

**UNITED SPIRITUAL COUNCIL
OF NATIONS**

**SEMESTER
STUDY
COURSES**

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The United Spiritual Council of Nations has established a structured study course designed to educate the serious student on the major religions of the world. The purpose of this organization is to illuminate their understanding that the commonality of these religions is that they all follow the Universal Spiritual Laws of Nature which is God's laws. They will come to realize that the essence of all the major religions display similar patterns and began with a spiritual vision from a Higher Source.

It is our purpose to educate the serious student not only in religious theology but also in the pure essence of Spirituality, which is carried through our innate intelligence. We do this by educating the mind of man and by going within to the heart (or Life Force) of our being. In order to fully understand the Spiritual Laws of God that the major religions endorse and practice, the student needs to learn experientially how to connect the knowledge of the mind and the innate wisdom of the Spirit.

It is our intent to produce graduates that will not endorse or oppose any religion, but will instead, be ministers and educators who teach and apply the Spiritual Laws of established religions and promote mutual aid in advancing traditional religious teachings and education.

**Reverend Mahala D. Bacon, Th.D.
President**

UNITED SPIRITUAL COUNCIL OF NATIONS

SEMESTER STUDY COURSES

Each semester consists of 14 weeks (about 3 and a half months).

All students who apply will need to request an audience with the education administrator.

Ministerial Curriculum

Essential Philosophy for Spiritual Unfoldment

Associate Minister

Ordained Minister

Required courses for:

Ministerial Curriculum –

- 1. Studies of Major Protestant Religions**
- 2. The Worldview of Major Religions**
- 3. Basic course of Essential Philosophy for Spiritual Unfoldment Course**

Assistant Minister –

- 1. Must have completed the Ministerial Curriculum and received the diploma.**
- 2. Intermediate course of Essential Philosophy for Spiritual Unfoldment**
- 3. Basic course of Essential Philosophy Spiritual Healing**
- 4. Must be able to perform all the ministerial duties except marriage and baptism**
- 5. Know your state and local laws**
- 6. Know what each board position of your church requires, and your bylaws and policies and procedures**

Ordained Minister –

- 1. Must have completed the Ministerial Curriculum, Assistant Minister Curriculums and received diplomas.**
- 2. Advanced course of Essential Philosophy in Spiritual Unfoldment**
- 3. Intermediate and Advanced Essential Philosophy Spiritual Healing**
- 4. Must have satisfactorily completed 3 courses in world religions**
- 5. Must demonstrate the ability to perform all ministerial duties**

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF ASIAN RELIGIONS

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** - The objectives of this course are: 1) to explore the faith experiences and the belief systems of particular world religions as expressed in their scriptures and traditions; 2) to assess the symbols, rituals, myths, and ideas whereby religions name and celebrate that which gives meaning and value to life; 3) to recognize religion as both a disrupter and stabilizer of life; 4) to appreciate and respect the truth claims of each religion; 5) To evaluate views of nature in the world's religions in relation to the current environmental crisis.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** - The course will investigate and compare the religions of indigenous traditions and Asian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto). The course will explore the historical growth, geographical expansion and modern struggles of these religions. It will also discuss the potential environmental ethics in each of these world's religions.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION AND STUDY** - Classes will include a lecture-discussion on the major religious ideas of a selected tradition and of the historical development of the tradition. There also will be selected films presenting visual images of the religions and/or discussion of novels related to the particular traditions. Field trips to religious institutions pertaining to Asian philosophies will also be offered.

WORLDVIEW OF MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

- I. GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES - We hope to develop together a greater understanding of different religious experiences and empathy for the expression of that experience in scripture, ritual, symbol, and doctrine. In addition, we aim to identify some principles for dialogue and for comparison between religions as well as some means of constructive appropriation of these traditions for moral insight
- II. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER - This course attempts to understand the nature of religion by looking at some foundational ideas, texts, and figures in a variety of religious traditions. We will explore what human beings have seen as the ultimate meanings and purposes of existence. Our goal is to comprehend better the varieties of religious experiences in the world. We shall assume that religion has many dimensions and that answers to religious questions are manifold. The course has two main aims: first, for you to become more informed about the ultimate concerns of others, past and present; second, for this information to make available new understandings of yourself and others. At times you should ask yourself: what is true, and why? Why are people religious? Do people really believe this or that? What do I believe, and why? Remember, learning about others should teach you about yourself.
- III. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION – Lectures by visiting speakers. Film studies followed by discussion and class participation. Subject matter will be drawn from a variety of contemporary authors such as Carolyn Myss, Louise Hayes and Deepak Chopra, etc. Assigned reading materials will be advised at time of course.

COMPARATIVE CONTRAST OF JUDAIC AND ISLAMIC LAW

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES** - This course treats the classical writings of the two kindred religions, in a large-scale labor of comparison and contrast: how are they alike? How are they different? What do we learn from the likeness? What do we learn from the difference? Issues of borrowings and dependence are not addressed, the two systems being described, analyzed, and interpreted and then compared as free-standing coherent wholes. The comparisons that we draw rest not on historical but on logical and phenomenological bases: we compare religions of the monotheist type, religions that lay heavy stress on norms of behavior.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** - This course treats as Islam the normative statements of the Quran and related traditions, and as Judaism the authoritative statements of the Torah.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – Excerpts from the Quran and related traditions, and the Torah, both oral and written. Written essays required. This course requires 100% in- class attendance and participation.

STUDIES OF MAJOR PROTESTANT RELIGIONS

(These classes are offered individually or comparatively)

AMISH (MENNONITES)

SEVENTH DAY

ADVENTIST

**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
(MORMONS)**

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LUTHERAN CHURCH

PENTECOSTAL

CHURCHES BAPTISTS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

METHODIST CHURCH

**UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST**

UNITY CHURCH

CHRISTIAN

SCIENCE

SPIRITUALISM

SPIRITISM

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES** – These introductory courses are designed to familiarize the student with similarities and differences of the major Protestant religions practiced in North America and worldwide. These courses are one way for students to acquaint themselves with the major Protestant religions. Students will come to appreciate the richness and diversity as well as the commonalities of religious life in the various belief systems. These courses are designed to promote a spiritual continuity between all Protestant religions by understanding the origins and central core beliefs.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** - We will explore some of the diversities and origins of the awakenings that caused the misunderstandings that lead to the separations of these religions that study from biblical texts. Students will be expected to tie in the spiritual aspects of each religion studied and find the commonality of spiritual laws within each of these religions. The social values and structures of each religion, as well as the founders and/or the reformers, will be studied.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – Biographies of the major spiritual figureheads that changed the face of these religions, i.e., John Smyth, Martin Luther, King Henry VIII and Reverend John Wesley will be studied. Film excerpts, outside lecturers and debates will form the greater part of this course. An open discussion on Charles Fillmore, Mary Baker Eddy and the Fox sisters will be conducted. Essays will be required on Charles Russell, William Miller, Samuel Seabury and Joseph Smith. A two-page written study on The American Unitarian Association is expected at the completion of this course.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM VERSUS THE ORTHODOX EASTERN CHURCH

- I. GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES – This course will examine the two largest Christian communities of the world. We will explore the beginnings of the split starting in the fifth century, which was finalized in the year 1004.
- II. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER - We will learn how the Orthodox religion holds biblical scripture and tradition guided by the Holy Spirit to be the source of Christian Truth. And how Catholicism claims direct historical descent from the church founded by the Apostle Peter. We will explore the six sacraments and the similarities of these two great religions.
- III. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION – We will study the doctrine established by the seven ecumenical councils and later amended in the late Byzantine period. We will examine how Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox churches have improved since the Vatican Council II.

INTRODUCTION COURSES TO WORLD RELIGIONS

(Each religion class is taught separately and individually.)

BAHA'I

BUDDHISM

CONFUCIANISM

ETHICAL CULTURE

HINDUISM

ISLAM

JUDAISM

CHRISTIANITY ORTHODOX

EASTERN CHURCH

ROMAN

CATHOLICISM

ROSICRUIANISM

SHINTO

TAOISM

SIKHISM

ZOROASTRIANISM

- I. GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE – These are introductory courses for the students to get basic knowledge of different religions of the world and their belief systems. These courses are one way for students to acquaint themselves with the major religions of the world, who believe in one God or Infinite Intelligence. Each student can gain a fundamental understanding of the general nature of religion and of various religious traditions. Students will have the opportunity to appreciate the richness and diversity as well as the commonalities of religious life in various cultures and historical periods. To gain understanding about how and why people construct their religious worlds through myth, ritual, symbolism, beliefs, ethics etc. The students will become aware of the need for spiritual dialogue in our contemporary world. It will also attempt make the “strange” familiar and to unify and promote understanding that the different beliefs are quite common in the whole picture of spirituality.
- II. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER – Each course will discuss the rituals, the nature of symbols, myths, beliefs and doctrines about divinity. They will cover the social values, and structures of each religion, as well as the founders and/or reformers. The students will be expected to tie in the spiritual aspect of each religion studied to find the commonality of spiritual laws that each religion in perspective adheres to.
- III. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION – Each religion has their sacred texts, and writings. These books will be posted according to appropriate classes at the time of registration. The grade will be based on how well you fulfill the description of the cultural conditions of the religion of your study. A comparison of the religion in relationship to the spiritual laws. An analysis of the importance of the studied religion to religious structures in general. We will have representatives to speak on the religion being studied. You will need to be able to author a paper on the founders and or reformers, ritual and beliefs of the religion course that you are studying. Each course will have at least one extra reading assignment and will be posted at the time of registration. Group participation including debates and discussion will make up one third of your grade.

WESTERN RELIGION AND THE QUEST FOR SPIRITUAL MEANING

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** – This is a comparative study of Western Societies and their ways of demonstrating their religion to find spiritual fulfillment. How each ritual that is practiced is to open the mind to a consciousness of at-one-ment with God. Our approach is concerned with the several ways in which human beings from each religious practice have related to their understanding of the Ultimate Reality.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** - We will look at the transformations of each of these religious traditions in order to respond to an ever-changing world and the challenges. We will study the people who have given meaning to their lives through these religious traditions, as well as of the people who have rebelled and made changes through their rebellion. We will deliberately attempt to incorporate a study of rituals, and contemporary challenges, as well as sensory experiences into this course of study. This is not a class about the written Scripture, but a class that is aimed toward the totality of the religious experience, that create spiritual connective-ness.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – Required reading will be Mystery of Faith, Life and Teachings of the Masters, Many Ways to God, along with library assignments that will be posted at the time of registration. The sensory experience will lead to the use of music and film material. Class lectures, three final papers will be required - 1. On a man or woman that has made a difference in western religion. 2. Making connection with rituals and or tradition to spiritual connective-ness. 3. How religions are continuing to restructure due to contemporary challenges and lifestyles of today.

AN OVERVIEW STUDY OF THE TORAH, QUR'AN (KORAN), AND THE HOLY BIBLE

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** – This course is to familiarize the student with the content of these sacred scriptures. This course is designed to give an overview of each of these books. The myths contained in these sacred texts will be explored to bring awareness to the student that spiritual connectedness is found in all these teachings. Students will read in different terms, but shockingly similar, stories about creation, temptation, murder, exile and family strife. These themes emerge over and over from the pages of these Holy Scriptures.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** – This class will explore how divine revelation inspired the writers of these scriptures. We will look at the miracles contained within these books. We will cover comparisons of stories between the texts and will attempt to show that today's problems and worries are not so different than when these great books were written. The attempt here is to show that even though we intellectually learn and grow through the ages, the hearts and emotions of men have similar challenges.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – Selected readings from the Qur'an, Torah, and the Holy Bible. Class groups for discussion will present various points of view supporting and/or challenging the doctrines and myths found in these books. Students will have the opportunity to compare contemporary problems (individual or cultural) with the problems found in the study texts. We will use maps to show the geographical locations of the countries in comparison to one another. Selected works of art will be presented to demonstrate life and customs in the ancient world. Additional reading materials will be posted at the time of registration.

ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHY IN SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

(This class is offered in an introductory level, intermediate level and advanced level.)

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** – This class will provide students with the opportunity to learn about the Spirit within. We will become aware of our innate intelligence, or the Life Force within, that provides guidance and direction in our journey through this physical life. We will show how the Holy Scripture communicates about our innate intelligence or the Spirit within. We will learn the advantages of meditation and how to focus our mind and energies to more fully experience the Creative Life Force that dwells within each of us.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** – Students will learn to attune themselves to the unseen forces that guide and direct our every thought, word and deed. They will learn how their every action creates a reaction as they come to understand the Spiritual Law of Cause and Effect. Another awareness these students will achieve is the knowledge that we put many things in our mind through our five physical senses and the difference of something impressed on our minds by divine inspiration. We, also, will be demonstrating how the Spiritual Law of Attraction manifests in our daily lives. We will discuss the Spiritual Law of Order and how it applies to the entire universe.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** - This class will use meditation tapes as a guide. There will be demonstrations to show students the magnetic force. This is designed to bring to them the awareness of the energy within and its power. Students will be given the opportunity to learn about the Still, Small Voice within and how to recognize it, and utilize it, for their individual spiritual path. Outside lectures and field trips will also be planned for participation. This class requires a commitment to attendance. Homework will consist of daily focus and meditation. With the instructor's approval, students may select three sources of spiritual reading material. A paper will be expected with each source of reading material. Each student will need to give a four-minute talk on some aspect of the Spiritual Laws with questions by the other students to follow.

ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHY SPIRITUAL HEALING CLASS

(This class is available at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels. Students must have satisfactorily completed the intermediate level of the Spiritual Unfoldment Course.)

This class will be limited to no more than five students at a time.)

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** – This course is designed to teach the student the art of channeling the Life Force energy of healing through - 1. Laying on of the hands, 2. Thought projection, and 3. The spoken word. This is for the serious student who wishes to direct Innate Energy towards the betterment of mankind. Although Spiritual Healing can, and does, involve healing of the physical body, all healing begins in the Spiritual Realm. Students will begin to develop a sensitivity to the electro-magnetic fields, which are a facet of the spiritual body. As the student starts to work with this energy, our aim is for him to begin the realization that all spiritual power is carried through the vibration of the Christo Consciousness.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** – This is the study of the seven major energy centers, or Chakras, and their individual characteristics and their connection to the physical body. This involves the perception of auras and the interpretation of those energy communications. As we need to remember, all energy carries information. Receiving whole concepts that go beyond the five physical senses and understanding that all of God’s communication will follow the Spiritual Laws. Even though it is TRUTH that we can heal ourselves, it is not true yet. This course is not designed to take the place of our medical doctors. It is designed to help us evolve towards the TRUTH of total spiritual, physical and mental healing.
- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – We will draw on the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy, and her teacher, Anton Mesmer, Barbara Ann Brennan, Carolyn Myss, Wayne Dyer. Required reading material will include Hands of Light, selected Christian Science articles written by Mary Baker Eddy, and various excerpts from esoteric libraries. Students will learn the intricacies of the body’s energy field by practicing the techniques involved with energy. They will learn about healing thoughts through interaction with one another. There will be in-class demonstrations of the power our words carry.

BIBLE LITERATURE

- I. **GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVE** – This course is designed to study the Bible as a piece of literature and not to influence any religion. This study will include characters of the Bible, customs of the day, geographical influences, and Jesus’ parables.
- II. **DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER** – In order to understand the Bible more fully, we must have a knowledge of the cultures and customs, and the influences of the governments and their societies. We will cover the major

wars of Biblical times and their far-reaching impact on today's history, especially in the Middle East. As we study these ancient peoples, we will learn how their taboos and symbolic rituals guided their everyday lives. Although women appear to be relegated to a background role, they, in fact, worked to earn money, influence governmental figureheads and held powerful positions. We will see how these women impacted their societies. This class will learn how Jesus used the customs of the day to teach through his parables.

An overview book by book study will show us geographically the historical places and travels of many of the Biblical characters.

- III. **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION** – The textbook for this course is the New Living Translation Holy Bible. Other textbooks will be used in conjunction with the Holy Bible. We will use film studies and various art forms to illustrate the temples, work environment and everyday lifestyles. Students will be expected to do two term papers, one paper on a prominent female and one paper on a prominent male of Biblical times. A written synopsis of the essence of Jesus of Nazareth will be required at the end of the course. A written test will be given at mid-term and a final written test.