

*Mormonisms*  
REL 288 - Spring 2020

**Meetings:** Monday/Wednesday, 1:20-2:35 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. David J. Howlett, Mellon Visiting Assistant Professor, The Religion Department, dhowlett@smith.edu

**Office Hours:** Monday, 3:00-4:30 p.m.; Thursday, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

**Course Description:** Mormonism has gone from a religion of a few families to a global family of small sects and large denominations. This course explores the diversity of contemporary and historical Mormonisms. Topics for discussion include the creation of new scriptures; conflict between church and state; the dynamics of religious schism; temple spaces and the politics of secrecy; constructions of race, gender, and sexuality; missions and evangelism; modern pilgrimage; and the globalization of modern Mormonisms. In addition, students will conduct oral histories with various Mormons, including women ordained within a progressive Mormon church.

**Course Goals:** Students will leave this class with

- an ability to engage secondary and primary historical sources in a mini-research paper.
- an ability to write a critical book review of a scholarly work.
- an awareness of the ethical issues posed by conducting oral histories.
- an ability to use readily accessible software to write and produce a podcast episode.
- 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, sexuality, age, and class.

**Final Class Grade:**

- Book Review 25%
- Oral History Summary 10%
- Podcast 35%
- Journalistic Article 15%
- Participation and Moodle Posts 15%

**Class Participation:** Students should attend class regularly and actively participate in discussions. This is accomplished in three ways. First, you will choose one reading in the first

five weeks of class and formulate two questions from key quotes in the reading. Then, on the day we discuss the reading, you will present your questions to the class as part of our larger discussion. This activity will be repeated in the second half of class, as well. Second, you will post about each week's readings on Moodle (excluding the weeks that cover the book you are reviewing). These posts may address your thoughts, questions, or epiphanies generated by the texts and should be, at minimum, 200 words. Each week's post is due after the weekly discussions on Saturday by midnight. You may skip posting for two weeks at any point in the semester. Finally, we will begin each class with a free-writing assignment. Keep your musings in a notebook or folder and turn them in at midterm and the last week of class.

**Book Review:** Students will complete a book review of Quincy D. Newell's *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James, a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon* (due March 9) or Jana Riess's *The Next Mormons: How Millennials Are Changing the LDS Church* (due April 17). In addition, we will have a face-to-face discussion with Newell when she visits Smith College. Finally, the book review editor of the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* has agreed to publish the best student review of Newell and Riess's books respectively.

**Oral History Project:** Our class will be contributing to a pilot project to document the experiences of ordained women. In particular, we will be interviewing women ordained in the Community of Christ, formerly called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This project consists of four parts.

**Journalistic Article:** To understand the context for women's ordination within the Community of Christ (RLDS Church), you will write up a short background article that utilizes articles read in class, as well as two autobiographical histories written by ordained RLDS women in the late 1980s. (The Community of Christ Archives has generously provided us with online access to nearly 200 such interviews.) Your article will be written in an accessible, journalistic style and be between 800 and 1000 words (due March 2).

**Oral History and Summary:** In a group with two other class members, you will conduct an oral history with a selected Community of Christ priesthood member recorded via Zoom. In class, we will agree upon common questions, and you will ask additional questions of your own choosing. Then, you will obtain media release forms from your interviewee, set up a time to interview her by Zoom, and conduct your interview. Once your interview is complete, you will upload your recorded interview to a common google folder, turn in the questions you asked, transcribe your interview, provide a two-paragraph summary of your interview, and compose a one-paragraph analysis of how the woman's story relates to any of the secondary source material encountered in class (due March 25).

**Storyboard for Episode the Podcast Episode:** You will take your recorded interview and edit it into a podcast episode that follows a story arc. This episode will be one of six episodes we will release for our podcast (name to be determined by the class). Each episode will be on a different theme. For example, one episode might be on "the call" to the priesthood and another on "challenges." As a class, we will decide on the six selected themes, and I will assign one theme per group. With your two partners, you will access the transcripts and audio to the six interviews gathered by the class and construct a

narrative about this theme, plotted on a storyboard. This narrative will combine key quotes from the interviews, as well as your own narration to stitch the story together (due April 6).

**Producing a Podcast Episode:** You will then take your storyboarded episode and produce it using audio files you generate, as well as the relevant source material recorded by your group and your classmates. Dan Bennett of the Smith Learning, Research, and Technology Team will provide an in-class workshop on podcast editing (April 8), and we will have an additional class in the Smith Media Lab to work on technical parts of your podcast editing (April 20). Your finished podcast episode should be between 10 to 15 minutes in length. We will listen to your preliminary podcast on our final day in class (April 29), and you will have a chance to make final edits before you submit your revised episode to our class's podcast during finals week (May 7).

**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 they earn.

### **Classroom Procedures and Policies:**

**Academic Dishonesty:** The Student Handbook notes the following:

Students and faculty at Smith are part of an academic community defined by its commitment to scholarship, which depends on scrupulous and attentive acknowledgement of all sources of information and honest and respectful use of college resources.

Smith College expects all students to be honest and committed to the principles of academic and intellectual integrity in their preparation and submission of course work and examinations. All submitted work of any kind must be the original work of the student who must cite all the sources used in its preparation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Student Conduct & Social Responsibility: Academic Honor Code," Smith College, accessed September 3, 2019, <https://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct/honorcode.php>.

If you have questions about what might constitute inadvertent plagiarism, please consult me before you hand in your work.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Any assignment not turned in on the due date is late and will have its grade automatically dropped by five percent per day late. If you foresee needing an extension due to extenuating circumstances, you must see me in person during my office hours or contact me by email before the scheduled deadline.

**Accommodations for Students:** If you have a disability or a personal circumstance that you think will affect your learning in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs. Students who need accessibility accommodations are also encouraged to contact Disability Services ([www.smith.edu/about-smith/disability-services](http://www.smith.edu/about-smith/disability-services)) and obtain an official letter of accommodation. Furthermore, if anyone in the class has ideas about how the structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be altered to encourage greater inclusion and participation, please let me know. You all deserve a safe and comfortable learning environment.

**Title IX Rights and Responsibilities:** The Smith College Title IX website notes the following: Gender-based and sexual misconduct is any unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that significantly interferes with a student's success or access to educational opportunities at the college. A student with a complaint alleging gender-based and sexual misconduct should report it to the Title IX Coordinator (Amy Hunter, [ahunter65@smith.edu](mailto:ahunter65@smith.edu)). Complaints regarding sexual violence (sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking) may also be reported to the Campus Police Department or the Dean of Students Office (Marge Litchford, [mlitchfo@smith.edu](mailto:mlitchfo@smith.edu)). Complaints of gender-based or sexual misconduct between Smith College students or where the individual allegedly committing the misconduct is a Smith College student are governed by the Smith College Student Code and applicable state and federal laws.

Beyond this policy, you should know that I am a mandatory reporter at the college. In the event that you experience a Title IX violation, you may talk to me, and I will keep your information private to the greatest extent possible. However, as a professor, I have a responsibility to report any information regarding sexual misconduct and crimes that I learn about to make our campus a safe place for all. For further information about Title IX rights and related all-college policies, as well as support services, please consult the following webpage: <https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/title-ix>

**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 Texts** (available for purchase at the Grécourt Bookstore, Campus Center)

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

**ISBN-13:** 978-1138020481

■ Quincy D. Newell, *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James, a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

**ISBN-13:** 978-0199338665

■ Janna Riess, *The Next Mormons: How Millennials Are Changing the LDS Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

**ISBN-13:** 978-0190885205

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

## SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY TOPICS & STUDENT READING ASSIGNMENTS

### *Mormonisms*

REL 288 - Spring Semester 2020

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**

(1/27 – 1/29)

**Monday:**      Film: Excerpt from “The Mormons,” a film by Helen Whitney

**Wednesday:** 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**

(2/3 – 2/5)

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

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

**Wednesday:** Richard H. Broadhead, “Prophets in America circa 1830: Nat Turner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Joseph Smith,” in *Joseph Smith: Reappraisals after Two Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13-30. [Moodle]

Mason Kamana Allred, “Circulating Specters: Mormon Reading Networks, Vision, and Optical Media,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85.2 (2017): 527–548.

#### **WEEK 3      The Book of Mormon and American Culture**

(2/10 – 2/12)

**Monday:**      Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, “Introduction,” in the Book of Mormon (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008), vii-xxvi. [Moodle]

Ann Taves, “Selves” in *Revelatory Events: Three Case Studies of the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 240-268.

**Wednesday:** Jared Hickman, "The Book of Mormon as Amerindian Apocalypse," *American Literature* 86.3 (2014): 429-461.

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) [Moodle].

**WEEK 4**      **Gender, Sexuality, and Families**  
(2/17 – 2/19)

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

Janet Bennion, "History, Culture, and Variability of Mormon Schismatic Groups," in *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, ed. by Cardell K. Jacobson with Lara Burton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 101-124. [Moodle]

**Wednesday:** Susanna Morrill, "Relief Society Birth and Death Rituals: Women at the Gates of Mortality," *Journal of Mormon History* 36.2 (2010): 128-159.

Kristine Wright, "'We Baked a Lot of Bread': Reconceptualizing Women and Ritual Objects," in *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 82-100.

**WEEK 5**      **Women's Ordination Controversies**  
(2/24 – 2/26)

**Monday:** Jeff Braithwaite, "The Changing Face of Priesthood in the RLDS Church," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 20 (2000): 133-46.

L. Madeline Brunson, *Bonds of Sisterhood: A History of the RLDS Women's Organization, 1842-1983* (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1983), 88-135.

**Wednesday:** Lorie Winder Stromberg, "The Birth of Ordain Women: The Personal Becomes Political," in *Voices for Equality: Ordain Women and Resurgent Mormon Feminism*, ed. by Gordon Shepherd and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2015), 3-26.

Benjamin Knoll and Cammie Jo Bolin, "Women's Ordination in America: A Contemporary Overview," in *She Preached the Word: Women's Ordination in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 21-47.

**WEEK 6**      **Mormons and Race**  
(3/2 – 3/4)

**Journalistic Essay Due (3/2)**

**Class Visit: Assoc. Prof. Quincy Newell, Hamilton College (3/4)**

**Monday:** Quincy D. Newell, *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James, a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), introduction, chapters 1-4.

**Wednesday:** Newell, *Your Sister in the Gospel*, chapters 5-8, epilogue.

**WEEK 7**      **Indigenous Mormonisms, Imperialisms, and Decolonization**  
(3/9 – 3/11)  
**3/9**

**Newell Book Review Due, Monday,**

**Monday:** Peter Lineham, “The Mormon Message in the Context of Maori Culture,” in *The Mormon History Association’s Tanner Lectures: The First Twenty Years*, ed. by Dean L. May and Reid L. Neilson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 207-223.

**Wednesday:** Elise Boxer, “‘This is the Place?’: Disrupting Mormon Settler Colonialism,” in *Decolonizing Mormonism*, 77-100.

Thomas W. Murphy and Angela Baca, “Rejecting Racism in Any Form: Latter-day Saint Rhetoric, Religion, and Repatriation,” *Open Theology* 2 (2016): 700-725.

**--SPRING BREAK--**

**WEEK 8**      **Mormons and Sacred Space**  
(3/23 – 3/25)

**Oral History and Summary Due, Friday, 3/27**

**Monday:** Duffy and Howlett, “Making Holy Places: Sacred Space in Mormonism,” in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 125-145.

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. [Moodle]

**Wednesday:** David J. Howlett, “Introduction: The Kirtland Temple as a Parallel Pilgrimage” and “Conclusion: Parallel Pilgrimages, Parallel Temples” in *Kirtland Temple: The Biography of a Shared Mormon Sacred Space* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 1-12, 207-218.

Christopher James Blythe, “Emma’s Willow: Historical Anxiety, Mormon Pilgrimage and Nauvoo’s Mater Dolorosa,” *Material Religion: A Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 12.4 (2016): 405-432.

**WEEK 9**      **Mormons and Church-State Relations; The Mormon Life Cycle**  
(3/30 – 4/1)

**Monday:**      Howlett and Duffy, “Building God’s Kingdom: Mormons and Church-state Relations,” in *Mormonism: The Basics*, 55-79.

David E. Campbell, et. al., “A Politically Peculiar People: How Mormons Moved into and then out of the Political Mainstream,” in *Mormonism and American Politics*, ed. by Jana Riess and Randall Balmer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 133-154.

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

**WEEK 10**      **Young Adults and the New Mormonism**  
(4/6 – 4/8)

**Storyboard Due, Monday, 4/6**

**Monday:**      Jana Riess, “Introduction: The Changing Face of Mormonism” and “Part One: Foundations,” in *The Next Mormons: How Millennials are Changing the LDS Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1-70.

**Wednesday:** Podcasting workshop with Dan Bennett, Smith LRT Team, Smith Media Lab

**WEEK 11**      **Young Adults and the New Mormonism**  
(4/13 – 4/15)

**Riess Book Review Due, Friday, 4/17**

**Monday:**      Riess, “Part Two: Changing Definitions of Family and Culture,” in *The Next Mormons*, 71-148.

**Wednesday:** Riess, “Part Three: Passages of Faith and Doubt,” in *The Next Mormons*, 149-248.

**WEEK 12**      **Globalization and Many Mormonisms**  
(4/20 -4/22)

**Monday:**      In-class work on podcast at Smith Media Labs (4/20)

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

D. Dmitri Hurlbut, “Gobert Edet and the Entry of the RLDS Church into Southeastern Nigeria, 1962-1966,” *Journal of Mormon History* 45.4 (2019): 81-104. [Moodle]

**WEEK 13    The Once and Future Mormon Church(es)**  
(4/27 - 4/29)

**Monday:** Taunaly 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. [Moodle]

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, “Tale of Three Primaries: Critical Mass in Mormonism’s Informal Institutions” in *Decolonizing Mormonism*, 229-262.

**Wednesday:** Listening day for podcast episodes and final course wrap-up

**Revised Podcasts Due: Finals Week, Thursday, May 7 at noon**

# 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 [total pages 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, 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:** Newell (3/9); Riess (4/17)