

A Sampling of 2009 Winter Online Courses

Available at the Church of the Larger Fellowship
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A Chosen Faith: Self-Study Guide (On-going)

A guided examination of Unitarian Universalism, based on the book *A Chosen Faith* by John Buehrens and Forrest Church. Full participation in this course requires having the book *A Chosen Faith*, available from the UUA bookstore at www.uua.org/bookstore. *Free*

Ancient Roots: The Feminine Face of Western Religion, part II

Taught by Elizabeth Lerner, January 5, 2009 - February 2, 2009

This second part of the Ancient Roots curriculum addresses women in early Jewish and Christian story and history, looking again at some elements and characters we may know well—or may not know as well as we think! Starting with Eve and the lesser-known Lilith in the Hebrew bible, we'll look also at the roles and relevance of some famous matriarchs in early Judaism. Then moving on to Christianity, we'll consider the Gnostic gospel of Mary Magdalene—which presents a very different early Christian woman with very different significance, than has come down in popular understanding. Finally we'll move into early European history by exploring different roles for women in the early Irish church. *\$40*

Religion and Ecology: A Shared Fate, A Shared Task

Taught by Peg Shaffer: January 12, 2009 - February 20, 2009

How are the world's religions responding to environmental concerns? Is the environment a religious issue? John Henry Newman has stated that people will die for a dogma who will not stir for a conclusion. What if, then, environmentalism was discussed in religious rather than scientific language? Would the 2/3 of the world's population who belong to a religion then pay more attention, be willing to make changes? In this course we'll explore the spiritual aspects of the environmental crisis and how the world's religions are working separately and together toward saving this sacred space called Earth, from the Hindu concept of *ahimsa* (do no harm) and the ethics of Buddhism, to the shareable wisdom of Islam, from the Protestant work ethic, Thoreau's Walden, the *ruach* or "breath" of Judaism, to the Mennonite philosophy of living more with less. We'll look at the resources that these religions bring to the discussion of what is being called "deep ecology," the religious and ethical dimensions of viewing the earth as sacred. *\$40*

The Soul of Nature: A Journey into the Poetry of Mary Oliver

Taught by Amanda Aikman: February 9, 2009 - March 16, 2009

Mary Oliver has been lovingly called "the poet laureate of Unitarian Universalism." Through keen observation of the natural world, Oliver finds delight, sorrow, mystery and paradox. Her poems are deceptively simple, containing rich layers of meaning that are illuminated in unexpected ways when we discuss them with like-minded readers. In this six-session class, we will find a safe container for our reflections on the spiritual and personal meanings of Oliver's poems, using her themes as pathways into a spiritual practice of close observation of nature. There will be optional weekly writing exercises for those who wish to try their hand at poetry. The class will be based on Oliver's "New and Selected Poems, Volume 2," which is widely available. *\$40*

For information about these courses and more, contact
The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)
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