

RELIGIOUS STUDIES COLLOQUIUM

Hosted by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies



“Why UFO Religions Matter”



Benjamin Zeller, Ph.D.

Professor of Religion
Lake Forest College

Thursday, February 27, 2025

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Student Union, Room 220

The 20th century saw flying saucers and UFOs enter not only the world of pop culture, but religion as well. During the “flying saucer craze,” religious movements such as the Unarius Academy of Science and the Aetherius Society formed and promoted beliefs in extraterrestrial contact. Now, there are and have been numerous such groups, e.g., the Raelian movement, Heaven’s Gate, and the Valley of the Dawn.

UFO religions and broader UFO spirituality are worth considering because they raise fundamental questions about the nature of religious identity, belief, community, and practice. They show that the search for the transcendent is broader than traditional forms of belief in the supernatural, and that the lines between religious belief, scientific knowledge, and spiritual claims is permeable.

This talk analyzes how such movements address those questions, situating them in their religious, social, and cultural contexts and arguing that analysis of these movements is important, demonstrating the transformations of modern religious thought in the space age and beyond.

Event is free and open to the public.

Lunch will be provided on a first come, first served basis.

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

I AM *true* **BLUE**