



RELS 3339 | Secularisms and Atheisms

Section: 16133 | Asynchronous Online
University of Houston

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1302. Examines the non-religious history of the United States, the various forms of non-belief or alternative belief, and the everyday life of religious "nones."

General Course Information

Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda (he/they) - call me, Dr. Pegoda, Professor Pegoda, or Professor

Department: CLASS

Email: ajpegoda@central.uh.edu

Office Hours

By appointment through Zoom, weekdays 11 am - 8 pm work best

Fall 2025: August 25 – December 6

SECULARISMS AND ATHEISMS

Welcome. I am glad you are here. My mission is to help facilitate your learning *and unlearning* and to provide a course that will help you grow. Learn all that you can because they can never take that away from you.

Some think that since this isn't a STEM class, it won't be, can't be, or shouldn't be just as challenging. This course is required for some students. This course is an elective for others. College electives are NOT blow off courses. Remember too that being a student is a job.

Some also think that online classes will have less work than face-to-face classes. By law, all course formats are required to have equivalent workloads and to provide equivalent opportunities to learn. You're paying the same price and earning the same number of credits, so it's only fair to

have the same amount of work. If anything, online classes have *more* work because you are learning without the structure provided by a dedicated physical time and space.

You can learn all about me and my experiences at <https://andrewpegoda.com>.

Please read this syllabus carefully. It details course pedagogies and policies—nothing in the main section is boilerplate. **By staying enrolled, you hereby acknowledge that you have read this document and agree to the herein policies.**

Copyrighted © Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda, 2007-2025

Description

The United States promotes itself as a seemingly unified Christian nation, even something of a theocracy. Popular rhetoric frequently and regularly suggests that “everyone” is a Christian and the few who are not, lack morality or lack wisdom and are doomed to an eternity of suffering. However, there have always been people in the United States and in other nations who were atheists (or who are religious “nones” or “dones”) or who have followed religions other than Christianity. Of note, the number of religions “nones” has been growing in all so-called most industrialized nations. There have also regularly been voices calling for strict divides between State and Church throughout the United States’s existence. *Secularism and Atheisms* is an upper-level, interdisciplinary course focused on the United States and explores such “free thinkers” and “heathens”—“heathens” toward proper, patriotic, civil religion of the United States; “heathens” toward the dominant theistic mores in the United States. We will also always strive to remember that not all religions are theistic and that “atheism” (even “religion”) itself is a notion that doesn’t make sense in all contexts.

Disclaimers

This syllabus is tentative. I/we reserve the right to change requirements, topics, and/or policies. All information herein is current and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Announcements should be considered clarifications of, reiterations of, additions to, and/or modifications to this syllabus.

Further, this syllabus is tentative until the first official day of class when this syllabus is posted in Canvas, as small changes with assignments and points and with exact topics are possible.

Please operate under the expectation that disclaimers/trigger warnings are always in effect. We will discuss ableism, ageism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism, and/or sexism, as well as death, murder, rape, and/or suicide and other forms of illness, trauma, and/or violence. Content will include explicit, offensive, sensitive content, including language and nudity. This list is not all-inclusive. Additional or specific warnings cannot be provided, partly as they make assumptions about what will or will not trigger. (For example, Khan in *My Name is Khan* is strongly triggered by the color yellow.) Students who are triggered by certain content are welcome to visit with me. And note that from a psychological perspective being triggered is not something that makes you uncomfortable but that triggers flashbacks in PTSD, for example.

We are interested in learning. I select course content with education in mind. Materials might do something excellent, terrible, new, or different. There should be no implied or assumed agreement between course content and myself.

Information about reporting. Anything shared with me concerning illness, safety, wellness, or violence may be relayed to the appropriate office. In particular, I am a mandatory reporter if I learn about sexual violence that occurs by/to an enrolled student, regardless of location, per Federal, State, and UHS Title IX policies. Tragically, sexual violence is endemic (30%+ victim/survivor rate), including among college students (50%+ victims/survivors).

Accessibility

I am 39. I am a queer, crip (i.e., disabled), feminist. I have neurofibromatosis and dozens of related conditions. I have had six surgeries, so far! Two brain tumors are being monitored. I take two dozen medications. I am dyslexic and neurodivergent. I have been in lockdown since March 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 continues its destruction, something I have written many articles about. I was told by experts that my medical problems posed too many obstacles to ever be a professor or even attend college. Yet, I have five college degrees, have countless publications, and have been teaching college since 2007. I've been at UH since 2008.

Thus, I am committed to supporting equitable opportunities. You are encouraged to communicate access needs; please schedule a Zoom with me to do so. I know that the Medical Model of Disability doesn't always make healthcare accessible, safe, or comfortable. If you are registered with the DART Student Accessibility Center, let me know. As needed, you are charged with coordinating communication with the Dart Center. Every effort is made to follow these accommodations or appropriate and reasonable alternatives.

Communication

Check Canvas often, taking note of announcements, grades, etc. When you have a question or want to share something with me, please send me an email. **I do not use Canvas**

Mail. Depending on the question, I will reply directly to you, or I will address the question in the next daily announcement. I will respond promptly (i.e., within 48 hours, excluding weekends/holidays), if the message follows guidelines of professionalism. Practice professionalism by sending messages from your UH email account (required per UH policies) and by including a subject, greeting and sign-off with your full name, concise paragraphs, appropriate content, your student ID, and your class name.

Don't resend messages within minutes or hours or ask that I answer as soon as possible. Emails are triaged and answered according to relative importance (and according to the spoons I have available). Make sure to check your UH email account regularly, and if you receive a direct email from me, please reply promptly.

Additionally, you may be required to have a one-on-one Zoom to discuss your performance and other matters related to the class.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for students seeking major or minor credit in Religious Studies. This course is further approved for CLASS Block requirements. Of course, all students are welcome to take this course as an upper-division elective.

Students will attain—through lectures, formal and informal discussions, and/or primary and secondary texts (e.g., fiction and nonfiction, alphabetic and non-alphabetic)—and demonstrate—through a variety of informal and formal compositions (e.g., quizzes, drafts, presentations, major papers)—high-level knowledge, perspectives, and theories about the history of secularisms and atheisms in the United States and all of the related institutions, issues, peoples, traditions, and texts.

Through the above processes, students will increase their aural, cultural, technological, textual, and visual literacies; their written and oral interpersonal and intrapersonal communication literacies; their metacognitive literacies; their ability to grapple with some of the field's vocabulary; their ability to analyze, apply, explain, and synthesize and analyze material; and their ideas about the impacts of history, social/colonial constructions, and embodiment. Students will

also appreciate “the learning worth crying about” (Dr. Michael Wesch); the role of failure in learning (Professor Clint Tuttle); the decision of “becom[ing] an active owner of your education” (Dr. Gabriela Diaz de Sabates); and “the emotional demands of college” (Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda).

Requirements

1-Commitment: Per Federal, State, SACS, and UH policies, each 3-credit class requires a 180-hour or so commitment from students. If you start early, study, read, participate, communicate, submit the work, and demonstrate critical thinking, you will have no problem earning a high grade. **If you make good-faith efforts to complete the readings and requirements, you are almost guaranteed to pass the class.** Throughout the class, please pay careful attention to the Live Course Calendar (LCC)—it details the term step-by-step.

2-Integrity: My Integrity Policy underscores two beliefs: the importance of original, independent thinking and the importance of community/support and feedback.

What you cannot do: Any use of any Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or AI-like tool—for anything in this course including but not limited to assignments, papers, presentations, projects, quizzes or tests, and essays—is absolutely prohibited. Further, don’t use AI for brainstorming, consulting, thinking, reading, researching, writing, translating, paraphrasing, revising, etc. Don’t use Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, Quill, or other tools/websites to help with any part of any work for this class, including any rewrite or edit suggestions from Word. ****Only submit your own ideas in your own words.**** All work is subject to scanning by TurnItIn’s Similarity Report and AI Report. Further, don’t manipulate fonts/margins, don’t adjust the speed of a video project to be faster or slower, don’t recycle papers, don’t buy papers, don’t pay someone to do your work, don’t get unauthorized help, don’t copy or paraphrase text, don’t plagiarize, and don’t use any outside resources (unless you have prior approval). Don’t sell/share my course materials. Don’t upload/sell your work to websites like Chegg or Course Hero. Don’t mass message the class, and don’t make/join a group chat, such as GroupMe. This list is not all-inclusive. Should you learn of policy violations, you have an obligation to notify me. Integrity violations usually result in an F for the class and an official report. Should I discover violations after the fact, I reserve the right to apply necessary sanctions.

What you can (and should) do: You are always welcome to use course materials and your notes while completing graded work. Study groups are fine, too, just no more than three or

four. You are strongly encouraged to visit the Writing Center (<https://uh.edu/writing-center/>). For tutoring, student success workshops, or an academic coach, please contact LAUNCH (<https://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch>). Both the Writing Center and LAUNCH offer services online and face-to-face. It's fine to have a friend or relative proofread work before you submit it—provided they do not use any kind of AI tool and they only point out any typos or point out possible areas in need clarification. Of course, you can always reach out to me, too. I am always happy to review assignments before you submit them for grading, but I need at least 48 hours (excluding weekends/holidays) to get back to you and then you need time to make any revisions.

3-Curiosity: A willingness to learn is vital. You will likely encounter views you find morally wrong. Please avoid agreeing or disagreeing. There are more sophisticated forms of engagement. For our purposes, we want to consider many different, different perspectives and think about how and why those ideas exist. If we give respect to the thoughts that different people offer (and consider their intersectionalities and positionalities) we can learn and be more appreciative of the complex, beautiful world around us. Related to this, an important skill to learn in college is sometimes moving away from centering or referencing your personal experience.

4-Reading: You are expected to read assigned materials, including but not limited to *reading* articles, books, videos, films, images, and/or novels. Takes notes, as these will help you process the information and will help with assignments. It's expected that you watch videos on regular speed. **Most materials are provided, but you are responsible for acquiring access to the following.** It's college, so allow for the possibility that you will need to spend small amounts on other supplies, including movie rentals, to complete requirements.

- Tara Isabella Burton, *Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World*
- Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: History of American Secularism*
- Phil Zuckerman, *Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions*

5-Writing: As this is a university liberal arts class, you will be writing often. For credit, written work must be in English and must also use appropriate capitalization, complete sentences, and paragraphs. Give appropriate attention to punctuation, grammar, and spelling. You are always expected to fully answer prompts with examples, analysis, and/or synthesis that explores who, what, when, where, how, and why. Further, except as otherwise noted, it's required to use the version of Word provided in AccessUH for the entirety of completing written assignments—

simply create a folder for this class in your OneDrive and give files an appropriate name. This process is important so that I can access a document's version history, if needed.

6-Technology: A desktop or laptop computer, high-speed internet, a webcam, and a mic/earbuds are required by the University of Houston for students taking online classes. Our course requires use of Canvas (***only access Canvas through AccessUH; if you use the App, you will encounter glitches***); Microsoft 365; Zoom; and UH email. Cameras must be on, and you must be visible in the frame when completing a video assignment or when attending Live Sessions or Office Hours. When you need help with technology, please contact UIT (open 8 am – 8 pm daily) by calling/texting 713.743.1411 or emailing uitsupport@uh.edu.

7-Behavior: I hope we can all treat each other in a way that would make our dearest cats and dogs and other best friends proud. I hope we can always do better and learn more. Specifically, remember your audience: Class is not a family reunion, missionary retreat, or night out. Our class should be a *brave space*. Students who make inappropriate comments or requests, who proselytize, who refuse to comply with reasonable requests, or who do anything that compromises my commitments to inclusive learning will typically be reported to the Dean of Students Office and/or to Equal Opportunity Services.

8-Instructions: Not following instructions is one of the biggest things that holds students back. In all cases, reading and following instructions is crucial to earn credit on assignments. The instructions always have important information regarding what to do, how to do it, and where and when to submit it. Instructions are carefully crafted to communicate expectations.

9-Assignments: The course is graded on the points system and is out of 100 points.

- **5 Live Sessions (10 points)**
 - 1) five live sessions, live active attendance during online meetings (or if you cannot attend live, actively watching the recording and writing a short response), 2 points each
- **4 Assessments (45 points)**
 - 1) three timed tests over assigned material, 10 points each; 2) course reflection, 15 points
- **4 Writing Assignments (45 points)**
 - 1) primary source analysis, 5 points; 2) reaction paper, 10 points; 3) identity paper, 15 points; 4) synthesis/argument paper, 15 points
- **Bonus Opportunities**

opportunities to recover missed participation points or earn bonus points, 1-2 points each

Deadlines: Assignments are always due by 11:59:00 PM CST on the specified day. Because everything is posted early, you can work around personal commitments. Strive to be ahead and have backup plans as insurance against the unexpected. All assignments always have an automatic 6-hour EMERGENCY grace period. Otherwise, deadlines are firm, and NO LATE SUBMISSIONS will be accepted, unless a prior agreement has been arranged between you and Dr. Pegoda. Emergencies will, of course, be taken into consideration. Deadlines are never extended for participation assignments or bonus opportunities, including for students who add the class late.

Other details: Assignments must show incremental understandings of course concepts. I might use completed work as a future example—anonymity maintained. Work is only submitted when submitted to the appropriate link(s) and in the appropriate format(s). Work is further only considered submitted when it is SFW and does not contribute to an atmosphere of threat or intimidation. In other words, everything must be school-appropriate—please do not say or show anything that would be inappropriate, disruptive, or alarming in a face-to-face class.

Grades

Unlike what has become a common in high school, re-dos are not standard in college. Once work is graded, please focus on the future. As above, assignments are open for large windows, there are numerous assignments, you can always receive feedback early, and UH offers its students many resources.

When you have questions about grades or feedback or if a mistake happened: first, take 24 hours to review and reflect upon your submission and class resources; and after this moratorium, second, please email me (following the procedures above) to schedule a Zoom. Grades will not be discussed by email. I am always glad to discuss ways for you to grow or to correct a mistake.

Please don't leave questions as a Comment in Canvas, as these are hard to access.

Also, know that grades are not negotiable. Grade grubbing will not be entertained. Such tends to happen when someone might fuss about a grade **and** (1) demand a higher grade, (2) suggest the grade earned will prevent graduation, law school, getting a scholarship, etc., (3) emphasize how much time or effort went into the assignment, (4) allude to other courses or programs with work considered more important, (5) reference past grades, (6) suggest how they would have graded or

designed the assignment, or (7) say—*after the fact*—the assignment was *confusing* or *too hard*, for example.

Grades are always imperfect measurements—not indicators of worth—of your performance in the given contexts and goals of your life and the larger geopolitical realities we find ourselves in.

Term grades are based on the following point breakdown. *Students may receive a higher grade than their final point total if they have shown substantial improvement, outstanding participation, or some other behavior that shows a commitment toward their learning and growth. Students should **not** ask for a higher grade.*

94.0 or more = A

90.0 - 93.9 = A-

87.0 - 89.9 = B+

83.0 - 86.9 = B

80.0 - 82.9 = B-

77.0 - 79.9 = C+

73.0 - 76.9 = C

70.0 - 72.9 = C-

67.0 - 69.9 = D+

63.0 - 66.9 = D

60.0 - 62.9 = D-

59.9 - 0 = F

Discussion and Lecture Topics

I. Opening Thoughts

II. Contemporary Voices

III. Reevaluating US History

IV. Atheisms and Secularisms across the Globe

V. Rethinking the Religious

VI. Deconversion and Religion Leaders

VII. Atheisms in the US of the Global Majority

VIII. When Church and State Collide

IX. Project Week

X. Separating Church and State

Boilerplate Syllabus Information

The information below is "boilerplate" -- common to every syllabus across the University. I have no control over the language, structure, format, grammar, and punctuation.

University Policies and Student Support Resources

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including [CoogsCARE](#) and the [UH Go App](#). [UH Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off- campus. For assistance visit uh.edu/caps, call 713-743-5454, or visit a [Let's Talk](#) location in-person or virtually. Let's Talk are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

Need Support Now? If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat 988lifeline.org.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office (known at UH as the Equal Opportunity Services office or "EOS"). Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the UH [Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Resources page](#). Please note that you may also report concerns of discrimination based on your protected class identity to EOS.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website:

<https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

The [Center for Student Advocacy and Community \(CSAC\)](#) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a "home away from home" and serves as a [resource hub](#) to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our [Cougar Cupboard](#), all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1:1 appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The [Cougar Closet](#) is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar community come closer together. Visit the CSAC homepage or follow us on Instagram: [@uh_CSAC](#) and [@uhcupbrd](#). YOU belong here.

Women and Gender Resource Center

The mission of the [WGRC](#) is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

Academic Honesty Policy

High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The [UH Academic Honesty Policy](#) is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Course Schedule, Assignments, and Assessments

See Requirements. Specific semester deadlines are provided within Canvas.

Required Instructional Materials

See Requirements.

Course Policies and Procedures

See Requirements.

Grading Rubrics and Weights

See Requirements and Grades.

Secularisms and Atheisms

**

"We are all atheists about most of the gods that humanity has ever believed in. Some of us just go one god further."

**

"One cannot correctly understand the Black religious experience without an affirmation of deep faith informed by profound doubt. Suffering naturally gives rise to doubt. How can one believe in God in the face of such horrendous suffering as slavery, segregation, and the lynching tree? Under these circumstances, doubt is not a denial but an integral part of faith."

**

"Secularism in a US context is nice white Christianity with the serial numbers filed off."

**

"In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship...If you worship money and things-if they are where you tap real meaning in life-then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you."

**

Links below will often require using your UH Library account and/or UH Office account

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<p>Please go through materials in the order they are listed. Links often require your CougarNet username and password.</p> <p>If a link stops working, let me know!</p>		
GETTING STARTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Syllabus • Vocabulary Handout • The Live Sessions • Optional Bonus Opportunities • General Grading Descriptions 	
-W1- 8/25-8/31	<p><u>Opening Thoughts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What is Religion?" • "The Anthropology of Religion" • "Karen Armstrong on Religion" • "Anthropology in 10 or Less: How Do We Understand Religion?" • "Memorial Service" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Quiz (8/30, required to earn grades) • Course Folder (8/30, required to earn

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "American Does Not Need More God. It Needs More Atheists." • "Survey Finds Most American Christians Are Actually Heretics" • "Losing Our Religion: The Growth Of The 'Nones'" • "Both an Atheist and a Theist" • "Religion is Not Done With You" • "Terms and (Starting) Definitions" 	<p>grades)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions (8/31, worth 1 bonus point)
-W2- 9/1-9/7	<p><u>Contemporary Voices</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atheists in America (read at least three articles from each part) • Why I Left (takes a minute to load different locations, look at at least several different cities, including Houston) • "I Found Myself When I Lost My Faith" • "Why I Lost Faith in New Atheism" • "Freethought Matters: Gloria Steinem" • "There's No Such Thing As Atheist Fundamentalists" • "Yes, Atheists Can Be Fundamentalists" • "New Atheism: What Went Wrong?" <p>**Start the Source Analysis Paper</p>	
-W3- 9/8-9/14	<p><u>Reevaluating US History</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Big Idea History Syllabus" • <i>Freethinkers: History of American Secularism</i> Ch 3, 4, 5 • Black Freethinkers : A History of African American Secularism Ch 1 • "9 Great Freethinkers and Religious Dissenters in History" <p>*****Mark your calendars: Live Session with Colton Llenos, Cameron Rollwitz, and Jaden Urdiales on Wednesday, September 10, 7-8 PM CST*****</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/10 Live Session with Heathen Panel -- response required unless you attended live (9/13, worth 2 points)
-W4- 9/15-9/21	<p><u>Reevaluating US History, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Freethinkers: History of American Secularism</i>, Ch 6, 7, Appendix • <i>Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions</i> Ch 3 • Letters from an Atheist Nation pgs., 62-77, 94-98, 193-197, 239-243 • "Americans Are Religious About America" • "Is the US Capitol a Religious Building" <p>**Start the Reaction Paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source Analysis Paper (9/21, worth 5 points)
-W5- 9/22-9/28	<p><u>Atheisms and Secularisms Across the Globe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Freedom of Thought Report (explore the website) • "What Are The Most Atheist Countries?" • "The 'Underground Railroad' To Save Atheists" • "Atheism and Secularity in India" • "Atheism and Secularity in Ghana" • "Atheism and Secularity in Japan" <p>*****Mark your calendars: Live Session with Dr. John Gillispie on Tuesday, September 23, 7-8 PM CST*****</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/23 Live Session with Dr. Gillispie -- response required unless you attended live (9/27, worth 2 points) • Test 1 (9/28, worth 10 points)

<p>-W6- 9/29-10/5</p>	<p><u>Rethinking the Religious</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World</i> Intro and Ch 3, 5, 8 • "Satanic Temple's Seven Tenets Are Morally Superior To Ten Commandments" • "What is Post-theism" • "My Journey To Discovering Omnism" • "What Happens at an Atheist Church" • "John Shelby Spong Quotes" • "Despite Pushback, Atheist Gives Lovely Invocation" • "An Atheist Chaplain, and a Death Row Inmate's Final Hours" • "This Is Who I Am" <p>**Start the Identity Paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper (10/5, worth 10 points)
<p>-W7- 10/6-10/12</p>	<p><u>Deconversion and Religious Leaders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ex Pastor Keven Wesley Says The Bible Isn't Real" • "From Minister To Atheist: A Story Of Losing Faith" • "Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor are Happily God-free" • "A Year Without God: A Former Pastor's Journey Into Atheism" • "The Cost of Atheism" • "After Year Of Atheism, Former Pastor: 'I Don't Think God Exists'" • "Conservative Pastor Comes Out as an Atheist" • The Clergy Project (explore the website) • Writing God's Obituary : How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist (start) <p>***** Mark your calendars: Live Session with Dr. Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst and Dr. Megan Goodwin on Monday, October 6, 7-8 PM CST*****</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/6 Live Session with Drs. Morgenstein Fuerst and Goodwin -- response required unless you attended live (10/11, worth 2 points)
<p>-W8- 10/13-10/19</p>	<p><u>Atheisms in the US of the Global Majority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing God's Obituary : How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist (continue) • "Mandisa Thomas: President of Black Nonbelievers" • "10 Fierce Atheists: Unapologetically Black Women Beyond Belief" • "Black Atheists Explain What It's Like to Be a 'Double Minority'" • "Godless Gospel Debuts!" (just get some impressions) • Black Nonbelievers (just get some impressions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity Paper (10/19, worth 15 points)
<p>-W9- 10/20-10/26</p>	<p><u>Atheisms in the US of the Global Majority, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing God's Obituary : How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist (finish) • "Sarah Haider: Ex-Muslims of North America" • "Say It With Me: I'm a Hispanic Atheist" <p>**Start the Synthesis/Argument Paper</p>	
<p>-W10-</p>	<p><u>When Church and State Collide</u></p>	

10/27-11/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Crusade: How the Supreme Court is Weaponizing Religious Freedom, Ch 1-5 • "Why I'm an Atheist . . . in 60 seconds - Andrew L. Seidel" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 2 (11/2, worth 10 points)
-W11- 11/3-11/9	<p><u>When Church and State Collide, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Crusade: How the Supreme Court is Weaponizing Religious Freedom, Ch, 6-10, 14 • <i>Freethinkers: History of American Secularism</i>, Ch 12 • "The Battle Over a 'Catholic Public School' in Oklahoma" <p>****Mark your calendars: Live Session with Dr. Anthony Pinn on Monday, November 3, 7-8 PM CST****</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/3 Live Session with Dr. Pinn -- response required unless you attended live (11/8, worth 2 points) • Synthesis/Argument Paper (11/9, worth 15 points)
-W12- 11/10-11/16	<p><u>Separating State and Church</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions</i> Intro & Ch 1 <p>****Mark your calendars: Live Session with Attorney Andrew Seidel on TBA, 7-8 PM CST****</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA Live Session with Attorney Seidel -- response required unless you attended live (11/15, worth 2 points)
-W13- 11/17-11/23	<p><u>Separating State and Church, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions</i> 2, 4 • "Religion is Politics" • "The Congressional Freethought Caucus Adds Two More Members" 	
-W14- 11/24-11/30	<p><u>Separating State and Church, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions</i> 5, 6 <p style="text-align: center;">Thanksgiving Break, Wednesday-Saturday</p>	
-W15- 12/1-12/6	<p><u>Separating State and Church, cont.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions</i> Ch 7 • Student Secular Alliance (just get some impressions) <p>Note that per the University of Houston calendar, Saturday, December 6, 2025, is the last day of class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 3 (12/5, worth 10 points) • Course Reflection (12/6, worth 15 points)