



Michael Shellenberger

Follow @ShellenbergerMD

271K followers

11 Nov, 54 tweets, 8 min read



Bookmark

Save as PDF

+ My Authors

When does a political ideology become a religion? When it comes to rely upon easily debunked myths and supernatural beliefs.

Here's why Wokeism is a Religion



Why Wokeism Is A Religion

Introducing the Taxonomy of Woke Religion

<https://michaelshellenberger.substack.com/p/why-wokeism-is-a-religion>

Special bonus: Woke Religion: A Taxonomy

Co-authored with [@peterboghossian](#)

Follow Us on Twitter!

Tweet

Share

WOKE RELIGION: A TAXONOMY

By Michael Shellenberger @Shellenbergermd and Peter Boghossian @peterboghossian

CATEGORY	Original Sin What happened in the past to make things so terrible today	Guilty Devils The people who made things so terrible	Myths Creation story	Sacred Victims People who continue to be harmed by original sin	The Elect Those chosen to make things right	Supernatural Beliefs Beliefs beyond scientific understanding or known laws of nature	Taboo Facts Things forbidden to say	Taboo Speech Words that trigger anger among the elect	Purifying Rituals Acts perceived to make people innocent of guilt and responsibility	Purifying Speech Words people use to be perceived as virtuous
RACISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White people Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American War of Independence was fought to maintain slavery Structural racism is the cause of all racial inequality and the only explanation possible for disparate outcomes by racial group Asian success is due to Asians participating in white supremacy Rioting and looting are political acts We rarely discuss slavery and history of racism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black people Indigenous people People of color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coates, Kendi, DiAngelo Black Lives Matter Critical Race Theorists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mult is racist White people borrowing elements from other cultures is theft (i.e. "cultural appropriation") Culture doesn't matter Racism is as bad as ever Living white people are guilty for sins committed by dead white people Speech/silence equals violence Implicit bias tied to real world harms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racism has declined There is broad societal acceptance of interracial relationships and families Black wealth is rising The obsession with race can make racism worse 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent legislation banned structural racism Police do not kill unarmed black men at higher rates than other races Asian success is due to hard work and higher ed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Reverse racism" "Acting white" "All lives matter" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reparations/Affirmative Action/ racial preferences Knooling Using correct language Public apologies White people not speaking Asking students or employees to self-segregate on the basis of race Diversity trainings White people confessing to being racist Announcing one's race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "BIPOC" "Latinx" "People of color" Capitalized "Black" but lower-case "white" "Centering" Intersectionality
CLIMATE CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossil fuel use Industrial revolution Modern farming Western development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exxon, BP, etc. (fossil fuels industry) "Climate deniers" Monsanto Koch Brothers Corporations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Earth's climate was safer in past Climate change is making natural disasters deadlier and more expensive Climate change is the main cause of high intensity forest fires We rarely discuss climate change We can power world with renewables Human civilization is unsustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsistence farmers Maldives, Tuvalu and other small island nations Young people Bangladeshis Global South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate scientists, activists, journalists UN officials Greta Thunberg Yandana Shiva Thomas Malthus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change will make humans extinct Humans causing sixth mass extinction Study of "tipping points" is scientific Prosperity doesn't depend on high energy use Prosperity is not necessary for happiness Organic agriculture can feed the world while protecting nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaths from natural disasters have declined 90% since 1900 Renewables can't power high-energy world Emissions are declining in developed nations and could soon peak and start to decline globally Food surpluses are rising Some climate policies hurt the poor and increase emissions Nuclear energy is safe, clean, and effective, with myriad beneficial side effects Renewables are dirty to produce and distribute Prosperity (without inflation) follows shifting to cheaper, higher energy-density fuels, not more expensive lower energy-density fuels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear power plants have the smallest environmental impact of any energy source Fracking reduces carbon emissions Economic development outweighs impact of climate change Renewables hurt the environment Wealth is good "We're safer than ever" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon effects Walking, biking, or public transit Renewable Energy Credits Carbon budgets Climate reparations Climate conferences Extinction Rebellion-style performance art and public protests Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Renewables" "Organics" "Climate-fueled" "Sustainable" / "Sustainability" "Net-Zero (Emissions)" "Carbon Zero" / "Carbon Negative"
TRANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex or gender spectrum reduced to just two sexes and genders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who view sex as biologically determined Opponents of legal requirements to use trans pronouns TERFs Opponents of allowing trans women athletes to compete with biological women athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans women or trans men are identical to biological women or biological men Violence against trans people is on the rise, disproportionate, and due to being trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans people Nonbinary people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans activists GLAAD HRC ACLU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty blockers and surgery can change your biological sex A person can immediately change their sex simply by identifying as the opposite sex, or as non-binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social acceptance of trans people is increasing Trans kids and kids with gender dysphoria often benefit from parental involvement Trans activism can hurt trans and gender-dysphoric children Many children who think they're trans have gender dysphoria Many de-transitioners say they wish there had been more obstacles to changing their sex Gender dysphoria is sometimes correlated with mental health problems There is little evidence that transitioning reduces the risk of suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex heavily influences gender Gender dysphoria is real "De-transitioners" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcing one's pronouns Educating people about trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Dis" "Speech is violence" "Silence is violence" "Trans women are women"
CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private property Capitalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Prison guards Capitalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are large numbers of unjustified killings of unarmed black men by police Crime is not rising in progressive cities Black people killed by police officers are sacred but black people killed by other black people aren't Police forces descended from slave patrols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incarcerated people Black people Criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive DAs Black Lives Matter Abolition movement activists George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoners aren't guilty, the system is Jails and prisons aren't necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police reduce crime and prevent incarceration The "Ferguson effect," whereby anti-police protests result in police pull-back and criminal emboldenment, is real Anti-police agenda hurts black people Most black people oppose defunding the police Thirty times more black people killed by civilians than by the police Taboo against cooperating with police and prosecutors is a barrier to successfully prosecuting criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "All lives matter" "Black-on-black violence" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defund/abolish the police De-incarceration Decriminalize theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Justice-involved" "Carceral state" "Police state" "Prison industrial complex"
MENTAL ILLNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatry Invention of mental illness Enlightenment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatrists Enlightenment philosophers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlightenment philosophy led to the medicalization of neuroatypical people Psychiatrists don't want to help people they just want to control them, whether with drugs or therapies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neuroatypical Neuroconformists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates of mentally ill Michel Foucault Thomas Szasz R.D. Laing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental illness doesn't exist except as a way to stigmatize neuroatypical people Mentally ill people should be free to self-medicate however they see fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untreated mentally ill people are disproportionately violent Many mentally ill people say they benefited from involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mentally ill people need involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close psychiatric hospitals Demand the release of mentally ill people from psychiatric hospitals Create all-voluntary community mental health clinics Demand that the police not arrest mentally ill people when they break the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Neuroatypical" "Normies"
DRUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug prohibition Stigmatization of altered states of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibitionists Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people in jail or prison are there for nonviolent drug offenses We can liberalize, decriminalize and normalize addictive drugs without significantly increasing addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harm Reduction Coalition Drug Policy Alliance George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decriminalizing or legalizing drugs is the key to preventing addiction and overdoses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberalization, decriminalization, and normalization of drugs increases use and addiction Many recovering addicts credit being arrested for their recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addicts who break laws should be arrested and given the choice between jail and rehab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributing clean needles, and other drug paraphernalia Providing services to homeless street addicts Distributing Narcan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Substance use disorder"
HOMELESSNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalism Private property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politicians who shut down open drug scenes ("homeless encampments") Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness is caused by poverty and high rents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless advocates Homeless service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who simply can't afford rent and suffer no mental illness or addiction decide to live in tents on sidewalks Acknowledging that homeless people suffer high rates of addiction and mental illness causes violence against them Most violence against homeless people is by non-homeless people Violence against homeless people is increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rise in homelessness can't be explained by trauma and abuse, which have steadily declined for decades Most unsheltered homeless people are homeless because of their addiction and/or untreated mental illness Housing First enables addiction Homeless advocates restricted funding for shelter, worsening homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidized housing should be contingent on abstinence People have a right to shelter, not to housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free, unconditional housing Homeless outreach Defending the right of people to camp in public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Unhoused" "Houseless" "People experiencing homelessness"

Over the last year, a growing number of progressives have pointed to police killings of unarmed black men, rising carbon emissions and extreme weather events, and the killing of trans people as proof that the US has failed to take action on racism, climate change, and transphobia

Others have pointed to the war on drugs, the criminalization of homelessness, and mass incarceration as evidence that little has changed in the U.S. over the last 30 years.

And yet, on each of those issues, the U.S. has made significant progress.

- Police killings of black Americans declined from 217/year in the 1970s to 157/year in the 2010s.

- Between 2011 and 2020, CO2 emissions declined 14% in the US, more than in any other nation

- Just 300 people died from disasters, a 90+% percent decline over the past century.

- Public acceptance of trans people is higher than ever

- Total prison & jail population peaked in 2008 and has declined significantly ever since

- Just 4% of state prisoners (87% of total prison pop.), are in for nonviolent drug possession; just 14% for nonviolent drug offenses

Follow Us on Twitter!

Tweet Share

Progressives respond that these gains obscure broad inequalities, and are under threat. Black Americans are killed at between two to three times the rate of white Americans, according to a Washington Post analysis of police killings between 2015 and 2020.

Carbon emissions are once again rising as the U.S. emerges from the covid pandemic, and scientists believe global warming is contributing to extreme weather events.

In 2020, Human Rights Campaign found that at least 44 transgender and non-gender conforming people were killed, which is the most since it started tracking fatalities in 2013, and already that number has reached 45 this year.

Drug prohibition remains in effect, homeless people are still being arrested, and the U.S. continues to have one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world.

But those numbers, too, obscure important realities. There are no racial differences in police killings when accounting for whether or not the suspect was armed or a threat (“justified” vs “unjustified” shooting).

While carbon emissions will rise in 2021 there is every reason to believe they will continue to decline in the future, so long as natural gas continues to replace coal, and nuclear plants continue operating.

While climate change may be contributing to extreme weather events, neither the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change nor another other scientific body predicts it will outpace rising resilience to cause an increase in deaths from natural disasters.

Researchers do not know if trans people are being killed disproportionately in comparison to cis-gender people, if trans homicides are rising, or if trans people are being killed for being trans, rather than for some other reason.

Twenty-six states have decriminalized marijuana. California & Oregon have decriminalized and legalized, respectively, the possession of all drugs.

Progressive District Attorneys in San Francisco, Los Angeles and other major cities have scaled back prosecutions against people for breaking many laws related to homelessness including public camping, public drug use, and theft.

And yet many Americans would be surprised to learn any of the above information; some would reject it outright as false.

Despite the decline in police killings of African Americans, the share of the public which said police violence is a serious or extremely serious problem rose from 32 to 45 percent between 2015 and 2020.

Despite the decline in carbon emissions, 47 percent of the public agreed with the statement, “Carbon emissions have risen in the United States over the last 10 years,” and just 16 percent disagreed.

Meanwhile, 46 percent of Americans agree with the statement, “Deaths from natural disasters will increase in the future due to climate change” and just 16 percent disagreed, despite the absence of any scientific scenario supporting such fears.

And despite the lack of good evidence, mainstream news media widely reported that the killing of trans people is on the rise.

The gulf between reality and perception is alarming for reasons that go beyond the importance of having an informed electorate for a healthy liberal democracy.

Distrust of the police appears to have contributed to the nearly 30% rise in homicides after the 2020 Black Lives

A growing body of research finds that news media coverage of climate change is contributing to rising levels of anxiety and depression among children.

And there's good reason to fear that misinformation about the killing of trans and non-gender conforming individuals contributes to anxiety and depression among trans and gender dysphoric youth.

Why is that? Why does there exist such a massive divide between perception and reality on so many important issues?

Part of the reason appears to stem from the rise of social media and corresponding changes to news media over the last decade.

Social media fuels rising and unwarranted certainty, dogmatism, and intolerance of viewpoint diversity and disconfirmatory information. Social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram reward users for sharing information popular with peers...

... particularly extreme views, and punish users for expressing unpopular, more moderate, and less emotional opinions. This cycle is self-reinforcing. Audiences seek out views that reinforce their own.

Experts seek conclusions, and journalists write stories, which affirm the predispositions of their audiences. It may be for these reasons that much of the news media have failed to inform their audiences that there are no racial differences in police killings...

..., that emissions are declining, and that claims of rising trans killings are unscientific.

Another reason may be due to the influence of well-funded advocacy organizations to shape public perceptions, particularly in combination with social media.

Organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Campaign, and Drug Policy Alliance have misled journalists, policymakers, and the public, about police killings, drug policy, and trans killings, often by simply leaving out crucial contextual information.

The same has been true for climate activists, including those operating as experts and journalists, who withhold information about declining deaths from natural disasters, the cost of disasters relative to GDP growth, and declining U.S. emissions.

But neither of these explanations fully captures the religious quality of so much of the progressive discourse on issues relating to race, climate, trans, crime, drugs, homelessness, and the related issue of mental illness.

A growing number of thinkers use the word “woke” to describe the religiosity of so many progressive causes today.

In his new book, *Woke Racism*, Columbia University linguist John McWhorter argues that Wokeism should, literally, be considered a religion.

As evidence for his argument McWhorter points to commonly held myths, like the debunked claim that the American War of Independence was fought to maintain slavery, or that racial disparities in educational performance are due to racist teachers.

He points to Woke religious fervor in seeking to censor, fire, and otherwise punish heretics for holding taboo views. And McWhorter suggests that, because Wokeism meets specific psychological and spiritual needs for meaning, belonging, and status...

... pointing out its supernatural elements is likely to have little impact among the Woke.

But just because an ideology is dogmatic and self-righteous does not necessarily make it a religion, and so it is fair to ask whether Wokeism is anything more than a new belief system.

There is no obviously mythological or supernatural element to Woke ideology, and its adherents rarely, if ever, justify their statements with reference to a god, or higher power. But a deeper look at Wokeism reveals a whole series of mythological and supernatural beliefs...

They include the idea that white people today are responsible for the racist actions of white people in the past; that climate change risks making humans extinct; and that a person can change their sex by simply identifying as the opposite sex.

While reading McWhorter's new book, I was surprised to discover many similarities between woke racism and apocalyptic environmentalism, which in *Apocalypse Never* I describe as a religion.

Each offers an original sin as the cause of present-day evils (e.g., slavery, the industrial revolution). Each has guilty devils (e.g., white people, "climate deniers," etc.) sacred victims (e.g., black people, poor islanders, etc.) and what McWhorter calls "The Elect" ...

...or people self-appointed to crusade against evil (e.g., BLM activists, Greta Thunberg, etc.). And each have a set of taboos (e.g., saying "All lives matter," criticizing renewables, etc.) and purifying rituals (e.g., kneeling/apologizing, buying carbon offsets, etc).

I also saw parallels between woke racism, apocalyptic environmentalism, and victimology, which in *San Fransicko* I describe as a religion complete with the metaphysical view that people can be categorized as victims or oppressors, by nature of their identity or experience.

I reached out to a new friend, Peter Boghossian, a philosopher who recently resigned his post at Portland State University in response to Wokeist repression, and other experts in different Woke movements, and together we constructed a Woke Religion Taxonomy (below).

WOKE RELIGION: A TAXONOMY

By Michael Shellenberger @Shellenbergermd and Peter Boghossian @peterboghossian

CATEGORY	Original Sin What happened in the past to make things so terrible today	Guilty Devils The people who made things so terrible	Myths Creation story	Sacred Victims People who continue to be harmed by original sin	The Elect Those chosen to make things right	Supernatural Beliefs Beliefs beyond scientific understanding or known laws of nature	Taboo Facts Things forbidden to say	Taboo Speech Words that trigger anger among the elect	Purifying Rituals Acts perceived to make people innocent of guilt and responsibility	Purifying Speech Words people use to be perceived as virtuous
RACISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White people Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American War of Independence was fought to maintain slavery Structural racism is the cause of all racial inequality and the only explanation possible for disparate outcomes by racial group Asian success is due to Asians participating in white supremacy Rioting and looting are political acts We rarely discuss slavery and history of racism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black people Indigenous people People of color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coates, Kendi, DiAngelo Black Lives Matter Critical Race Theorists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muth is racist White people borrowing elements from other cultures is theft (i.e. "cultural appropriation") Culture doesn't matter Racism is as bad as ever Living white people are guilty for sins committed by dead white people Speech/silence equals violence Implicit bias tied to real world harms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racism has declined There is broad societal acceptance of interracial relationships and families Black wealth is rising The obsession with race can make racism worse 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent legislation banned structural racism Police do not kill unarmed black men at higher rates than other races Asian success is due to hard work and higher ed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Reverse racism" "Acting white" "All lives matter" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reparations/Affirmative Action/ racial preferences Knooling Using correct language Public apologies White people not speaking Asking students or employees to self-segregate on the basis of race Diversity trainings White people confessing to being racist Announcing one's race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "BIPOC" "Latinx" "People of color" Capitalized "Black" but lower-case "white" "Centering" Intersectionality
CLIMATE CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossil fuel use Industrial revolution Modern farming Western development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exxon, BP, etc. (fossil fuels industry) "Climate deniers" Monsanto Koch Brothers Corporations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Earth's climate was safer in past Climate change is making natural disasters deadlier and more expensive Climate change is the main cause of high intensity forest fires We rarely discuss climate change We can power world with renewables Human civilization is unsustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsistence farmers Maldives, Tuvalu and other small island nations Young people Bangladeshis Global South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate scientists, activists, journalists UN officials Greta Thunberg Yandana Shiva Thomas Malthus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change will make humans extinct Humans causing sixth mass extinction Study of "tipping points" is scientific Prosperity doesn't depend on high energy use Prosperity is not necessary for happiness Organic agriculture can feed the world while protecting nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaths from natural disasters have declined 90% since 1900 Renewables can't power high-energy world Emissions are declining in developed nations and could soon peak and start to decline globally Food surpluses are rising Some climate policies hurt the poor and increase emissions Nuclear energy is safe, clean, and effective, with myriad beneficial side effects Renewables are dirty to produce and distribute Prosperity (without inflation) follows shifting to cheaper, higher energy-density fuels, not more expensive lower energy-density fuels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear power plants have the smallest environmental impact of any energy source Fracking reduces carbon emissions Economic development outweighs impact of climate change Renewables hurt the environment Wealth is good "We're safer than ever" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon offsets Walking, biking, or public transit Renewable Energy Credits Carbon budgets Climate reparations Climate conferences Extinction Rebellion-style performance art and public protests Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Renewables" "Organics" "Climate-fueled" "Sustainable" / "Sustainability" "Net-Zero (Emissions)" "Carbon Zero" / "Carbon Negative"
TRANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex or gender spectrum reduced to just two sexes and genders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who view sex as biologically determined Opponents of legal requirements to use trans pronouns TERFs Opponents of allowing trans women athletes to compete with biological women athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans women or trans men are identical to biological women or biological men Violence against trans people is on the rise, disproportionate, and due to being trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans people Nonbinary people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans activists GLAAD HRC ACLU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty blockers and surgery can change your biological sex A person can immediately change their sex simply by identifying as the opposite sex, or as non-binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social acceptance of trans people is increasing Trans kids and kids with gender dysphoria avoid benefits from parental involvement Trans activism can hurt trans and gender-dysphoric children Many children who think they're trans have gender dysphoria Many de-transitioners say they wish there had been more obstacles to changing their sex Gender dysphoria is sometimes correlated with mental health problems There is little evidence that transitioning reduces the risk of suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex heavily influences gender Gender dysphoria is real "De-transitioners" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcing one's pronouns Educating people about trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Dis" "Speech is violence" "Silence is violence" "Trans women are women"
CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private property Capitalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Prison guards Capitalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are large numbers of unjustified killings of unarmed black men by police Crime is not rising in progressive cities Black people killed by police officers are sacred but black people killed by other black people aren't Police forces descended from slave patrols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incarcerated people Black people Criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive DAs Black Lives Matter Abolition movement activists George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoners aren't guilty, the system is Jails and prisons aren't necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police reduce crime and prevent incarceration The "Ferguson effect," whereby anti-police protests result in police pull-back and criminal emboldenment, is real Anti-police agenda hurts black people Most black people oppose defunding the police Thirty times more black people killed by civilians than by the police Taboo against cooperating with police and prosecutors is a barrier to successfully prosecuting criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "All lives matter" "Black-on-black violence" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defund/abolish the police De-incarceration Decriminalize theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Justice-involved" "Carceral state" "Police state" "Prison industrial complex"
MENTAL ILLNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatry Invention of mental illness Enlightenment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatrists Enlightenment philosophers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlightenment philosophy led to the medicalization of neuroatypical people Psychiatrists don't want to help people they just want to control them, whether with drugs or therapies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neuroatypical Neuroconformists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates of mentally ill Michel Foucault Thomas Szasz R.D. Laing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental illness doesn't exist except as a way to stigmatize neuroatypical people Mentally ill people should be free to self-medicate however they see fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untreated mentally ill people are disproportionately violent Many mentally ill people say they benefited from involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mentally ill people need involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close psychiatric hospitals Demand the release of mentally ill people from psychiatric hospitals Create all-voluntary community mental health clinics Demand that the police not arrest mentally ill people when they break the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Neuroatypical" "Normies"
DRUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug prohibition Stigmatization of altered states of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibitionists Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people in jail or prison are there for nonviolent drug offenses We can liberalize, decriminalize and normalize addictive drugs without significantly increasing addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harm Reduction Coalition Drug Policy Alliance George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decriminalizing or legalizing drugs is the key to preventing addiction and overdoses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberalization, decriminalization, and normalization of drugs increases use and addiction Many recovering addicts credit being arrested for their recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addicts who break laws should be arrested and given the choice between jail and rehab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributing clean needles, and other drug paraphernalia Providing services to homeless street addicts Distributing Narcan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Substance use disorder"
HOMELESSNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalism Private property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politicians who shut down open drug scenes ("homeless encampments") Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness is caused by poverty and high rents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless advocates Homeless service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who simply can't afford rent and suffer no mental illness or addiction decide to live in tents on sidewalks Acknowledging that homeless people suffer high rates of addiction and mental illness causes violence against them Most violence against homeless people is by non-homeless people Violence against homeless people is increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rise in homelessness can't be explained by trauma and abuse, which have steadily declined for decades Most unsheltered homeless people are homeless because of their addiction and/or untreated mental illness Housing First enables addiction Homeless advocates restricted housing for shelter, worsening homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidized housing should be contingent on abstinence People have a right to shelter, not to housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free, unconditional housing Homeless outreach Defending the right of people to camp in public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Unhoused" "Houseless" "People experiencing homelessness"

It includes seven issue areas (Racism, Climate Change, Trans, Crime, Mental Illness, Drugs, and Homelessness) covered by Woke Racism, Apocalypse Never, San Fransicko, Peter's research, and the writings of other critics of Wokeism.

It cuts across 10 categories (Original Sin, Guilty Devils, Myths, Sacred Victims, The Elect, Supernatural Beliefs, Taboo Facts, Taboo Speech, Purifying Rituals, Purifying Speech)

We were surprised by how easy it was to fill in each category, and by the fascinating similarities.

We decided to publish the Woke Religion Taxonomy because it was helpful to our own understanding of Wokeism as a religion, and we felt it might help others. The Taxonomy identifies common myths and supernatural beliefs and helps explain why so many people continue to hold them...

..., despite overwhelming evidence that they are false. We are under no illusion that the Taxonomy will reduce the power that Wokeism holds over true believers. But we also believe it will help orient those who are confused by its irrationalism, and are seeking an overview.

Finally, we recognize that we might be wrong, either about matters of fact or classification, and hope it will encourage a healthy debate. As such, we have published it with the caveat that it is "Version 1.0" with the expectation that we will revise it in the future

Follow Us on Twitter!

Tweet Share

Both Peter and I would like to stress that we have published the Taxonomy in service of the liberal and democratic project of social and environmental progress, which we believe to be under threat from Wokeism.

We believe the U.S. is well-positioned to reduce police killings, crime, and carbon emissions; protect the lives and the mental health of trans, non-gender conforming, and cis-gender people; and better treat of the mentally ill and drug addicted.

But doing so will require that Wokeism weaken its grip over the American psyche.

As Peter writes, “bigotry and racial discrimination are real and they have no place in society. Yes, there is ongoing racism. Yes, there is ongoing homophobia...

... Yes, there is ongoing hatred of trans people. These are morally abhorrent and we all need to work together to bring about their end. The woke religion, however, is not the way to stop these moral horrors. It is making our shared problems more difficult to solve.”

Woke Religion: A Taxonomy v1

WOKE RELIGION: A TAXONOMY										
By Michael Shellenberger @Shellenbergermd and Peter Boghossian @peterboghossian										
CATEGORY	Original Sin What happened in the past to make things so terrible today	Guilty Devils The people who made things so terrible	Myths Creation story	Sacred Victims People who continue to be harmed by original sin	The Elect Those chosen to make things right	Supernatural Beliefs Beliefs beyond scientific understanding or known laws of nature	Taboo Facts Things forbidden to say	Taboo Speech Words that trigger anger among the elect	Purifying Rituals Acts perceived to make people innocent of guilt and responsibility	Purifying Speech Words people use to be perceived as virtuous
RACISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White people Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American War of Independence was fought to maintain slavery Structural racism is the cause of all racial inequality and the only explanation possible for disparate outcomes by racial group Asian success is due to Asians participating in white supremacy Rioting and looting are political acts We rarely discuss slavery and history of racism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black people Indigenous people People of color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coates, Kendi, DiAngelo Black Lives Matter Critical Race Theorists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muth is racist White people borrowing elements from other cultures is theft (i.e. "cultural appropriation") Culture doesn't matter Racism is as bad as ever Living white people are guilty for sins committed by dead white people Speech/silence equals violence Implicit bias tied to real world harms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racism has declined There is broad societal acceptance of interracial relationships and families Black wealth is rising The obsession with race can make racism worse 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent legislation banned structural racism Police do not kill unarmed black men at higher rates than other races Asian success is due to hard work and higher ed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Reverse racism" "Acting white" "All lives matter" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reparations/Affirmative Action/ racial preferences Knooling Using correct language Public apologies White people not speaking Asking students or employees to self-segregate on the basis of race Diversity trainings White people confessing to being racist Announcing one's race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "BIPOC" "Latinx" "People of color" Capitalized "Black" but lower-case "white" "Centering" Intersectionality
CLIMATE CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossil fuel use Industrial revolution Modern farming Monsanto Koch Brothers Corporations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exxon, BP, etc. (fossil fuels industry) "Climate deniers" Monsanto Koch Brothers Corporations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Earth's climate was safer in past Climate change is making natural disasters deadlier and more expensive Climate change is the main cause of high intensity forest fires We rarely discuss climate change We can power world with renewables Human civilization is unsustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsistence farmers Maldives, Tuvalu and other small island nations Young people Bangladeshis Global South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate scientists, activists, journalists UN officials Greta Thunberg Vandana Shiva Thomas Malthus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change will make humans extinct Humans causing sixth mass extinction Study of "tipping points" is scientific Prosperity doesn't depend on high energy use Prosperity is not necessary for happiness Organic agriculture can feed the world while protecting nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaths from natural disasters have declined 90% since 1900 Renewables can't power high-energy world Emissions are declining in developed nations and could soon peak and start to decline globally Food surpluses are rising Some climate policies hurt the poor and increase emissions Nuclear energy is safe, clean, and effective, with myriad beneficial side effects Renewables are dirty to produce and distribute Prosperity (without inflation) follows shifting to cheaper, higher energy-density fuels, not more expensive lower energy-density fuels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear power plants have the smallest environmental impact of any energy source Fracking reduces carbon emissions Economic development outweighs impact of climate change Renewables hurt the environment Wealth is good "We're safer than ever" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon offsets Walking, biking, or public transit Renewable Energy Credits Carbon budgets Climate reparations Climate conferences Extinction Rebellion-style performance art and public protests Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Renewables" "Organics" "Climate-fueled" "Sustainable" / "Sustainability" "Net-Zero (Emissions)" "Carbon Zero" / "Carbon Negative"
TRANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex or gender spectrum reduced to just two sexes and genders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who view sex as biologically determined Opponents of legal requirements to use trans pronouns TERFs Opponents of allowing trans women athletes to compete with biological women athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans women or trans men are identical to biological women or biological men Violence against trans people is on the rise, disproportionate, and due to being trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans people Nonbinary people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans activists GLAAD HRC ACLU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty blockers and surgery can change your biological sex A person can immediately change their sex simply by identifying as the opposite sex, or as non-binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social acceptance of trans people is increasing Trans kids and kids with gender dysphoria often benefit from parental involvement Trans activism can hurt trans and gender-dysphoric children Many children who think they're trans have gender dysphoria Many de-transitioners say they wish there had been more obstacles to changing their sex Gender dysphoria is sometimes correlated with mental health problems There is little evidence that transitioning reduces the risk of suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex heavily influences gender Gender dysphoria is real "De-transitioners" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcing one's pronouns Educating people about trans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Cis" "Speech is violence" "Silence is violence" "Trans women are women"
CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private property Capitalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Prison guards Capitalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are large numbers of unjustified killings of unarmed black men by police Crime is not rising in progressive cities Black people killed by police officers are spared but black people killed by other black people aren't Police forces descended from slave patrols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incarcerated people Black people Criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive DAs Black Lives Matter Abolition movement activists George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoners aren't guilty, the system is Jails and prisons aren't necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police reduce crime and prevent incarceration The "Ferguson effect," whereby anti-police protests result in police pull-back and criminal emboldenment, is real Anti-police agenda hurts black people Most black people oppose defunding the police Thirty times more black people killed by civilians than by the police Taboo against cooperating with police and prosecutors is a barrier to successfully prosecuting criminals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "All lives matter" "Black-on-black violence" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defund/abolish the police De-incarceration Discriminate theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Justice-involved" "Carceral state" "Police state" "Prison industrial complex"
MENTAL ILLNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatry Invention of mental illness Enlightenment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatrists Enlightenment philosophers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlightenment philosophy led to the medicalization of neurotypical people Psychiatrists don't want to help people they just want to control them, whether with drugs or therapies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neurotypical Nonconformists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates of mentally ill Michel Foucault Thomas Szasz R.D. Laing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental illness doesn't exist except as a way to stigmatize neurotypical people Mentally ill people should be free to self-medicate however they see fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untreated mentally ill people are disproportionately violent Many mentally ill people say they benefited from involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mentally ill people need involuntary medical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close psychiatric hospitals Demand the release of mentally ill people from psychiatric hospitals Create all-voluntary community mental health clinics Demand that the police not arrest mentally ill people when they break the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Neurotypical" "Normies"
DRUGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug prohibition Stigmatization of altered states of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibitionists Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people in jail or prison are there for nonviolent drug offenses We can liberalize, decriminalize and normalize addictive drugs without significantly increasing addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harm Reduction Coalition Drug Policy Alliance George Soros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decriminalizing or legalizing drugs is the key to preventing addiction and overdose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberalization, decriminalization, and normalization of drugs increases use and addiction Many recovering addicts credit being arrested for their recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addicts who break laws should be arrested and given the choice between jail and rehab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributing clean needles, and other drug paraphernalia Providing services to homeless street addicts Distributing Narcan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Substance use disorder"
HOMELESSNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalism Private property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politicians who shut down open drug scenes ("homeless encampments") Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness is caused by poverty and high rents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless advocates Homeless service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who simply can't afford rent and suffer no mental illness or addiction decide to live in tents on sidewalks Acknowledging that homeless people suffer high rates of addiction and mental illness causes violence against them Most violence against homeless people is by non-homeless people Violence against homeless people is increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rise in homelessness can't be explained by trauma and abuse, which have steadily declined for decades Most unsheltered homeless people are homeless because of their addiction and/or untreated mental illness Housing First enables addiction Homeless advocates restricted funding for shelter, worsening homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidized housing should be contingent on abstinence People have a right to shelter, not to housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free, unconditional housing Homeless outreach Defending the right of people to camp in public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Unhoused" "Houseless" "People experiencing homelessness"

Missing some Tweet in this thread? You can try to [force a refresh](#)

Follow Us on Twitter!

Tweet

Share