

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910460611403321
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Titolo	New age, neopagan, and new religious movements : alternative spirituality in contemporary America // Hugh B. Urban
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oakland, California : , : University of California Press, , 2015 ©2015
ISBN	0-520-96212-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (329 p.)
Disciplina	299/.930973
Soggetti	Cults - United States Sects - United States Occultism - United States Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references at the end of each chapters and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Preface and Acknowledgments -- One. Introduction: The Rise of New Religions in Modern America -- Two. The Native American Church: Ancient Tradition in a Modern Legal Context -- Three. Mormonism and Plural Marriage: The LDS and the FLDS -- Four. Spiritualism: Women, Mediums, and Messages from Other Worlds -- Five. The Nation of Islam and the Five Percenters: Race, Religion, and Hip-Hop -- Six. Rastafari: Messianism, Music, and Ganja -- Seven. The Church of Scientology: New Religions and Tax Exemption -- Eight. Wicca and Neopaganism: Magic, Feminism, and Environmentalism -- Nine. The Church of Satan and the Temple of Set: Religious Parody and Satanic Panic -- Ten. ISKCON (Hare Krishna): Eastern Religions in America and the "Brainwashing" Debate -- Eleven. Channeling and the New Age: Alternative Spirituality in Popular Culture and Media -- Twelve. Peoples Temple: Mass Murder-Suicide, the Media, and The "Cult" Label -- Thirteen. The Branch Davidians: Millenarian Movements, Religious Freedom, and Privacy -- Fourteen. The Raëlians: UFOS and Human Cloning -- Appendix. Method and Theory in the Study of New Religions -- Index

New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements is the most extensive study to date of modern American alternative spiritual currents. Hugh B. Urban covers a range of emerging religions from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, including the Nation of Islam, Mormonism, Scientology, ISKCON, Wicca, the Church of Satan, Peoples Temple, and the Branch Davidians. This essential text engages students by addressing major theoretical and methodological issues in the study of new religions and is organized to guide students in their learning. Each chapter focuses on one important issue involving a particular faith group, providing readers with examples that illustrate larger issues in the study of religion and American culture. Urban addresses such questions as, Why has there been such a tremendous proliferation of new spiritual forms in the past 150 years, even as our society has become increasingly rational, scientific, technological, and secular? Why has the United States become the heartland for the explosion of new religious movements? How do we deal with complex legal debates, such as the use of peyote by the Native American Church or the practice of plural marriage by some Mormon communities? And how do we navigate issues of religious freedom and privacy in an age of religious violence, terrorism, and government surveillance?

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