

# Religion & Webinar Teaching Resources/ Study Guides

## Religion & Drugs - Released April 2023

[YouTube Link](#)

### Overview

The complex relationship between religion and drugs has long intrigued scholars and the public. While some religious groups have issued prohibitions against the use of certain drugs, others have involved drugs in their ritual practices. Religion has also played a part in U.S (United States) drug policy. Religious ideologies and institutions have mobilized in the War on Drugs, while transnational drug cartels have drawn on devotional practices and folk saints to maintain their power. From sympathetic legal decisions, clinical research, and the larger psychedelic renaissance. Research suggests that the religious use of psychoactive substances is not only increasing but rapidly. They are forming groups and churches, sponsoring research and conferences exposing the virtues of religious drug use. Join us for a thought-provoking discussion with an interdisciplinary panel of experts to explore the fascinating and multi-faceted relationship between religion and drugs, a topic that offers abundant opportunities to think anew about the intersection of American religion, culture, and politics.

### Host:

**Brad Stoddard** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at McDaniel College in Westminster, MD. His research interests include religion in/and American prisons,entheogens, religion and the economy, religion and public policy, method and theory, and new craft beer releases.

### Panelists:

**Gary Laderman** is Goodrich C. White Professor of American Religious History and Cultures at Emory College. He is the author of *Don't Think About Death: A Memoir on Mortality* (Deeds Publishing, 2020). His other books include an exploration of the sacred in the new American religious landscape: *Sacred Matters: Celebrity Worship, Sexual Ecstasies, the Living Dead, and Other Signs of Religious Life in the United States* (The New Press, 2009); two books on the history of death in America (read the new one to understand why): *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* (Yale University Press, 1996) and *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

**Andrew Monteith** is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Elon University. His research examines questions of secularism, religion, and power in American life, both past and present. He is also interested in the ways that America itself can serve as its own kind of religion. His first book, *Christian Nationalism and the Birth of the War on Drugs* (New York University Press, 2023) explains how religion, race, and US colonialism germinated the early Drug War during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Deepak Sarma** is professor of Indian religions and philosophy at Case Western Reserve University, is the author of *Classical Indian Philosophy: A Reader* (2011), *Hinduism: A Reader* (2008), *Epistemologies*

*and the Limitations of Philosophical Inquiry: Doctrine in Madhva Vedanta* (2005) and *An Introduction to Madhva Vedanta* (2003).

## **Key terms**

Entheogen

Psychedelic

Christian temperance movement

Psychoactive substances

Affect Theory

## **Sources Mentioned in Video**

*Christian Nationalism and The Birth of The War on Drugs* by Andrew Monteith

*Sacred matters: Celebrity Worship, Sexual Ecstasies, the Living Dead and Other Signs of Religious Life in the United States* by Gary Laderman

*On Speed: The Many Lives of Amphetamines* by Nicolas Rasmussen

*Queering Psychedelics: From Oppression to Liberation in Psychedelic Medicine* by Alex Belser, Clancy Cavnar, and Beatriz Labate

*Religious Perspectives on the Use of Psychopharmaceuticals as an Enhancement Technology* by Deepak Sarma

*Righteous Dopefiend* by Jeff Schonberg and Philippe Bourgois

*The Immortality Key* by Brian C. Muraresku

*The Cult of Doctors* by Gary Laderman

## **Teaching Resource 1 – Assignment (Whole Video)**

1. How do the panelists differ in their use of terms like entheogen, drug, substance etc. and why? What are some of the major problems or differences in their terms?
2. What kind of psychoactive substances are people consuming for religious purposes?
3. A lot of these substances began legally. How have laws changed and how do these laws impact people today?

## **Teaching Resource 2 – Discussion Question (Whole Video)**

1. How can coffee be a religious substance? How does it function in a religious context for many people and why does it fall into the realm of religion and drugs? What are other substances that could fit under this theory of religious drugs?