

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (ARE) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

1. Mission

- The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (UUCA) is to foster a community of faith that encourages and supports our individual spiritual quests out of which we act together for social justice.
- The ARE mission is to nurture the lifelong development of the whole person--body, mind, heart, and spirit--through broad and flexible opportunities for study, exploration, reflection, and spiritual practice. ARE also nurtures the development of a whole community through courses on our relationships, our congregation, our faith movement, and our wider world.

2. Overall Administration of ARE Program

- The UUCA ARE program is administered by the ARE Team in such a way that all participants – whether teacher or learner or ARE Team member – experience positive personal and spiritual growth.
- All participants in the ARE program (whether or not they are members or friends of UUCA) are expected to abide by UUCA's Covenant of Healthy Relationships. In cases of serious interpersonal problems, conflicts, or disruptive behavior, the Senior Minister or the Senior Minister's designee will be available for assistance/coaching.
- So as to ensure (a) quality control in ARE offerings, (b) balance in programming, (c) clarity and consistency in policy and procedures, and (d) effective congregational communications, the ARE Team will have "final say" over all adult-oriented courses taught at UUCA. For this purpose, a "course" is defined as "any educational sequence involving two or more events which are led/facilitated by the same person, for the benefit of adults."
- The team reserves the right to veto courses that, in their opinion, do not best serve the interests of the congregation. Thus, any group that wishes to offer an adult course (as defined above) at UUCA must first consult with the ARE team.

3. Purpose and Administration of Sunday ARE Hour

- The purpose of Sunday ARE Hour is to provide content that helps congregants at UUCA to go deeper in their spiritual journeys and to become more spiritually mature Unitarian Universalists. It focuses on furthering faith development and enabling our spiritual quests.
- Sunday ARE Hour sessions are an important resource that need to be used mindfully. They are also a resource that is limited by time; this one hour per week is the only faith development time other than worship that UUCA has with most congregants. There are many worthy endeavors at UUCA that would benefit from meeting during Sunday ARE Hour. The ARE Mission Statement calls for focus on faith development and spiritual quests. To remain focused on that mission, Sunday ARE Hour offerings will adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Sunday ARE Hour will be reserved for the sole purpose of Lifespan Religious Education classes.
 - Courses during Sunday ARE Hour must adhere to the ARE Mission statement, be derived from or complement offerings in the Faith Forward curriculum, and be approved by the ARE team.
 - Exceptions to this policy must be proposed to the Executive and agreed to by the Executive or those to whom the Executive has delegated this duty.

4. Purpose and Administration of Community Classes

- The purpose of community classes is to provide further opportunity for development of the whole person and to nurture the development of community.
- Pre-registration is not required unless specifically listed in the course announcement.
- If pre-registration is required, the procedure for this will be indicated in the course announcement.

5. Instructors

- Instructors are welcome to teach in the ARE program at the discretion of the ARE Team. Offering an adult course is one of many ways that people can share their gifts and talents with the UUCA community, and all contributions are deeply appreciated.
- Courses may be offered by individuals who are (a) UUCA members or pledging friends, (b) invited to teach by the ARE Team or by a UUCA staff member, or (c) sponsored by the ARE Team. Individuals outside of the UUCA community are typically invited to offer courses or workshops only when they have special skill sets or unique qualifications that are not available within UUCA.
- In rare cases, it may become necessary to remove instructors from the ARE program. This would happen if (a) they have repeatedly and knowingly violated UUCA's Covenant of Healthy Relationships in their treatment of students, fellow teachers, or ARE Team members; (b) they have repeatedly and knowingly violated ARE policies and procedures; or (c) concerns have repeatedly arisen over their teaching performance.

6. Course Proposals

- Courses proposed for offering must be submitted using the Adult RE Course Proposal form, located at https://uuca.formstack.com/forms/are_course_proposal.
- The Adult RE Team considers proposals for courses upon receipt. Courses proposed for offering during Sunday ARE Hour must be structured to accommodate drop-ins.
- Course proposals may be submitted by UUCA members or pledging friends. Anyone else who submits a course proposal needs a sponsor from the staff or the ARE Team.

7. Scheduling and Enrollment

- Courses typically range from 2 weeks to 8 weeks. This allows for relatively lengthy courses, while still permitting a variety of courses to be scheduled. Once a course is scheduled, it typically is not extended for additional weeks, except in special cases (e.g., if illness or other issues require "make-up" sessions).
- Scheduling of courses always depends on space availability, the requirements of other activities and events taking place at UUCA, and the availability of a Building Attendant.
- Courses offered through Adult Religious Education must be open to all who wish to participate (i.e., an Adult RE course cannot be a closed group). However, a maximum enrollment may be set for courses.

8. Room Assignments

- Instructors can find room assignments in the online UUCA calendar. Click the Calendar link on the home page (www.uuca.org). In rare cases, room assignments may change at the last minute. All room assignments for the day are posted on the electronic board in the hall next to the Social Hall.

9. Course Evaluations

- An evaluation is conducted at the conclusion of a course. For courses outside of the Sunday ARE Hour, the evaluation instrument will be distributed to course instructors prior to the end of each course. Contact the ARE Team if you need additional copies of the Evaluation Form. The Evaluation Form is also available electronically.
- Participants complete the evaluations anonymously, unless they choose to sign the form.
- Soon after the last class, instructors should return the print evaluations in an envelope to the UUCA office. These evaluations can be placed in the Adult RE file in the UUCA office.
- Evaluations will allow instructors to receive constructive feedback and will allow the Adult RE team to assess how well the courses are meeting the needs of congregants.

10. Cost to Participants and Fees

- Most courses are supported by the operating budget of UUCA and by the generosity of volunteer instructors and are offered free of charge. No Sunday ARE Hour course may charge a fee.
 - Courses offered at times other than Sunday Are Hour may charge a fee with the prior approval of the ARE Team. Acceptable kinds of fees include (a) fees for required course materials that are both reasonable

and nominal; and (b) fees for courses taught by instructors with special expertise, for which, in the world beyond UUCA, people would pay.

- So as to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, friends and members of UUCA may not charge a fee that would benefit themselves. If a UUCA member or friend has special expertise and wishes to teach a course that, in the world beyond UUCA, people would pay for, he or she may charge a fee only if 100% of such monies are donated to UUCA. Alternatively, offering a course free of charge is a generous way to contribute to the UUCA community.
- A “love offering” (voluntary money donation) is considered a course fee and is subject to the same conditions as listed above.
- Limited scholarships are available to UUCA members and pledging friends for whom a course fee creates a financial hardship.

11. Childcare

- During Sunday services, free infant and toddler care is available without reservation. Childcare for infants, toddlers, and elementary school-aged children is typically available by reservation (one week in advance) on Wednesday evenings, September to May, to coincide with Wonderful Wednesday dinners and evening courses and activities. Childcare also may be available at other times. Please see “Childcare” at the main UUCA website (www.uuca.org/about-us/childcare/) for specific times, further details about childcare at UUCA, or to submit a reservation.

12. Publicity

- **Order of Service.** The schedule for Sunday ARE Hour courses is included in the Order of Service each Sunday.
- **Webpage.** Course information will be available from the Adult RE webpage (<https://www.uuca.org/newcomers/religious-exploration/adult-religious-education/>). In addition, Sunday ARE Hour courses and schedules will be available from the UUCA homepage (www.uuca.org).
- **UUCA Weekly, The Bulletin, and Social Hall UUCA Bulletin Board.** The Adult RE Team will handle publicity for courses via the *UUCA Weekly*, *The Bulletin*, and the UUCA Bulletin Board in the Social Hall. Course announcements generally appear in the *UUCA Weekly* starting two weeks before the beginning of the class.
- **Other publicity.** Instructors are encouraged to use informal forms of publicity for courses. All external media publicity must be coordinated through the UUCA staff. Please contact the UUCA Communications and Marketing Director (nicole.pressley@uuca.org) with any questions.

13. Class Cancellation

- UUCA’s inclement weather policy stipulates that instructors and course participants should check the website for updated information on building closing and program cancellation. See www.uuca.org for more information.