

Mormonism

RE 230C, Section 001 - Spring 2018

Meetings: W/F, 10:10 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.; Ladd Hall 206

Instructor: Dr. David J. Howlett, Teaching Professor of Religious Studies, dhowlett@skidmore.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-3:00 p.m.; Thursday 9:30-11:00 a.m., or by appointment
205B Ladd Hall, (518) 580-8404 (office)

Course Description: Investigates the history and culture of Mormonism (in its three major streams) from the movement's origins in the 1820s to the present. More than just about Mormons, this course provides an introduction to dynamics that shape religious movements, especially in the American context: minority religions' relations with majority religions, or their relations with the state; religions' attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and family; their ways of making sacred space or organizing daily life; and their ways of adapting to new global cultural settings. Along the way, we highlight the ever-changing public faces of Mormonism, from its founder Joseph Smith to the satirical characters in Broadway's *The Book of Mormon*.

Course Goals: Students will leave this class with

- an ability to engage secondary and primary historical sources in an original research paper.
- an ability to write a critical book review of a scholarly work.
- an understanding of several major themes, practices, beliefs, conflicts, and tensions in Mormon denominations.
- an appreciation for the diversity of experience between and within Mormon denominations.
- an awareness of how Mormons have shaped and been shaped by cultural constructions such as race, gender, age, and class.

Final Class Grade:	Book Review	20%
	Final Research Paper	60%
	Attendance/Class Participation	10%
	Interview Questions and Reflections	5%
	Student-led Discussions	5%

Book Review: Students will complete a book review of one of three scholarly texts assigned in class. A separate sheet detailing this assignment is attached.

Final Research Paper: Students will complete an original research paper of eight to twelve pages in length. This assignment is broken into six parts: initial research proposal, annotated bibliography, a draft of your paper, a critique of another student's paper (done anonymously), a Power Point presentation of your research (a "pecha kucha"), and the final paper itself. A separate sheet detailing this assignment is attached.

Student-led Discussion of a Reading: In the course of the semester, you will be asked to lead two discussions of our course readings. This reading will be drawn from the articles and chapters, not from *Mormonism: The Basics*. To lead a discussion, you will need to identify key terms and concepts that should be covered. Rather than lecturing, you need to find passages that relate to these terms and

concepts, and pose questions related to these passages. Some basic questions will be necessary, but try to also ask questions that provoke the class to “read between the lines” or “beyond the lines” of any reading. A student-led discussion will last for approximately 20 minutes. Your fellow students will also come to class with questions (see the section “Attendance and Participation” below), but you will be in charge of moving the discussion along. To complete a successful discussion, I suggest that you find five key passages and have five questions ready.

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend every class and participate in class discussions. This means that each student will come to class with **two questions** (“reading questions”) that they would like to pose to the class based upon the reading from the day. You should also jot down a preliminary answer. This does not mean that you must know the answer to your questions; it just means that you have formulated a hunch about your question. Each class will have a **daily question** or exercise that students are expected to complete in the first few minutes of class. Daily questions, along with your reading questions, will be collected at the middle point of the semester and at the last class of the semester.

Interview Questions and Reflections: Students will have the opportunity to engage three different scholars of Mormon history through a Skype interview. Before the interview, students will compose two questions that they would like to ask the scholar, based upon that day’s readings. After each interview, students will write a one-paragraph reflection about the interview and topic, due in class on the following week.

Assessment of Student Work: Students will be subject to a standard grading scale as follows:

A+	97-100
A	94-96
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	60-66
D-	56-59
F	55 and below

There is no curve for this class. A student will receive the grade he or she earns. There is no curve for this class. A student will receive the grade he or she earns.

Classroom Procedures and Policies:

Academic Dishonesty: Skidmore College’s *Academic Integrity Handbook, 2012-2013* defines plagiarism and its consequences as follows:

PLAGIARISM: Presenting as one's own the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone

else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student's work as one's own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging his or her academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating the Skidmore Honor Code. The Academic Integrity Board and the Board of Review will not regard claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, and of academic or personal pressures as an adequate defense for violations of the Honor Code.¹

Further information on the college-wide policy on plagiarism and proper citation methods may be found on pages 14-26 of *The Academic Integrity Handbook*.

Late Assignment Policy: Any paper not given to the instructor in person by the student on the due date is late and will have its grade automatically dropped by one full letter grade. A student will have forty-eight hours to e-mail the instructor a copy of the late paper. (The student must still submit a hard copy.) Any paper that is not given to the instructor within forty-eight hours of the due date will not be accepted, and the offending student will receive a zero for that assignment.

Accommodations for Students: If you are a student with an approved accommodation for your courses, please see me in private or e-mail me about the agreement that has been worked out with the Coordinator of Student Accessibility Services. If you do not have a documented accommodation and need one, contact Meg Hegener, Coordinator of Student Access Services. You will need to provide her office with documentation which verifies the existence of a disability and supports your request. For further information, please call 580-8150 or stop by the Office of Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center.

Sexual- and Gender-based Misconduct and Title IX Rights: Skidmore College considers sexual and gender-based misconduct to be one of the most serious violations of the values and standards of the College. Unwelcome sexual contact of any form is a violation of students' personal integrity and their right to a safe environment and therefore violates Skidmore's values. Sexual and gender-based misconduct is also prohibited by federal regulations. Skidmore College faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. If a student chooses to confide in a member of Skidmore's faculty or staff regarding an issue of sexual or gender-based misconduct, that faculty or staff member is obligated to tell Skidmore's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator will assist the student in connecting with all possible resources for support and reporting both on and off campus. Identities and details will be shared only with those who need to know to support the student and to address the situation through the college's processes. If the student wishes to confide in a confidential resource, The Counseling Center Staff, Health Services, and Victim Advocates are all options available. More information can be found at <https://www.skidmore.edu/sgbm/> or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator.

¹ *Academic Integrity Handbook, 2012-2013* (Saratoga Springs, New York: Office of Academic Advising--Skidmore College, 2012), 17.

Work Expectations: Students should expect nine to ten hours of outside preparation work for class each week. On written assignments, successful students distribute their workloads over the course of a week rather than cram their writing into the night before the due date. Be a successful student.

Required Text

- David J. Howlett and John-Charles Duffy, *Mormonism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

ISBN-13: 978-1138020481

Texts for the Book Review (Choose One)

- Joanna Brooks, *The Book of Mormon Girl: An American Memoir* (New York: The Free Press, 2013).

ISBN-13: 978-1451699685

- Max Perry Mueller, *Race and the Making of the Mormon People* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

ISBN-13: 978-1469636160

- Other texts required for the course will be posted on Blackboard, drawn from several journals, books, and primary source document readers.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY TOPICS & STUDENT READING ASSIGNMENTS

Mormonism

RE 230C, Section 001 - Spring Semester 2018

All assignments are to be read by the beginning of each class. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the reading schedule. Should changes be made, students will be informed in advance.

WEEK 1 Class Orientation and Historical Overview
(1/24-1/26)

Wednesday: Film: Excerpt from "The Mormons," a film by Helen Whitney

Friday: John-Charles Duffy and David J. Howlett, "Introduction," and "A Brief History of Mormons" in *Mormonism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2016), ix-xii, 1-27.

WEEK 2 Mormon Theologies, Mormon Origins
(1/31 – 2/2)

Wednesday: Duffy and Howlett, "Are Mormons Christian? Why Does it Matter?: Mormonism and Religious Pluralism," in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 28-54.

Friday: Stephen J. Fleming, "The Religious Heritage of British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism," *Church History* 77, no. 1 (2008): 73-104. [Blackboard]

WEEK 3 The Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and American Culture
(2/7 – 2/9)

Wednesday: Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Introduction," in the Book of Mormon (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008), vii-xxvi. [Blackboard]

Book of Mormon (Penguin edition), pp. 3-7 (part of I Nephi 1); pp. 478-479, 484-488 (selections of III Nephi); pp. 523-527 (IV Nephi); pp. 596-598 (selections from Moroni) [Blackboard].

Friday: Ann Taves, "Materialization" and "Beginnings" in *Revelatory Events: Three Case Studies of the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 50-81.

NO CLASS 3/14 - 3/16 (Spring Break)

WEEK 8 Mormons, Gender, and Sexuality **3/23— Outline of Essay Due**
(3/21 – 3/23) **3/23—Skype Interview: Asst. Prof. Amanda Hendrix-Komoto, Montana State University**

Wednesday: Duffy and Howlett, "Mormons and Sex: Gender, Sexuality, and Family," in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 80-99.

Friday: Amanda Hendrix-Komoto, "'Mahana, You Naked!': Modesty, Sexuality, and Race in the Mormon Pacific" in *Out of Obscurity: Mormonism since 1945*, ed. by Patrick Q. Mason and John G. Turner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 173-197. [Blackboard]

WEEK 9 The Mormon Life Cycle; Age as a Category of Difference
(3/28 – 3/30)

Wednesday: Duffy and Howlett, "The Shape of a Mormon Life: Ritual and Regulation," in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 100-124.

Friday: David J. Howlett, "Eating Vegetables to Build Zion: RLDS Children in the 1920s," *Journal of Mormon History* 35.1 (2009): 1-22. [Blackboard]

WEEK 10 Mormon Memories, Mormon Memoirs **4/6— Book Review Due, Brooks**
(4/4– 4/6)

Wednesday: Steven C. Taysom, "The Last Memory: Joseph F. Smith and Lieux de Mémoire in Late Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 48.3 (2015): 1-24. [Blackboard]

Friday: Joanna Brooks, "Plan of Salvation," "Sparkling Difference," and "Signs of the Times," in *The Book of Mormon Girl: An American Memoir* (New York: The Free Press, 2013), 1-46. [Blackboard]

WEEK 11 The Missionary Experience; Sacred Spaces, Sacred Rituals **4/11— Guest Speakers, Sister Missionaries**
(4/11 – 4/13) **4/13— Draft of Research Paper Due**

Wednesday: Keith Parry, "Mormon Missionary Companionship," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. by Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 182-206. [Blackboard]

Friday: Duffy and Howlett, "Making Holy Places: Sacred Space in Mormonism," in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 125-145.

WEEK 12 Sacred Spaces, Sacred Rituals, cont'd; Globalization and Mormonism
(4/18– 4/20) **4/20 – Student Critiques of Drafts Due**

Wednesday: John-Charles Duffy, “Concealing the Body, Concealing the Sacred: The Decline of Ritual Nudity in Mormon Temples,” *Journal of Ritual Studies* 21.2 (2007): 1-21. [Blackboard]

Friday: Duffy and Howlett, “Going Global: Mormonism’s International Expansion,” in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 146-171.

WEEK 13 Globalization and the Mormonism; the Future of Mormonism
(4/25– 4/27) **4/27 – Skype Interview: Dean Patrick Q. Mason, Claremont Graduate University**

Wednesday: Taunalyn F. Rutherford, “The Internationalization of Mormonism: Indications from India,” in *Out of Obscurity: Mormonism since 1945*, ed. by Patrick Q. Mason and John G. Turner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 37-59. [Blackboard]

Friday: “Mormonism: Future of Faith in America” at http://www.patheos.com/Topics/Future-of-Faith-in-America/Mormonism?ref_widget=topic&ref_blog=welcometable&ref_post=the-future-of-mormonism-the-next-five-years (You will be assigned to read 3 of the 7 short essays)

Finals Week: Student Presentations and Paper Due, May 7, 9:00 a.m. Ladd 206

Research Essay

As part of your final grade, you will write an eight- to twelve-page double-spaced research paper drawn from primary and secondary sources. Your topic may be on anything related to the course, but it must be approved in consultation with me. This is your chance to investigate a topic that fascinates you in an in-depth manner; seize your opportunity!

To help you succeed in this project, the following schedule spreads out your work load over the course of the semester.

February 16—Your proposed topic is due with a one-paragraph explanation of what you want to investigate. (5% of Research Essay grade.)

March 21—A typed, annotated list of five to six printed secondary sources (articles, book chapters, or books) is due. (7% of Research Essay grade.)

March 22 — An outline of your research essay, complete with a refined thesis statement, is due. (8% of your Research Essay grade.)

April 18—A draft of your research paper is due at this time. (15% of Research Essay Grade)

April 25—Your evaluation of another student's research paper is due. You will be given a rubric to evaluate the other student's paper. Your evaluation of the student's work will count as 5% of the other student's grade. Failure to complete this assignment will mean that you will lose 5% of your grade and the student you evaluate will be granted a full 5% mark on the assignment.

May 7—You will present a five-minute Power Point slide presentation about your research. You will be limited to only 20 slides and may spend no longer than 20-seconds per slide. This type of presentation is known as a *pecha kucha*, and you may find examples of this kind of presentation at <http://www.pecha-kucha.org/> . (10% of your Research Essay grade)

May 7— Your research paper is due. Late papers will be assessed a full letter-grade deduction for each day after this due date. (50% of your Research Essay grade)

All papers should be written in double-spaced, twelve-point Times New Roman font with Chicago Turabian-style footnotes. Please also include a title page with your name, date, class, and title for your work. Do not place your name on any of the following pages. Number your body pages with a centered page number at the bottom of your text. All submissions should be by e-mail in MS Word format. I will return your papers with my comments by e-mail.

Possible Topics for the Research Essay

The following list provides some suggestions for general topics that you might use as a starting point for a much more focused study. Your choice of topics is not limited to this list.

- Mormons, masonry, and “magic”
- portrayals of Mormons in the mass media and Hollywood
- LGBT Mormons
- Mormons and the Suffrage movement
- contemporary Mormon millennialism
- mass-market Mormon novels for Mormons
- Mormonism in Asia
- managing Mormonism’s public image online
- “Jack Mormons” (inactive Mormons)
- Mormons, Muscular Christianity, and sports
- contemporary Mormon feminism
- polygamous Mormon denominations and the courts
- Mormons and the American Presidency
- changing dietary standards for Mormons
- Mormons and the American Civil War
- Mormon pilgrimage and sacred sites
- Mormons and inter-faith alliances
- Mormons and Native American identity
- Canonizing and decanonizing Mormon Scripture
- Mormon urban legends and folklore
- Mormons, missions, and politics in South and Central America
- Mormons and higher education
- Mormons, materiality, and media studies
- The evolution of Mormon theology and philosophy

Your options are endless. Remember, choosing a topic is not the same thing as formulating an argument. All college-level research papers must have a thesis statement (a clear argument). Choose a topic first, do some initial research, and then begin to form an argument. As you write, your initial argument will likely change. However, some reflection before you begin writing (such as writing out an outline or attempting to develop a thesis) will pay dividends as you write your paper. Of course, you may ask my advice at any reasonable time. Come by my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

Writing a Book Review

A book review is not simply a book summary. Instead, a book review summarizes an author's main argument, highlights an author's contribution, and critiques an author's work (that is, a book review analyzes an author's strengths and weaknesses). A good book review is approximately 1,000 words in length. While you may use some creativity in how you organize and compose your book review, try to use the following guidelines.

Title your review as follows:

Name of Book. By Name of Book's Author. Place of Publication: Press of Publication, Year of Publication. Pp. xi [for forward, if applicable], 514 [total pages, including index and endnotes]. Reviewed by Your Name Here.

In your first paragraph, you should quickly tell your reader the subject matter of your book. You may also very briefly alert your reader to the background of the author. Is the author a new scholar, an independent scholar, a tenured professor? By the end of the first paragraph, you need to let your reader know the book's main thesis. You may also try to fit the author's work into a larger framework. In other words, relate how the reviewed text answers particular historiographical questions, concerns, or trends.

In your body paragraphs, you should briefly summarize the author's arguments. This summary should not be a blow-by-blow description of the work; instead, highlight the main points of the author's work and the insights that this work brings to the field.

Next, provide a summary of the reception of the author's work. You should consult and cite several book reviews by scholars in peer-reviewed journals. Use Chicago Turabian-style footnotes for any citations. Actual published book reviews rarely (if ever) cite other reviews, but you will benefit from reading and summarizing the critiques of others. You may find book reviews for Brooks's book through Skidmore Library's SearchMore engine. In the case of Mueller's 2017 book, you will have to find reviews of it on scholarly Mormon studies blogs (such as *Juvenile Instructor*) since journals have yet to review it.

Once you have documented the book's critical reception, you should offer your own critique. You might want to assess the author's work in the light of some of the following questions. Is the work well-documented? Has the author used questionable sources or made hasty interpretations? Do you find major logical faults with her/his arguments? Does academic jargon obscure the author's argument? When you make such arguments, do not clutter your text with "I think. . ." or "in my opinion." Do not be tentative. Be bold and make strong arguments. However, always try to be fair.

Finally, summarize the contribution the reviewed work makes to the broader fields of religious studies or Mormon studies. What does this work help scholars understand in general? At this point, you may also make suggestions about the text's suitability for various reading audiences. Should this text be used in undergraduate survey courses, upper-level undergraduate classes, graduate courses, or simply by specialist historians? Conclude with a final recommendation on the book. Is this work definitive or is there much more to be studied? Does the work make a stunning contribution, or is the work so seriously flawed as to merit little notice?

Stylistic format: double spaced, Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, no page number on first page, all other pages numbered at the bottom (centered)

Due date: Varies by text chosen; consult the syllabus