJPNl>).
- “Patty Hearst Arrested,” *ABCNews.com* (news broadcast of 18 September 1975 posted 15 June 2010; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/sept-18-1975-patty-hearst-arrested-10924635>).
- Patricia Hearst, “Author’s Note” and Chapters 3-5, *Every Secret Thing* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), ix, 36-100.
- Nathalie de Fabrique, Stephen J. Romano, Gregory M. Vecchi, and Vincent B. van Hasselt, “Understanding Stockholm Syndrome,” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (July 2007): 10-15 (accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2007-pdfs/july07leb.pdf>).

Questions: In what ways does Hearst’s experience reflect that of people subjected to brainwashing, as described by Lifton? In what ways does Hearst’s experience *not* reflect that of people subjected to brainwashing, as described by Lifton? How would you concisely and meaningfully improve the brief observation of Melton that Hearst’s case bore “some analogy to the situation of the Korean prisoners of war” (eighth paragraph, “Brainwashing and the Cults”)?

Week 6.

Mon. Oct. 6th – Scientology: A Case Study in Evaluating Sources.

Readings:

- “Church of Scientology,” in *Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed., edited by J. Gordon Melton et al. (Farmington Hills, [MI]: Gale, 2008), 793-795.
- J. Gordon Melton, “Birth of a Religion” (selections), *The Church of Scientology* (Salt Lake City, [UT]: Signature Books in cooperation with CESNUR, 2000), 1-12 and 21-23.
- Lawrence Wright, “Source” (selections), *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief* (New York, [NY]: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 20-56.
- Hugh Urban, “Scientology, Inc. – Becoming a ‘Religion’ in the 1950s” and “Secrets, Security, and Cyberspace – Scientology’s New Wars of Information on the Internet”, *The Church of Scientology: A History of a New Religion* (Princeton [NJ] and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), [57]- 88 and [178]-200.
- Janet Reitman, “Inside Scientology,” *Rolling Stone* (2006 report published online 8 February 2011; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/inside-scientology-20110208>).
- Joe Childs and Thomas C. Tobin, “Scientology: The Truth Rundown, Part 1 of 3 in a special report on the Church of Scientology,” *Tampa Bay Times* (21 June 2009; accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.tampabay.com/news/scientology-the-truth-rundown-part-1-of-3-in-a-special-report-on-the/1012148>).
- L. Ron Hubbard, “How to Use This Book” and “The Eleventh Act”, *Handbook for Preclears* (Los Angeles, CA: Bridge Publications, 1989), 1-3 and 185-189.
- L. Ron Hubbard, “The Auditor’s Role,” *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (Los Angeles, CA: Bridge Publications, 1992), 218-224.
- Robert Kaufman, “The Dianetics Class,” *Inside Scientology: How I Joined Scientology and Became Superhuman* (New York, NY: Olympia Press, 1972), 37-44.
- Nancy Many, “International Management” and “The Messianic Surveys and Plans”, *My Billion Year Contract: Memoir of a Former Scientologist* (CNM Publishing, 2009), 64-73 and 166-173.
- Marc Headley, “Behind the Wheel,” *Blown for Good: Behind the Iron Curtain of Scientology* (Burbank, [CA]: BFG Books, 2010), 179-184.
- “Meet a Scientologist” on *Scientology Video Channel* (various videos accessed 23 July 2014 at <http://www.scientology.org/videos/category/meet-a-scientologist#/videos/world-map>).
- Mark Rathbun, “Is History Repeating Itself?” and “The Reformation”, *The Scientology Reformation: What Every Scientologist Should Know* (Pancho n’ Lefty Publishing, 2010), 7-12 and 91-110.

Questions: How would you group this week’s texts into genres? What are the signs of each genre, if you tried to be fairly exhaustive in describing them? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each genre’s perspective on Scientology, and how

might these perspectives complement or correct one another? Did any texts seem to have major gaps or credibility problems, and why or why not? In what ways if any does the description of Scientology vary according to social location (e.g. academy, journalism, church membership)? What does Rathbun think of David Miscavige? What would Miscavige think of Rathbun? How can a scholar responsibly take into account these 2 perspectives if describing them in scholarship?

Week 7.

Mon. Oct. 13th - Social Forces and Total Institutions.

Readings:

- Erving Goffman, "Introduction" (selections) and "The Underlife of a Public Institution" (selections), *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), 3-12; and 188-189, 197-201, 207-248, and 318-320.
- Rosabeth Moss Kantner, "Commitment and Social Organization: A Study of Commitment Mechanisms in Utopian Communities," *American Sociological Review* 33.4 (Aug. 1968): 499-517.
- Rosabeth Moss Kantner, "The Comforts of Commitment: Issues in Group Life" (selections) and "The Limits of Utopia", *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 126-138 and 231-234.
- Susan M. Andersen, "Identifying Coercion and Deception in Social Systems," in *Scientific Research and New Religions: Divergent Perspectives*, edited by Brock Kilbourne (San Francisco, CA: American Association for the Advancement of Science - Pacific Division, 1985), 12-23.

- John Lofland, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland, "Thinking Topics" and "Asking Questions", *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth – Cengage, 2006), 121-143 and 144-167. (course site pdf of 121-143, otherwise ON RESERVE)

Questions: What features make for a total institution, according to Goffman? Are there or could there conceivably be different degrees of total institutions? What is the range of reactions to a total institution, and what situations enable these reactions? What commitment mechanisms does Kantner identify, and on what grounds does she argue for their success or failure? To what degree are the social forces that Goffman and Kantner describe more broadly applicable? To what degree are the concepts of the "total institution" and "commitment mechanisms" applicable to the Chicago NRM that you are studying? What motivates Andersen to identify coercion and deception in social systems? In what ways are her concerns and goals similar to and different from those of Kantner? To what degree do these scholars address concerns related to popular stereotypes of cults and brainwashing?

Week 8.

Mon. Oct. 20th - Affiliation, Disaffiliation, and Shifts in Membership.

Readings:

- John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective", *American Sociological Review* 30.6 (Dec. 1965): 862-875.
- John Lofland, "'Becoming a World-Saver' Revisited", in *Conversion Careers: In and Out of the New Religions*, edited by James T. Richardson (Beverly Hills, [CA], and London: Sage Publications, 1978), 10-23.
- John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, "Conversion Motifs", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20.4 (Dec. 1981): 373-385.
- Harriet Whitehead, "Renunciation and Reformulation", *Renunciation and Reformulation: A Study of Conversion in an American Sect* (Ithaca, [NY], and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 247-261.
- David G. Bromley, "Leaving the Fold: Disaffiliating from New Religious Movements", in *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, edited by James R. Lewis (Oxford; New York, [NY]: Oxford University Press, 2004), [298]-314. (ON RESERVE)

- Eileen Barker, "Standing at the Cross-Roads: The Politics of Marginality in 'Subversive Organizations'", in *The Politics of Religious Apostasy: The Role of Apostates in the Transformation of Religious Movements*, edited by David G. Bromley (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), [75]-93.
- E. Burke Rochford, "Family, Culture, and Change", *Hare Krishna Transformed* (New York, [NY]: New York University Press, 2007), 52-73.
- "International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)", "ISKCON Revival Movement", and "New Vrindaban Community", in *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed., edited by J. Gordon Melton et al. (Farmington Hills, [MI]: Gale, 2008), 991-992, 992-993, and 1000-1002.

Questions: How broadly applicable is the Lofland-Stark conversion model, and what are its limitations? In retrospect, what advantages and disadvantages does Lofland see in the model, and in what regard does he think scholarship on conversion could improve? In comparison, how useful are the Lofland-Skonovd conversion motifs? To what degree are these motifs applicable to the Chicago NRM that you are studying? To what degree are these motifs applicable to the renunciation-reformulation process described by Whitehead? Does the inclusion of Whitehead's own experience affect the validity of her scholarship? Why does Bromley prefer the terms "affiliation" and "disaffiliation" over "conversion" and "deconversion"? What are the causes of disaffiliation and organization change described by Bromley, Barker and Rochford?

Week 9.

Mon. Oct. 27th - Contemporary Chicago NRMs (1 of 4).

DUE (if presenting): Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring hard copies for all to class).

Readings: TBD.

Week 10.

Mon. Nov. 3rd - Contemporary Chicago NRMs (2 of 4).

DUE (if presenting): Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring hard copies for all to class).

Readings: TBD.

Week 11.

Mon. Nov. 10th - Contemporary Chicago NRMs (3 of 4).

DUE (if presenting): Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring hard copies for all to class).

Readings: TBD.

Week 12.

Mon. Nov. 17th – Contemporary Chicago NRMs (4 of 4).

DUE (if presenting): Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring hard copies for all to class).

Readings: TBD.

Week 13.

Mon. Nov. 24th - NRMs as a Field of Study.

Due: “You as an NRM scholar” position paper (3-4pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring 1 hard copy to class), Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper outline (1-2pp.) (email dmihal@saic.edu and bring hard copies for all to class).

Readings:

- J. Gordon Melton, “Perspective: Towards a Definition of ‘New Religion’”, *Nova Religio* 8.1 (July 2004): 73-87.
- Eileen Barker, “Perspective: What Are We Studying?”, *Nova Religio* 8.1 (July 2004): 88-102.
- David G. Bromley, “Perspective: Whither New Religious Studies?”, *Nova Religio* 8.2 (November 2004): 83-97.
- Thomas Robbins, “Perspective: New Religions and Alternative Religions,” *Nova Religio* 8.3 (March 2005): 104-11.

Questions: What ties a major field of study together, if even the most major scholars can have substantive disagreements about what they are collectively studying? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Melton’s lens as a historian and Barker’s lens as a sociologist? What do you think about Robbins’ distinction between “new religions” and “alternative religions”? How have these high-level debates affected your perceptions of the Chicago movement that you are studying?

Week 14.

Mon. Dec. 1st - The Anti-Cult Movement, Deprogramming, and the “Satanic Panic”.

Readings:

- Anson Shupe, David G. Bromley, and Susan E. Darnell, “The North American Anti-Cult Movement: Vicissitudes of Success and Failure”, in *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, edited by James R. Lewis (Oxford; New York, [NY]: Oxford University Press, 2004), [184]-205. (ON RESERVE)
- Ted Patrick, with Tom Dulack, “Foreword” and “Prologue”, *Let Our Children Go!* (New York, [NY]: Ballantine Books, 1976), v-vii and 1-27.
- Steven A. Hassan, “Strategic Intervention Therapy”, in *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley (New York, [NY] and London: Garland Publishing, 1994), 103-125.
- Philip Jenkins, “Satanism and Ritual Abuse”, in *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, edited by James R. Lewis (Oxford; New York, [NY]: Oxford University Press, 2004), [221]-242. (ON RESERVE)
- Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, M.D., Chapters 1-2, 4, and 11, *Michelle Remembers* (New York, [NY]: Congdon & Lattès, 1980), [3]-12, [13]-19, [27]-35, and [82]-88.

Questions: Into what major stages do Shupe, Bromley, and Darnell categorize the evolution of the North American anti-cult movement over time? In their view, what were the major turning points between these stages? How do the authors of *Let Our Children Go!* describe NRM members? According to them, what causes a successful deprogramming? How are their perceptions and treatment of NRM members similar to and different from Joyce McKinney’s perceptions and treatment of Kirk Anderson? According to Hassan, why is strategic intervention therapy preferable to deprogramming, and under what

conditions is deprogramming justifiable? What relation does Philip Jenkins posit between the anti-cult movement and the “Satanic Panic”? How do Smith and Pazder understand the sources of Michelle’s memories, as opposed to Jenkins? Does the text of *Michelle Remembers* provide evidence for the recovered memory process that Jenkins describes?

Week 15.

Mon. Dec. 8th - NRMs, Charisma, and Violence.

Readings:

- Lorne L. Dawson, “Crises of Charismatic Legitimacy and Violent Behavior in New Religious Movements”, in *Cults, Religion, and Violence*, edited by David G. Bromley and J. Gordon Melton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 80-101.
- Max Weber, “The Basis of Legitimacy”, “Charismatic Authority”, and “The Routinization of Charisma”, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, vol. 1, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich and translated by Ephraim Fischhoff et al. (New York, [NY]: Bedminster Press, 1968), 212-216, 241-245, and 246-254.
- Tim Reiterman, with John Jacobs, “The System at Work”, “Sex in the Temple”, “The Arms of God”, “Communalists”, and “White Nights”, *Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People* (New York, [NY]: E.P. Dutton, 1982), 156-163, 171-180, 198-205, 253-262, and 390-403.
- Laura Johnston Kohl, “What Were We Planning?”, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider’s Look* (New York, [NY], and Bloomington, [IN]: iUniverse, 2010), 44-57.
- Leslie Monique Wagner-Wilson, “The Color of Socialism”, *Slavery of Faith* (New York, [NY], and Bloomington, [IN]: iUniverse, 2008), 80-95.
- “People’s Temple Christian (Disciples) Church”, in *Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed., edited by J. Gordon Melton et al. (Farmington Hills, [MI]: Gale, 2008), 1230-1231.

Questions: What is charismatic authority, as described by Weber, and what role can charismatic authority play in violent behavior in NRMs, according to Dawson? What other factors are involved? To what extent can scholarly analysis predict which NRMs will exhibit violent behavior? To what extent does Dawson’s hypothesis fit Peoples Temple as described by Reiterman, Kohl, and Wagner-Wilson? Do Reiterman, Kohl, and Wagner-Wilson present significant material that Dawson does not take into account? Was Peoples Temple a “total institution”? Why or why not?

Thurs. Dec. 11th – DUE: Contemporary Chicago NRM research paper (8-10 pp.) (5pm, details TBD)

Week 16.

Mon. Dec. 16th - Ethics: Discussion Topics Selection, Artists’ Claimed Expertise on & Depiction of NRMs.

Readings:

- “Peoples Temple / Jonestown Gallery”, *Flickr* (accessed 4 August 2014 at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/peoplestemple/>).
- “Remembrances”, *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple* (various remembrances accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=40185).
- Haruki Murakami, *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche* (New York, [NY]: Vintage International, 2000), 3-8; 9-11, 12-18, 19-25, and 26-29; 59-62 and 63-65; 118-120; 138-142; 143-145 and 150-153; 224-241; [245]; 247-250; 304-316; and 359-364. (apart from coursesite pdf of 3-29 and 224-241, ON RESERVE)
- Howard W. French, “A Japanese Writer Analyzes Terrorists and Their Victims”, *New York Times* (15 October 2001; accessed 4 August 2014 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/15/books/15MURA.html>).
- “Aum Shinrikyo (Aum Supreme Truth)”, in *The Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions*, 2nd ed., edited by James R. Lewis (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 93-95.

- “Go Outside”, Cults music video hosted by *Boing Boing* (posted 13 July 2011 and accessed 4 August 2014 at <http://boingboing.net/2011/07/13/cults.html>).
- Isaiah Seret, “A Director Under the Influence of History”, *the jonestown report* 13 (2011; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=29274).
- Don Beck, aka Eiredon, “Talking with Cults: Conversations with a Video Director”, *the jonestown report* 13 (2011; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=29273).
- Nicola Bergström Hansen, “The Jonestown Library”, *the jonestown report* 14 (2012; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=34226).
- Garrett Lambrev, “Reflections on the Jonestown Library: A Response To The Work Of Nicola Bergström Hansen”, *the jonestown report* 14 (2012; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=34294).
- “The Books of the Jonestown Library”, *the jonestown report* 14 (2012; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=34227).
- Nick Burgess, “Painting Stories”, *the jonestown report* 13 (2011; accessed 4 August 2014 at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=29268).
- Hannah Martin, “Phantasma: Nicholas Burgess”, *Boston Dig* (article posted 21 July 2011 and accessed 4 August 2014 at <http://digboston.com/boston-arts-theater/2011/07/phantasma-nicholas-burgess/#more-77042>).

Questions: What topics were chosen for this course, what topics were omitted or largely neglected, and what difference does that make? What do you wish would have been discussed, and why? Do the topics that we choose to discuss ever distort a phenomenon simply because we choose to discuss certain topics and not others? How has your perception of Peoples Temple changed from examining photographs and reading reminiscences about those who died? What do you think of the statement by *the jonestown report* editors that “Remembrances” is their “most important work”, both for family and friends of victims and for Peoples Temple survivors?

For what personal, social, and artistic reasons did Murakami choose to write an oral history of the 1995 sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway? What do you find artistically interesting about Murakami’s book? Do his artistic preoccupations ever seem to distort the phenomena on which he focuses? Based on what you know of NRM scholarship, how sophisticated are Murakami’s observations on Aum Shinrikyo and Al Qaeda? In your opinion, should he have written *Underground* or been interviewed about Al Qaeda by the *New York Times*?

What do you find artistically interesting about the works referencing Peoples Temple? Did your perception of the artwork change after reading survivors’ analyses in *the jonestown report*? Do you think artists should reference other cultures or subcultures always, never, or only under certain conditions, and if under certain conditions, what are they? Do you think NRM members should exercise veto power over presentation and interpretation of their group always, never, or only under certain conditions, and if under certain conditions, what are they?

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Assignments (Instructions):

Weekly in-class reading responses (14 in total, 8-10 min. of writing each).

Apart from the first class, every class will begin with an in-class reading response.

The prompt for the response will be given out at the beginning of class, and will require students to write for 8-10 minutes about some or all of the assigned texts for that week's class (e.g., "Does *Tabloid* seem like an appropriate title for Errol Morris's documentary, since the director's primary interest is how an individual shapes their life through narrative?"). Students can write by hand or use electronics and should actively refer to texts, citing them by using page numbers in parentheses after quotes.

Demonstrating knowledge of the assigned texts and forming a thoughtful answer to the prompt will get credit for a response (even if the prompt's difficult, gather your thoughts and try as best you can).

Responses cannot be made up, and so arriving more than 10 minutes late or being absent from class will result in a 'no credit' response.

Overall, student must receive credit for at least 11 of the 14 responses in order to receive credit for the course (i.e., they can receive 'no credit' on a maximum of 3 responses).

Tabloid descriptive analysis (1-2pp.) and revision (1-2pp.).

Please write 1-2 paragraphs answering the question, "How does Joyce McKinney perceive Kirk Anderson's personality as a result of his involvement with a religious group, and how is her subsequent behavior to make him leave understandable in light of this perception?"

Remember the following:

- 1) Begin the analysis with a very concise preview of the entire argument to come, so that the reader knows what to expect.
- 2) Make sure that the analysis's language concisely acknowledges the difference between Joyce McKinney's perceptions of reality and what reality seems to have been (i.e., the difference between "The course's workload was heavy" vs. "*David thought that the course's workload was heavy*").
- 3) Use direct quotations to illustrate the analysis's points, but don't stop there. Make sure to introduce content categories that help readers easily digest the direct quotations, as well as "mini explanations" that help readers see the relevancy of the direct quotations (e.g. "*David thought that the course's workload was heavy, as can be seen from his complaints about the reading load and the associated timeframe. First, he repeatedly bemoaned "the burden of reading 200 pages a week, minimum," an amount that he perceived as excessive...*").

Please submit the descriptive analysis by email to dmihal@saic.edu by 5pm Sun. Sept 14th.

For the revision, please follow the personalized feedback on the print copy, revise accordingly, and turn in a *hard copy* in class on Mon. Sept. 22nd, along with the corrected copy of the original version. Please also email an electronic copy of the revision to dmihal@saic.edu.

Every Secret Thing scholarly conversation contribution (3-4 pp.).

Scholars advance conversations by faithfully portraying previous positions and marking out their own, improved positions in relation to them (e.g. affirmation, expansion, disagreement and revision, identification of overreach).

As an exercise in advancing a scholarly conversation, please answer the following question by using evidence gathered from the assigned sections of Lifton's *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* and Hearst's memoir *Every Secret Thing*:

How would you concisely but significantly improve the brief observation of Melton that Hearst's case bore "some analogy to the situation of the Korean prisoners of war" (eighth paragraph, "Brainwashing and the Cults")?

Remember the following:

- 1) Begin the analysis with a very concise preview of the entire argument to come, so that the reader knows what to expect.

- 2) Beware a “laundry list” paper style that allocates equal amount of space per point of comparison; substantial agreement is usually uninteresting to a reader and often can be treated quickly, whereas points of disagreement are usually more interesting to a reader and often merit greater length, especially when they are very nuanced.
- 3) Order the argument that so that the flow is natural to a first-time reader.
- 4) Acknowledge limitations of sources while nonetheless using them to advance the scholarly conversation as much as possible.

Please submit the scholarly conversation contribution by email to dmihal@saic.edu by 5pm Sun. Sept. 28th.

“You as an NRM scholar” position paper (3-4 pp.).

As an exercise in advancing scholarly conversation please read the Melton, Barker, and Robbins articles from *Nova Religio*, reflect on the course of the conversation, and lastly think how well their definitions of NRMs fit the movements studied so far in the semester, especially the movement to which you have paid site visits. Next, answer the following question:

In relation to the 3 perspectives offered, where would you chart your scholarly position, where would you categorize the movement to which you have paid site visits, and why?

Please pay particular attention to Robbins’ distinction between “NRMs” (categorized on the basis of “internal properties” like first generation membership) and “alternative religions” (categorized on the basis of “extrinsic, relational conceptions” like cultural alignment).

Turn in a *hard copy* in class on Mon. Nov. 24th, along with the corrected copy of the original version. Please also email an electronic copy of the revision to dmihal@saic.edu.

Contemp. Chicago NRM poss. research directions outline (1-3pp.), research paper outline (1-2pp.), research paper (8-10pp.).

As an exercise in feeling out and producing a larger contribution to scholarship, students will develop a research paper based on 3-4 term-time site visits to a contemporary Chicago NRM.

Much of this research paper will depend on site visit fieldnotes written, organized, and analyzed according to procedures suggested in *Analyzing Social Settings* (4th ed.). The specific research paper topic will be determined by student interest, in conversation with scholarship and the class.

Apart from personal reflection on site visits and conversations with any student studying the same movement, the first major opportunity to develop a paper topic will occur during the 4 sessions devoted to Contemporary Chicago NRMs (Mon. Oct. 27th and Mon. Nov. 3rd, 10th, and 17th). During each session, 2-3 movements will be discussed on the basis of 40-50pp. of primary and secondary literature per movement selected by the student(s) studying that movement. As will be discussed in classes preceding these sessions, scholarship should be representative and primary sources should include texts important to the group as well as texts that the student(s) find provocative or fascinating; primary sources may also include transcriptions of fieldnotes. After discussion of these texts, the student(s) will distribute *hard copies* of a 1-3pp. “possible research directions outline” categorizing a range of final paper topics; after becoming acquainted with the group through the chosen texts, the other class participants will likely have questions and ideas of their own, and the conversation will provide an in-depth opportunity to discuss reader interest in and viability of final paper topics.

The subsequent “research paper outline” (1-2pp. due Mon. Nov. 24th in hard copy, with electronic version emailed to dmihal@saic.edu) will elaborate a single, final topic by presenting:

- 1) A preliminary single-sentence thesis summarizing the research paper’s contribution.
- 2) Arguments supporting the research paper’s contribution (including a short literature review suggesting what areas have been researched and positioning the contribution in relation to them).

- 3) Evidence for each argument (e.g. pieces of literature for the lit review, sources like texts or fieldwork experiences).
- 4) Areas for future research stemming from the research paper’s contribution.

Be sure to review previous assignments and apply the same skill sets here (e.g. ordering the argument so that it “flows” for a first-time reader, etc.).

Lastly, the contemporary Chicago NRM research paper (8-10 pp.) will be due 4pm Thurs. Dec. 11th in *hard copy* in “mailbox alley” outside 112 S. Michigan #605, with an electronic version also emailed to dmihal@saic.edu.

Assignments (Feedback and Grading):

For assignments, feedback and grading will focus on:

- Quality of description: Make descriptions as concise as possible, and yet sufficiently nuanced so any reasonable person would agree with them. Language should not be evaluative (that is, make descriptions with which people at large could agree, apart from any value judgments that they might make). When summarizing a source, do so in a manner that it would be recognizable to its author.
- Prioritization of information: Do not attempt to be comprehensive; rather, provide the most relevant descriptions and observations. What is most distinctive? What is most striking, either in confirmation or contradiction of your previously-formed expectations? Were you sufficiently alert for observations that would affect your previously-formed expectations?
- Logic of analysis: Did you logically draw out how your observations affected your own previously-formed expectations, so that a reader would be persuaded to join you in your position?
- Importance and feasibility of future research: Would your research questions produce information that would have bearing on major aspects of your current understanding? What methodologies would your research questions incorporate, and is that research feasible? Given proper training, could anyone undertake your research questions, or do they encode prohibitive normative claims and evaluative descriptions?

Contemporary Chicago NRM site visits:

Repeat site visits by small groups of students are a common and long-standing pedagogical method in NRM courses taught by well-respected scholars (e.g. Eileen Barker at the London School of Economics and Ann Taves at UC – Santa Barbara).

For this course, students will be placed into groups of 1-3 and assigned a contemporary Chicago NRM to visit 3-4 times over the course of the semester (roughly once a month). The instructor will assign movements on the basis of student schedules and students’ interest in and relative unfamiliarity with given movements. Prior to site visits, class time will be spent on the basics of qualitative social science methodology, as well as the discussion of fieldwork experiences with SAIC grads. Students are responsible for making contact with their movement, selecting appropriate activities by which to sound out the movement and develop research, and maintaining fieldnotes according to procedures recommended by *Analyzing Social Settings* (4th ed.).

A range of NRMs have been pre-screened so that sites are easily CTA-accessible and group leadership is open to visits in future semesters, and to rule out any groups that require money, are deceptive, or engage in high pressure proselytization or illegal activities:

- 1) Alcoholics Anonymous (various locations across the city):

Activities: Open meetings (various times), Sat. Sept. 20th 6-9pm convention at UIC Pavilion.

2) Augustine's Eternal Gifts (Bridgeport; 3327 S. Halsted):

Activities: Book clubs 2nd/4th Thurs. 7:30pm, occasional free classes, open store hours during regular business hours.

3) Anthroposophical Society (Lincoln Square; 4249 N. Lincoln):

Activities: Various classes multiple days a week, Sat. 2-5pm library and bookstore open house.

4) Core Power Yoga (South Loop and various locations; South Loop location at 555 W. Roosevelt):

Activities: Various open yoga classes, week of free yoga.

5) Eckankar (Rogers Park; 7231 N. Sheridan):

Activities: Fri. 7-8pm Hu song once a month, occasional Sat. 12-2pm open center, Sun. 11am-12pm worship service.

6) International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Rogers Park; 1716 W. Lunt):

Activities: Open temple hours, daily morning and evening ceremonies, Sun. 5pm love feasts.

7) Jesus People USA (Uptown; 920 W. Wilson):

Activities: Various weekday evening activities, Sun. morning/early afternoon gatherings.

8) Maum Meditation (Loop; 401 S. LaSalle, Suite 900):

Activities: Daily open center hours, daily leafleting, meditation sessions/classes.

9) Soka Gakkai (South Loop; 1455 S. Wabash):

Activities: Various activities at very active center.

10) Victory's Banner (= followers of Sri Chinmoy) (Roscoe Village; 2135 W. Roscoe):

Activities: Fri.-Sun. 10am-3pm bookshop, monthly Thurs. evening meditation classes (Oct. 2nd, Nov. 6th, Dec. 4th), restaurant open daily except Tuesdays.

If you have ideas for other movements, please email dmihal@saic.edu so that the movements can be contacted and screened for students in future semesters.