



Social Work and Religious Diversity

Suggested Readings on Religious Diversity and “World Religions”

General Discussions of Religious Diversity:

Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, Wadsworth Publishing, 2006.

The definitive college textbook on American religious history, by a leading scholar. An invaluable resource on a wide range of communities, but a bit much for reading cover-to-cover.

Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions*, Pearson, 2010.

Perhaps the best of the many “world religions” textbooks – the only one that focuses primarily on the practices and experiences of contemporary religious communities, rather than the origins and doctrines of religious traditions.

Willard Oxtoby and Alan Segal, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, Oxford University Press, 2007.

A widely used college textbook on the history and beliefs of major religious traditions, from an authoritative publisher in religious studies.

Michael Palmer and Stanley Burgess (editors), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Extensive collection of scholarly essays on religious teachings, politics, leaders, institutions, and social issues. A great resource, but absurdly expensive – look for it at a university library.

David Whitten Smith and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr, *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

Introductions to social justice thought and activism in a number of religious traditions. Extremely useful, at times inspiring, but somewhat biased towards progressive politics and liberal theologies.

Discussions of African Diaspora Spirit Traditions:

George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories*, Indiana University Press, 1993.

Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*, University of California Press, 2001.

Maya Deren, *The Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*, McPherson, 1984.

Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora*, University of California Press, 2002.

Joseph Murphy, *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora*, Beacon Press, 1994.

Margarite Fernandez Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (eds), *Sacred Possessions – Vodou, Santeria, Obeah, and the Caribbean*, Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Jacob Olupona and Terry Rey (eds.), *Òrìsà Devotion as World Religion: The Globalization of Yorùbá Religious Culture*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Discussions of Buddhism:

James William Coleman, *The New Buddhism: the Western Transformation of an Ancient Tradition*, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka (eds.), *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, University of California Press, 1998.

Christopher Queen (ed.), *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, Wisdom Publications, 2000.

Walpole Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, New York: Grove Press, 1974.

Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America*, Columbia University Press, 2000.

Discussions of Christianity:

Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers*, Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, 3rd edition, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*, Addison-Wesley, 1995.

Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, Doubleday, 1985.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, Duke University Press, 1990.

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, Penguin, 2010.

Mark Noll, *The Work We Have To Do: A History of Protestants in America*, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Discussions of Hinduism:

Corrinne Dempsey, *The Goddess Lives in Upstate New York: Breaking Convention and Making Home at a North American Hindu Temple*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

Diana Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, Columbia University Press, 1995.

Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Stephen Huyler, *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion*, Yale University Press, 1999.

David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, University of California Press, 1997.

Prema Kurien, *A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American Hinduism*, Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Discussions of Islam:

Akbar Ahmed, *Islam Today: A Short Introduction to the Muslim World*, I.B. Tauris 1999.

Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, Random House, 2000.

Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, Harper San Francisco, 1992.

Carl Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*, University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 4th Edition, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith (eds), *Muslim Communities in North America*, State University of New York Press, 1994.

Jane Smith, *Islam in America*, 2nd Edition, Columbia University Press, 2009.

Discussions of Judaism:

David Ariel, *What Do Jews Believe: The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism*, Schocken Books, 1995.

Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora*, New York University Press, 2005.

Samuel Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew: the struggle for the soul of American Jewry*, Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Ari Goldman, *Being Jewish: the Spiritual and Cultural Practice of Judaism Today*, Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four centuries of an uneasy encounter: a history*, Columbia University Press, 1997.

Jacob Neusner, *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism*, Wadsworth, 1997.

Discussions of Sikhism:

Kathleen Hall, *Lives in Translation: Sikh Youth as British Citizens*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

John Stratton Hawley and Gurinder Singh Mann. *Studying the Sikhs: Issues for North America*. State University of New York Press, 1993.

Gurinder Singh Mann, *Sikhism*, Prentice Hall, 2004.

Eleanor Nesbitt, *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Please see:

<http://interfaithcenter.org/social-work-resources>

**for many more resources on religion, spirituality, and social work,
and information about the *Social Work and Religious Diversity*
continuing education program for mental health and social service
professionals.**