

Pandemic Religion: A Digital Archive



Perhaps you are teaching a fully online course for the first time this semester. Or you are looking for a creative assignment that will help students connect the classroom with the events unfolding around them. Consider building an assignment around the resources available at [Pandemic Religion](http://pandemicreligion.org) (pandemicreligion.org), or at our partner projects, [Preaching Goes Viral](#) and [American Jewish Life](#). This digital archive collects and preserves materials from individuals and religious communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your students could become contributors to the archive, and they could use its collection of materials to analyze the lived reality of American religion during the pandemic.

What are possible assignments?

- ⇒ Encourage students to contribute to the *Pandemic Religion* digital archive. The archive accepts narratives, documents, photographs, videos, and URLs. Student contributions could reflect personal experiences and affiliations, but students are just as welcome to seek out contributions from institutions or through their network of contacts. This is an opportunity for students to participate in an important, ground-level research project and to help create an archive of lasting value to future researchers studying the variety of American religious experiences and responses during this time.
- ⇒ Devise an assignment that requires students to learn about the promise and challenges of digital collecting. Students could: read an essay by [Mills Kelley and Sheila Brennan](#), “[Why Collecting Online is Web 1.5](#)”; summarize “best practices” as pertaining to issues of privacy and intellectual property; and then analyze the contributions at *Pandemic Religion* and other digital archives according to those standards.
- ⇒ Ask students to select several items from the *Pandemic Religion* collection and then analyze what they reveal about a particular religious tradition or about the ways that several religious traditions have adapted to the changed circumstances of the pandemic. For instance, by using the website’s search function, students could compare Protestant and Catholic reflections on the “Eucharist” and “sacraments” during this time.

Questions? Suggestions? Contact us at pandemicreligion@gmail.com.