

*"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours." - Stephen Roberts*

### **What is SOMA? What do you do?**

SOMA is the only student group at KU that is devoted to advancing a nonreligious worldview and to challenging religious dogma and the groups that advocate it. (There are 30 Christian groups on KU's campus in an average year, to contrast.) We hold social events, we sponsor events to inform the public about secular issues, and we have regular meetings every other week. If you like us and you're interested in getting involved, let one of the officers know and we will be more than happy to help you find a way to volunteer that's right for you.

*"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence."  
- Carl Sagan*

### **So, what's an Atheist?**

Atheism is characterized by an absence of belief in the existence of gods. This absence of belief generally comes about either through deliberate choice, or from an inherent inability to believe religious teachings which seem literally incredible. It is not a lack of belief born out of simple ignorance of religious teachings. Some atheists go beyond a mere absence of belief in gods: they actively believe that particular gods, or all gods, do not exist. Just lacking belief in gods is often referred to as the "weak atheist" position; whereas believing that gods do not (or cannot) exist is known as "strong atheism".

### **What's an Agnostic?**

The term 'agnosticism' was coined by Professor T.H. Huxley at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in 1876. He defined an agnostic as someone who disclaimed both ("strong") atheism and theism, and who believed that the question of whether a higher power existed was unsolved and insoluble. Another way of putting it is that an agnostic is someone who believes that we do not know for sure whether God exists. Some agnostics believe that we can never know.

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### **Some primary functions of SOMA:**

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- To raise awareness of atheism and agnosticism, while simultaneously dispelling negative connotations often affixed to atheism and agnosticism.
  - To provide a setting whereby atheists and agnostics can express and unite their views to acquire organized representation in public forum.
  - To provide an impetus for people to question their beliefs pertaining to religion and how these beliefs are then applied in fields such as science, morality, and politics.
  - To champion the cause of human reason over divine revelation.
  - To advocate the separation of church and state.
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## Anything else we need to know?

### A message from the group

We conduct open meetings, and welcome anyone who would like to attend. We do ask that you keep in mind that some of what may be said is not necessarily representative of the group's views, and may not necessarily be meant for public consumption. Because our views are not always those of the majority, we value our ability to speak our minds freely at our meetings. If something has been said that deeply offends you, or you would like clarification about something from one of our meetings, please see one of the officers or e-mail us @ [soma@ku.edu](mailto:soma@ku.edu). It is our goal to educate and promote tolerance.

There are several national organizations with which SOMA is affiliated. The two major ones are:

#### Secular Student Alliance

<http://www.secularstudents.org/>

and the Campus Freethought Alliance

<http://www.campusfreethought.org>

Also, we are friends with a couple of other local groups, including

Individuals for Freethought at K-State,

<http://www.k-state.edu/freethought/>

and Heartland Humanists of Kansas City

<http://www.heartland.humanists.net/>

*"A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death."  
- Albert Einstein, "Religion and Science," New York Times Magazine, 9 November 1930*

# S O M A

## Society of Open-Minded Atheists and Agnostics

WELCOME TO SOMA!

<http://www.kusoma.org>

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