



Joseph Blankholm

The Secular Paradox, or Why Secular People Can Seem Weirdly Religious

Saturday, May 21st at 4pm

Either In-Person or by Zoom

In-Person – You MUST email the chapter at mail@au-oc.org to request a place as we are limited to 25 people in person. You will receive a confirmation response.

Irvine Ranch Water District Community Room, 15500 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine

If by Zoom, You Will Need to Register

<https://www.mobilize.us/au/event/453526/>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting



Secular people are, by definition, not religious, but they share more with each other than religion's mere absence. They trust in certain ways of knowing the world, they create their own life-cycle rituals like weddings and memorial services, and they sometimes gather in face-to-face communities. Legally, secular people can choose to be religious or not religious depending on the rights they want to claim. They even have their own particular ways of inhabiting their bodies and giving meaning to their lives. In this talk, Joseph Blankholm relies on several years of ethnographic research, more than a hundred in-depth interviews, and a survey of over twelve thousand secular people to explain what it's like to be a nonbeliever in the United States and why at times secular people can seem so weirdly religious.

Joseph Blankholm is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His first book, [*The Secular Paradox: On the Religiosity of the Not Religious*](#), is an

ethnographic study of very secular people in the United States that will be published by NYU Press in June 2022. Blankholm currently co-leads a project that investigates the intergenerational transmission of values and the many things we mean when we talk about religion. The project surveys and interviews three generations of California families that have been tracked since 1971 and is funded by a \$2.8m grant from the Templeton Foundation.