

The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. In the center, there is a large orange speech bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing downwards. The text is centered within this bubble.

# Organizing Religion

# Classifications

- Religious jargon is useful for classifying religions and having academic discussions about them
  - Ethnic
  - Universalizing
  - Inclusive
  - Exclusive
  - Polytheistic
  - Monotheistic
  - Henotheistic
  - Fundamentalist
  - Conservative
  - Liberal

# Ethnic vs. Univer- salizing

- **Ethnic religion:** practiced by a specific group of people who live in a specific geographical area and almost always share the same cultural ethnic roots
  - e.g., Judaism, Hinduism
- Ethnic religions move with the people
- **Local religion:** an ethnic religion that is also geographically limited, exclusive to an area
- People are born into ethnic religions
  - Do not seek converts
  - Conversion process is arduous, designed to test the convert's commitment

**Ethnic vs.  
Univer-  
salizing  
cont'd**

- **Universalizing religion:** one that actively seeks converts, sometimes aggressively
- Believe that their message and beliefs universally apply to all people everywhere
- Tend to be global
  - e.g., Christianity, Islam, Buddhism

# Inclusive vs. Exclusive

- **Inclusive religions:** believe that there is more than one path for righteous people to take, taking a different path doesn't mean you doomed to burn in a pit of hellfire for all eternity
- Ethnic religions often inclusive
- Take stance that religion isn't a one-size fits all, people should shape it to best suit their needs
- **Exclusive religions:** believe that there is only one right path for good people to take
- Universalizing religions are exclusive because they believe that everyone should follow the same path

# Praise God(s)?

- Religions also classified based on the number of divine beings at play
- **Monotheistic** religions believes there is only one god
- **Polytheistic** religions believe in multiple gods
- Henotheistic religions believe in one god, but everything else in the universe is part of that being
  - Some believe that god can appear in different facets to serve as a guide

## Fundamen- tawhat?

- **Fundamentalist:** believes in the strictest interpretation of their religion
- Not specific to any single religion
- Doctrinal difference within a faith
- Any religion can have a fundamentalist version of it

## **Fundamen- tawhat? cont'd**

- **According to fundamentalists, the way the religion was practiced at the time of its founding should dictate how it is practiced today**
- **Complications arise**
  - **Don't sell your daughter for a goat!**

## Conservative vs. Liberal

- Terms used to describe doctrinal differences within a religion
- **Conservative** practitioners allow for a bit more interpretation than a fundamentalist
  - Allows for shifts in linguistic meanings or cultural changes over time
  - Want to reflect modern culture, but not stray drastically from traditional practices
    - A suitor should ask for a woman's hand in marriage

## Conservative vs. Liberal cont'd

- **Liberal** practitioners allow for the most interpretations of religious texts
- Interpret texts as symbolic guides rather than literal truth
- Practices can change greatly over time, but still hold to the core of the religion as they see it
  - One should respect their in-laws and care for each other

# Other Divisions

- Sect = Denomination
  - A subset of a religion
- Protestantism is a sect of Christianity
- Baptists are a sect of Protestantism
- Southern Baptists are a sect of Protestantism

