

PERSPECTIVES *On Religion*

Fall 2019 • Volume 26

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The South Asian Studies Program, with support from UI International Programs' Special Projects Awards and the Department of Religious Studies, will host a major conference marking Mahatma Gandhi's 150 birthday. Gandhi's date of birth was October 2, 1869, but the UI conference will be April 16-18, 2020, still part of his sesquicentennial year.

Professors Frederick Smith, Meena Khandelwal and Aniruddha Dutta, along with Religious Studies graduate student Pranav Prakash, are organizing the conference which will feature at least ten major speakers, including one each from India and South Africa, and several from major universities in the US. The conference, will not only celebrate one of the shrewdest political minds of the twentieth century and the greatest among independent India's founders, but will also reconsider his life and its many complex parts, his ideas, and his legacy as it appears today.

The conference will also feature student breakout sessions, and three films. The student led breakout sessions will engage students, faculty, and community members on critical issues surrounding Gandhi's influences. These sessions will cover a number of different topics, including:

- Gandhi's early work in South Africa;
- Gandhi's religious ideas, notably the positioning of Hindus & Muslim; the effectiveness of nonviolence; the role of gender in the Indian independence movement;
- Gandhi's views of gender equality; his ambiguous sexuality;

- Gandhi's ambivalent attitude towards the lower caste activist and writer, B. R. Ambedkar (primary author of the Indian constitution);
- Gandhi's political views and skills including his role in present day Indian polity including the BJP (India's ruling Hindu nationalist political party) and the Congress (the party spurred by Gandhi and his allies);
- Gandhi's role and lasting importance (or otherwise) in the American civil rights movement;
- The significance of Gandhi's assassination;

Profs. Smith, Khandelwal, and Dutta will offer credit for students who attend the conference and write a paper.

Watch the department website (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UIDeptofReligiousStudies/>) as more details become available.



Graduate Student Spotlight



Sheridan at a Hutterite colony in Saskatchewan, Canada

John Sheridan
Second year Ph.D. Student in the
Department of Religious Studies

With Fellowships from Dwight and Hannalore Bozeman's and the M. Willard Lampe Scholarship fund, I was able to fund my ethnographic dissertation research on the Hutterites, an Anabaptist communal group in North America. There are roughly 50,000 Hutterites in the U.S. and Canada living in mainly agrarian colonies, which average 100 members per colony. They hold their property and finances in common, dress plainly, and have existed since their formation in Moravia in 1528.

This group is fascinating for many reasons; however, my research focuses specifically on the gender dynamics of Hutterites. This past summer, I set out to discover some of the ways Hutterite women make and are made by Hutterite worlds. During my field research, I traveled to seven Hutterite colonies where I made contacts, conducted interviews, and engaged in participant observations. For one of my interviews, I spoke with a woman whose great-grandmother's husband was imprisoned in Alcatraz during WWI for being a pacifist, a core Hutterite belief, and refusing to serve in the U.S. military. He was tortured and later died of pneumonia in prison. Her great-grandmother was pregnant at the time and lost her baby due to the trauma of losing her husband. It was both heartbreaking and inspiring to hear how this event shaped the lives of three generations of Hutterite women.

During my research trip, I made significant leaps forward in understanding values of Hutterite men and women and in developing my categories of analysis. There is more work to be done, and I will be continuing on with my field research. I am very grateful to Dwight and Hannalore Bozeman, the Lampe family, and the Department of Religious Studies for their significant contributions to the development of my research and my progression in the religious studies Ph.D. program.

Dwight and Hannelore Bozeman Gift Helps Graduate Students — August 2019

XX Prof. T. Dwight and Hannalore Bozeman 's generous gift to the department has provided summer funding for many of our graduate students, allowing them time to focus on their research. Below are summaries from students who received money and how it benefitted their program.

Lazarus French: The Bozeman Fellowship this past summer allowed time for me to focus on my graduate program of study and finalizing my committee, and for that I am quite thankful. I had more than two dozen meetings and informational interviews with professors, potential committee members, and community members regarding volunteerism, graduate studies, programs, fellowships and assistantships, mortuary science, and steps to becoming a funeral director. I volunteered at the University of Iowa Hospital Libraries this summer and completed HawkIRB (Institutional Review Board) Training. I also made connections with national and international associations and resources including the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) and the Death Care Academy of Ireland.

Jacob Havel: The funding provided through the Bozeman Fellowship helped provide the time, space, and resources to construct my dissertation prospectus. I was able to travel to New York City to meet the subjects of my study, the Five Percenters. Understanding the group in the context of Harlem is essential, and the opportunity to travel there in person will be invaluable going forward. The fellowship also gave me financial peace of mind in the summer as I was not working as a TA. It really helps to know that people are invested in the humanities.

Kaitlyn Lindgren-Hansen: The Dwight and Hannalore Bozeman Fellowship fostered my academic and professional development this summer. This fellowship gave me the time

to begin revisions on my paper “Tangled World(s): World Religion and World Literature,” which suggests that the 19th century intellectual streams that contributed to the concept of “worlded” disciplines were responsible for the development of both religion and literature as academic disciplines. I was also able to enroll in a course (GRAD 6300) dedicated to further refining this paper for submission to an academic journal this fall.

Beyond my academic writing, this fellowship also supported my professional development. I was able to spend time this summer stepping into my new role as the Graduate Student Coordinator for the Upper Midwest AAR. I also met with the student coordinators from each region to prepare for our meeting at the AAR in November. The support of the Bozeman fellowship allowed me not only to attend all these meetings, but also to read all of the documentation from previous years so that I am better prepared to fill the role.

Darcy Metcalfe: I am incredibly grateful for the Dwight and Hannalore Bozeman Fellowship. This fellowship gave me the opportunity to concentrate on academic pursuits related to my Ph.D. work in the Religious Studies Department. Currently I have one article being considered for publication by the *Religions Journal*. I also had one op-ed public engagement article published at the beginning of the summer. I continue to work on my dissertation prospectus and plan to have a solid draft of it completed by the first week of Fall classes. The fellowship has also given me the time I needed to find outside funding for work on my dissertation. Through application to different funding opportunities, I have been able to secure much of the funding I need to travel to Harvard University for 1-2 weeks of work in library archives related to work on my dissertation. All of these pursuits would not have been possible without this funding.

Bozeman (cont.)

Peter Miller: From August 17 to 24, I attended the XVIII International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford, England to present original research on Syriac education and book culture. With the assistance of the Bozeman Fellowship and department support, I was able to take time prior to the conference to augment my research at the Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum. This provided valuable insight both in the codex I was able to consult and in the material evidence preserved in the museum. Consulting Syrian depictions of monks on seals, pilgrimage tokens, and inscription bowls provided new avenues of research for my ongoing studies. The updated version of my paper “Jewish Wisdom, Pagan Authors, Christian Monasteries” will be submitted for publication in the collected conference volume in the coming months.

Troy Mills: Because of the Bozeman’s generous 2019 Religious Studies Summer Fellowship, I was able to make necessary strides in my dissertation by conducting essential research that required travel and archival work in Jamaica and the United States. I visited the Jamaica Archives and Records Department, as well as the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, Jamaica. These visits allowed me to gain valuable insights into the social and political environment from which the Rastafarian communities emerged. Additionally, I was able to visit the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. This location contained some of the most invaluable archival records on the musical career of Bob Marley. I also visited the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, where I was able to conduct some archival work on the life of Malcolm X. I would like to acknowledge that without the support of this fellowship, these additional research efforts would not be possible. This area of American Religious history is critical to our understanding of

modernity. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for Bozeman’s continued funding of religious studies scholarship.

Cuma Ozkan: Thanks to the generous funding by the Dwight and Hannelore Bozeman Fellowship I had more time to work on my dissertation along with other scholarly pursuits. For my dissertation, I was able to revise the third chapter, “Jin Tianzhu and the *Qingzhen Shiyi* (Dispelling Doubts about Islam),” as well as the fifth chapter, “Contesting Sinicization.” I have recently been exploring the history of Christianity in China and religion in Modern China, which overlap with my dissertation to some extent, and this summer I presented a paper at a conference on Chinese studies analyzing China’s Religious Affairs Regulation (revised August 2017 and implemented on February 2018). I also wrote an introductory chapter on Chinese religions for a textbook in Turkish which was published this month in Turkey. All of my academic activities this past summer either directly or indirectly helped me write my dissertation or sharpen my ideas in the dissertation. I am enormously grateful to the Bozemans for giving me this opportunity.

Pranav Prakash: The Dwight and Hannelore Bozeman Fellowship enabled me to continue writing my dissertation during the summer break in Iowa City. In fall 2018 and spring 2019, I was a visiting fellow at the *École Nationale des Chartes* in Paris. I delivered a series of lectures at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* and Sorbonne University where several scholars offered valuable feedback and critique on my appraisal of Ḥasan’s biography and literary oeuvre. In addition to writing dissertation, I participated in a series of workshops, which have substantially enhanced my academic research and professional skills. I presented my research at the Rare Book School of

Bozeman (cont.)

University of Virginia, attended a series of workshops on the material history of Islamic manuscripts at Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania and Free Library of Philadelphia, and participated in a ten-week long workshop at the University of Iowa titled *Transforming your Research into Teaching* (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/news/2019-08-22/cirtl-series-ties-together-teaching-and-research>). I also participated in a few workshops of the *Managing the Market: Professional Development Series* which were organized by our Graduate College at the beginning of the summer break. I am thankful to our department for granting me the Bozeman Fellowship and supporting my research and professional development during the summer break.

Jan Rippentrop: This summer, because of the freedom the Bozeman Fellowship gave me to not need other income, I have been able to make strong progress on my dissertation and professional portfolio. I have been able to do research in the three states where my primary informants for my dissertation live. I have additionally done research for my intro and my chapters on emotion, affect, and performance, with the intro complete and the other chapters partially written. In addition, I have been able to co-write a top-quality article with Dr. Diana Cates that will be published in a peer-reviewed journal, which helps me develop my professional presence in the field of religious ethics.

Dr. Kristy Nabhan-Warren named first V.O. & Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair of Catholic Studies

By Nic Arp



Dean Steve Goddard, Provost and Executive Vice President Montserrat Fuentes, Prof. Kristy Nabhan-Warren and Executive Associate Dean Raúl Curto (photo by Jill Tobin)

In an investiture ceremony in the Old Capitol Museum Senate Chamber on September 23, the University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences celebrated the appointment of Professor Kristy Nabhan-Warren to the V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair in Catholic Studies.

Nabhan-Warren is the inaugural holder of the chair, established by a gift from the V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Charitable Foundation of Davenport, Iowa, to support Catholic studies in the Department of Religious Studies. The Figges, both deceased, were prominent philanthropists in the community, and V. O. Figge was Chairman of Davenport Bank and Trust for more than 60 years before his retirement in 1991. The gift was made to the University of Iowa Foundation, now known as the UI Center for Advancement.

Dean Steve Goddard of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences said Nabhan-Warren's appointment by the University of Iowa is recognition of her excellence as a scholar and educator.

"Professor Nabhan-Warren is a leading voice in Catholic studies and an outstanding teacher," said Goddard. "Holding the Figge Chair will enhance her impact on her discipline—and on the students she teaches and mentors—and I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition."

Kristy Nabhan-Warren is Professor of Religious Studies with a joint appointment in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies and the inaugural V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair in Catholic Studies. She has presented numerous invited talks throughout the country and internationally, and is the author of *The Virgin of El Barrio: Marian Apparitions, Catholic Evangelizing, and Mexican American Activism* (New York University Press, 2005); *Cursillos in America: Catholics, Protestants and Fourth Day Spirituality* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); and *América Woman: The Virgin of Guadalupe, Latinas and Accompaniment* (Loyola Marymount University Press, March 2018). Her forthcoming book is titled *Cornbelt America: How Immigrants, Work, and Faith in the Rural Midwest are Remaking the United States* (to be published with University of North Carolina Press) and she is the creator and Series Editor of a new book series, *Where Religion Lives*, with the University of North Carolina Press. She earned her PhD from Indiana University in 2001, and joined the University of Iowa faculty in 2012.

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2019, **Dr. Robert Cargill** was promoted to Associate Professor of Classics and Religious Studies. He also published his third book, *Melchizedek, King of Sodom: How Scribes Invented the Biblical Priest-King*, with Oxford University Press. He is continuing work on his next book, *The Reception History of Melchizedek*, due out in 2021, which will also be published with OUP. In addition to his research and publication agenda, Prof. Cargill also taught his full complement of courses, as well as a number of overload courses including Biblical Hebrew and an online version of his Religions in a Global Context courses—courses that assist his undergrad and graduate students in their studies as well as augment total student enrollment hours for the department.

Robert gave an invited lecture at the University of Maryland entitled “The Coronation of the King: Jesus’ Not-So-Humble Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem” in April and delivered a colloquium presentation to the faculty and students of the UIowa Dept. of Religious Studies in September entitled “Melchizedek, King of Sodom?”. He will also be chairing to sessions on the archaeology of Jerusalem at the annual *Society of Biblical Literature* meetings in San Diego in November.

Dr. Cargill advanced his service in the public humanities by completing

his second year as Editor of the popular magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review*. He also served as a consultant and contributor to CNN’s documentary program, *Jesus: His Life*, in which he appeared regularly. He also gave several lectures to communities of faith both locally and nationally, including lectures on his book, *The Cities that Built the Bible*, to the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Iowa City in February and to the B’nai Israel Congregation of Rockville, Maryland as part of the BASONOVA (Biblical Archaeology Society of Northern Virginia) in February, as well as a Jerusalem Day lecture entitled “Why did Josephus Deliberately Misspell Shalem as Solyma in his Writings?” at the Agudas Achim congregation in Coralville in May.

Diana Fritz Cates gave a plenary address at the fall 2018 UI Global Health Studies Conference on the contributions of the study of religion to the study of global health. At the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, she joined with a colleague Emilie Townes to participate in a plenary conversation with poet Lawrence Joseph on the topic of ethics and aesthetics. She published two articles in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, including “The Relational Aspects of Intimacy and Alterity” and “You Deserve to Suffer for What You Did.” She is nearing the completion of her work as senior editor of

a special issue of the journal *Religions* on the chosen topic of “The Morality of the Desire for Payback.” In the area of teaching, she taught a new graduate seminar in spring 2019 on religion and emotion, and she is currently developing a new undergraduate course with her graduate student Jan Schnell on the topic of love, which will be launched in Spring 2020. Dr. Cates is mentoring three outstanding PhD students at this time, all of whom reached major milestones in their degree programs this spring. With regard to service, she chaired the department’s recent Departmental Review Committee and drafted the Self-Study with input from the faculty. She stepped down as Chair of the Advisory Board of the UI Center for Human Rights, but she continues to serve as a board member. She continued her work as a Trustee of Religious Ethics, Inc. and a frequent manuscript reviewer of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*.

Hyaeweol Choi was honored with the appointment as the Robert Staley Distinguished Visiting Professor in East Asian Studies, Arizona State University, April 15-20, 2019. During her one-week stay at ASU, she gave a public lecture and held numerous meetings with students, academics and administrators. She also had the honor of being the keynote speaker at the conference on the theme, “Emotions, Culture, and Subjectivity in Korea,”

held at George Washington University, 9-10 November, 2018. Her keynote address was titled “A Quiet Revolt: Gender, Conversion and Emotional Communities in Modern Korea.” She has received a book contract with Cambridge University Press for her book manuscript, *Gender and Protestant Modernity in Korea: Global Networks under Japanese Rule*, and her latest article, “Transpacific Aspiration toward Modern Domesticity in Japanese Colonial-era Korea,” appeared in the *Journal of Women’s History* 30, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 60-83. She has also established the Korean Studies Research Network (KoRN) to bring together scholars and graduate students whose research focuses on Korea-related topics.

Paul Dilley completed two years as Director of Graduate Studies in Spring 2019 to pursue research on his second book project as a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study, School of Historical Studies, as an ACLS Burkhardt Fellow. He is exploring a group of Late Antique Lives of Saints, which he demonstrates are reformulations of pagan popular theater (street mime), and are evidence for a positive view of humor within Christian Spiritual Direction that embraces its potential to regulate thoughts and emotions. Work on this project began with a trip to Paris in March 2019, supported by the Loeb Foundation, to work on an ancient manuscript of one of the Lives. Dilley also continued his studies

on Manichaeism, the most formidable of early Christian heresies, arranging for multispectral and XRF imaging of key ancient manuscripts at the Chester Beatty Library there in April 2019, and co-curating a special exhibit there, “The Mystery of Mani,” which also offers a virtual tour for those unable to see it “live”: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=QHvtLrtp1gV>

Robert Gerstmyer

continued to focus on developing course offerings on contemporary fantasy and science fiction. During the Spring Semester he taught a new course entitled “Almost Human: Identity in Science Fiction.” The course explored issues of human identity by examining how non-biologicals are depicted in recent science fiction. The course includes a substantial movie component, viewing *Blade Runner*, *Blade Runner 2049*, *Ex Machina*, and *Her*. The literature and film selections portrayed a range of human and non-human interactions, ranging from affection and love to deception and violent confrontations. A new course offering on Black Science Fiction is being developed, using science fiction and speculative fiction to explore racial identity. This literature untethers our discussion on race from our present environmental constraints, offering the possibility of new perspectives from unexpected vantage points.

Raymond Mentzer

continues to teach an entry-level sequence of courses on medieval and

modern religious culture as well as more advanced courses on the history of religious transformation and confessional violence in early modern Europe. Mentzer’s ongoing research program includes publication of a brief article on “Assuring Civil Rights for Religious Minorities in Sixteenth-Century France,” in *A Sourcebook for Early Modern European History. Life, Death and Everything in Between*. Edited by Ute Lotz-Heumann (New York, 2019). Eight additional articles and book chapters are in various stages of production. Recent book reviews appeared in *Reading Religion*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, and the *Sixteenth Century Journal*. He chaired a session on “Histoire religieuse de la période communiste,” at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the History and Study of Christianity held at Lyon, France in mid-June. In October, he addressed the issue of “Recent Scholarship on Protestantism and Pilgrimage” at a conference on Pilgrimage Studies in the 21st Century, meeting at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 23-24. This past August, he lectured on “Understandings of Friendship: Luther and Calvin” at First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Rapids. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, *French Historical Studies*, the *Revue d’histoire du protestantisme* (Paris) and *Cristianesimo nella Storia* (Bologna). In addition, he serves on the editorial committees of several monograph series, including the History of

Christian Ecumenism (Bologna), and the Archives des Églises réformées de France (Paris). He is the American representative to the International Commission for the History and Study of Christianity, a subunit of the International Congress of Historical Sciences (a UNESCO organization).

On July 1, 2019, **Kristy Nabhan-Warren** was awarded the inaugural V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair in Catholic Studies. Kristy had a busy year presenting her work, and this Fall she is presenting her new research as an invited speaker at Indiana University, Michigan State University, Saint Louis University, and Princeton University. Her current book project is titled, *Cornbelt America: How Immigrants, Work, and Faith in the Rural Midwest are Remaking the United States* (to be published with University of North Carolina Press, 2021). Kristy is the creator and Series Editor of a new book series, *Where Religion Lives*, with the University of North Carolina Press. The web site was just launched this past summer and the series will publish two cutting edge books in ethnographic methods and the study of religion in the Americas starting in Spring 2021. Check it out!: <http://wrlbookseries.com/> Recently published work includes: Co-editing with James Bielo, Special Issue of the international journal *Exchange: Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context*. Special issue focus: *The Anthropology of*

Catholicism. Co-authored Introduction, “Imagining Catholicism and Catholics: Critical Reflections on *The Anthropology of Catholicism*” (September 2019), and Spring 2019, “Why Studying Religion, Migration and Work in the Heartland Matters.” *As Far as the Eye Can See*, The University of Iowa Press. Kristy continues to work as Editor on the forthcoming *Handbook on Latina/x/o Christianities in the United States* for Oxford University Press. For this project she is overseeing 24 authors from multiple humanities and social scientific-related fields and is writing the Handbook introduction.

Kristy continues to be active in the field of religious studies in leadership positions with the American Academy of Religion. She serves as Co-Chair of the Religion and Social Science unit and is the Vice Chair of the Council of Graduate Studies in Religion (CGSR). She is invited to review multiple articles and manuscripts with top peer-reviewed journals and university presses each year. She tries to live a balanced life with her husband Steve and children and enjoys running with her dog Rosie, watching Netflix series, and visiting Iowa City’s many attractions.

Morten Schlütter is now in his second year as Chair of the department, and is working hard on keeping up with the many recent changes in the responsibilities of department chairs in the College of Liberal Arts

and Sciences. He is also continuing his research and teaching on Buddhism and Chinese religions. In the summer 2019, he gave a keynote address on “The Life of Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157) and his Relations with Song-dynasty Officials” to the Hangzhou Buddhist Culture conference, held in Hangzhou, China. He also travelled for three weeks in Japan visiting a large number of temples of different kinds to gather materials for his classes.

Frederick Smith, Professor of Sanskrit & Classical Indian Religions, has had a very active year. Much of his time (too much of it in fact) has been consumed in department chair duties in the Department of Asian & Slavic Languages & Literature (ASLL). The new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences is attempting to change everything at once, which requires superhuman effort on the part of all department chairs. In addition to this, he has continued to teach courses in both Religious Studies and ASLL, including Religion and Healing in Fall 2018, a large course based in the Dept. of History, Civilizations of Asia: South Asia, in Spring 2019, and his regular Sanskrit language courses. He has published several papers in high level journals in the last year, including one on pilgrimage to the headwaters of the Ganges river, and on the “inner organ” of unified emotional and mental perception in Indian philosophical literature. He has also [published several book

reviews and is continuing on his book projects on the Sanskrit epic Mahābhārata (translation of the last five “books” or parvans of it) and on a Mahābhārata in a local Himalayan language, Garhwali, on which he is collaborating with scholars from India and Germany. He has presented a number of papers internationally in the last year, including two in Heidelberg, two in Israel, and two in India. Of particular interest was his pleasant experience teaching a 5 week intensive graduate seminar on Indian ritual at Tel Aviv University (TAU) in May-June 2019. In addition, he traveled around Israel for a couple of weeks and sat in on advanced classes and seminars at both TAU and Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He also presented papers at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and at the American Academy of Religion.

Jordan Smith, Lecturer in Biblical Studies, is working hard in his first year as the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the department. He is focused on bringing greater visibility to the department and facilitating a better understanding of what we are (and are not) both on campus and in the local community. Jordan spent much of the summer working on new brochures and program booklets for the department, as well as new courses that touch on the connections between religion and society in our modern world. He greatly appreciates the hard work of

our dedicated undergraduate and graduate students, particularly those in our TAK honors society, who give of their time to help put on events to increase the department’s visibility.

Ahmed Souaiaia Continues to work on the ten-year study of the Arab Spring and armed conflicts in Southwest Asia and North Africa. He collected and indexed over 50,000 digital documents including images, texts, maps, and videos. He continues to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the first Open Access peer-reviewed Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Multidisciplinary Studies. Prof. Souaiaia applied for General Education, -Diversity & Inclusion designation for his new course, *Economics and Islam* and revised his course, *Women in Islam and the Middle East* for online delivery. He is advising five SJD and Ph.D. students, who are conducting professional and graduate research in the area of Islamic law, Islamic political thought, Islamic legal traditions and texts, and human rights.

Jenna Supp-Montgomerie is happy to share that her book on the influence of American religion at the origins of network culture is now under contract with NYU Press. She is making the final revisions and expects the book to be in print in spring 2021. She has enjoyed many opportunities this year to present on this work and other research on religion and media, including contributing to

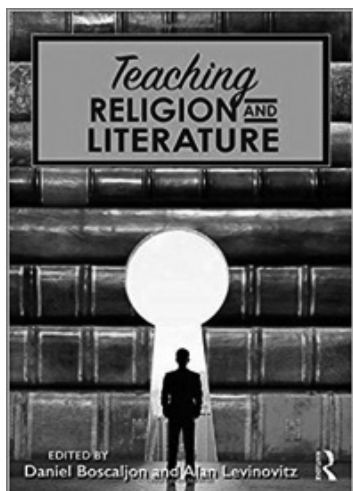
a new exhibit on religion and media at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. This summer, she also shared this work at a meeting with other scholars of religion and media in Fez, Morocco, where she had the opportunity to attend the Festival of Sacred Music. She continues to host a monthly reading group in critical theory, to develop the History of Media Laboratory, and to co-edit the Media, Religion, and Culture book series at Routledge. This fall, she is especially glad to welcome her second child.

Richard Brent Turner’s book project, *African-American Islam and Jazz: Religion, Music, and Black Internationalism* was approved for publication and a contract by New York University Press in 2019. He taught a new graduate seminar, “Advanced Readings in African American Culture” for the African American Studies graduate-certificate program in spring 2019. Professor Turner chaired a panel on “The Body as Signifier” at the KOSANBA international colloquium at Duke University in September 2019.

Alumni Books

Teaching Religion and Literature 1st Edition

By Daniel Boscaljon (Editor) and Alan Levinovitz (Editor)

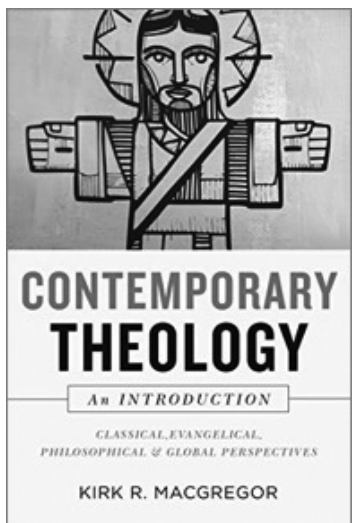


Teaching Religion and Literature provides a practical engagement with the pedagogical possibilities of teaching religion courses using literature, teaching literature classes using religion, and teaching Religion and Literature as a discipline. Featuring chapters written by award winning teachers from a variety of institutional settings, the book gives anyone interested in providing interdisciplinary education a set of questions, resources, and tools that will deepen a classroom's engagement with the field. Chapters are grounded in specific texts and religious questions but are oriented toward engaging general pedagogical issues that allow each chapter to improve any instructor's engagement with interdisciplinary education. The book offers resources to instructors new to teaching religion and literature and provides definitions of what the field means from senior scholars in the field. Featuring a wide range of religious traditions,

genres, and approaches, the book also provides an innovative glimpse at emerging possibilities for the sub-discipline.

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

by Kirk R. MacGregor



Accessible and comprehensive, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction* by professor and author Kirk R. MacGregor provides a chronological survey of the major thinkers and schools of thought in modern theology in a manner that is both approachable and intriguing.

Unique among introductions to contemporary theology, MacGregor includes:

- Evangelical perspectives alongside mainline and liberal developments
- The influence of philosophy and the recent Christian philosophical renaissance on theology
- Global contributions
- Recent developments in exegetical theology
- The implications of theological shifts on ethics and church life

Contemporary Theology: An Introduction is noteworthy for making complex thought understandable and for tracing the landscape of modern theology in a well-organized and easy-to-follow manner.

Undergraduate Reflections on Religious Studies Courses



Hannah B. Haack
4th year, International Relations
and History major

Religion is such a large part of our everyday life, whether we acknowledge it or not. Taking courses in the Religions Department has not only enriched my liberal arts education, it provides an explanation for how our world and the people on it interact in various ways. With this context and knowledge in my life, I am better able to understand not only the history of our world, but how this history directly affects problems our society faces today. Because of my experience with classes in the Religions Department, I feel that I am a more empathetic and informed citizen who actively tries to break down the barriers of prejudice and ignorance when I experience it in the real world.



Kaley Iddings
Second Year Speech and
Hearing Science major

Through my [Happiness in a Difficult World] class, I have recognized that every aspect of religion is based on individual interpretation of what is sacred. I have recognized that religion is not solely based on church and familial pillars, but on every meaningful interaction with others and even the earth. My religious identity is unlike anyone else's because no one has lived my same life and interpreted the events of it in the same way which in turn is true for every other person out there. I have loved getting a glimpse into the religious identity of my peers and the people we have studied, and becoming alert to the prospect of discovering it in others as well. I believe that knowledge is power and by hearing the wisdom of others, I am able to propel myself to greater understanding while constantly finding more questions to be answered. I am continuously growing in my religiosity and this course has provided me the environment to analyze my beliefs differently and opened the doors to the information I didn't know I was missing out on.

Undergraduate Reflections (*cont.*)



Gretchen Lenth
First Year Journalism &
Mass Communication major

As a journalism major, it is integral to my work that I understand the cultures around me. Before taking Living Religions of the East, I didn't see religion as a significant aspect of culture. But as I've come to discover, the two are linked so closely together that they are nearly indistinguishable.

Religion is about so much more than the god or gods a group of people place their faith in. It is what ties communities together, what determines interpersonal relationships, dietary habits—even law and commerce. Through the guidance of my professor and TA, I've come to recognize religion in all these facets. I walked in on my first day of class wondering what religion was. But, as I'm learning more and more, I'm now coming out of class with a different question on my mind: what isn't religion?

This line of questioning has given me a deeper appreciation for cultures that are not my own. Hopefully, this knowledge will allow me to better communicate with a greater diversity of people. Regardless of major, I think anyone can come out of a religion class with something valuable.



Guilherme L. N. Pinho
First Year Political Science
and History major

Studying religions is more than just purely academic. I never planned on studying religion, not having a firm belief in any myself, but I have found the purpose of it stretches past a career. Studying religions has allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of foreign customs and traditions. Learning the fundamentals of other cultures has allowed me to better sympathize with others in a way that not even traveling can. Studying religion has proven beneficial in my main course of studies in political sciences, by allowing me to take an entirely new perspective. I believe this skill is beneficial for every field of study, as they all draw from different cultures and lead to interacting with them. Business, medicine, engineering, and many others can benefit from gaining a new way of looking at the world and those they will interact with.



In the fall of 2018 the department launched a fun event titled, “Finals Survival Week.” Kudos to Prof. Jordan Smith for suggesting this great idea to the department! The purpose of this event was to give the students both a quiet study-space and a fun retreat-like atmosphere during finals week. Since the department is on the third floor, we typically do not see a lot of traffic from the students, so events such as this help to introduce students to our welcoming atmosphere, encourage them to take our courses, and perhaps declare a major or minor in Religious Studies.

We promote this event on our website and Facebook page, in addition to promoting in our classes, the Cambus, and big screens in the dorms and IMU.

The main part of the festivities are held in the department foyer since we have comfortable chairs and tables to accommodate the students, and a variety of fun and relaxing activities including coloring and stress building blocks (resembling Legos) with our department name. The highlight for most, however, is the complimentary chair massages by “Trika Yoga”.

Of course, no event is complete without food! We make sure to include healthy snacks of fresh fruit, granola bars, an assortment of soup and crackers, and fresh-popped popcorn, along with the donuts, bagels and of course - chocolate!

This event is a fantastic addition to our student outreach activities, and we’ve received positive feedback (see below). We are looking forward to this year’s “Finals Survival Week” just around the corner!

“My name is Sarah, and I wanted to personally thank you and any others in the Department of Religious Studies for putting together the finals survival week and for being so welcoming and hospitable! I spent much of my studying time on Tuesday and Wednesday on the third floor of Gilmore Hall and was so happy to have such a quiet, festive place to work. I was especially grateful for the delicious cookies and coffee, and for the best broccoli cheddar soup I have ever consumed (I’m not lying!). Thanks again and have a lovely holiday season:” - Sarah Hager

How You Can Help

The Department of Religious Studies is committed to producing top notch scholarship and offering high quality education for our undergraduate and graduate students.

Giving the faculty opportunity to conduct and present their research and bringing in top scholars in the field for colloquia and lectures are important ways of reaching this goal. We rely on support from generous donors to continue to provide these enriching opportunities.

To support faculty, staff and students in the Department of Religious Studies, please visit givetoioowa.org/2020RE99 or contact Adam Blind at the UI Center for Advancement (adam.blind@foriowa.org).



The University will be replacing our Student Computer Lab, currently a meeting and workspace for our students, with an air conditioning unit designed to cool the 2nd floor offices. In exchange, the University will create a study commons area in our lobby. The department has been reaching out to our undergraduate students in various ways through the years. We recently began offering coffee and tea on Monday/Wednesday mornings and fresh-popped popcorn on Thursday afternoons to encourage students to our quiet study space. After the beautiful study commons is complete we hope even more students will venture up to the 3rd floor.

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of Religious Studies
314 Gilmore Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242-1376

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR:



Morten Schlütter

I have now completed my first year as Chair (DEO) of the Department of Religious Studies, and it has been a very busy and exciting year for the department. Several of our faculty hit some important milestones: Bob Cargill was awarded tenure, and his book *Melchizedek, King of Sodom: How Scribes Invented the Biblical Priest-King* is already out; Kristy Nabhan-Warren was invested as the full V. O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair in Catholic Studies; and Paul Dilley received a prestigious full-year Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. In the fall of 2018, faculty in the department all contributed to the writing of a detailed self-study for a departmental review that took place in the spring (every academic department is reviewed every seven years); this provided us the opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments and areas for growth. The self-study is available on our website, and I feel it is impressive to see how much our faculty is doing in many different areas of research, teaching, and service.

Our graduate students had another successful year. They are an extraordinary group of talented students who work very hard and do innovative work in their own areas of research, but who also are crucial to our mission in undergraduate education as teaching assistants in our courses. Our graduate students enhance the life of the department and are a constant source of inspiration to the faculty.

We also have great undergraduate students in our classes, and in our major and minors. An analysis of our students shows that a large percentage of them come from outside the Humanities, from fields such as biology or business and many others. It is our hope that more and more undergraduate students at the University of Iowa will come to realize the value of taking courses in Religious Studies, and we are engaged in various initiatives aimed at promoting the department lead by our colleague Jordan Smith, who is the energetic new Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Finally, the Department of Religious Studies is extremely fortunate to have many dedicated alumni and other supporters of the department. Through donations to the department we have been able to help our students in numerous ways and enhance the scholarship and teaching of the faculty.

The fall 2019 semester has been a challenging one for departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The college's budget model has been changed and department chairs are finding themselves with new and unfamiliar responsibilities. As Chair of Religious Studies I am especially lucky to have a lot of great help and support from other faculty members in the department, and our wonderful staff Maureen and Robin. All departments at the UI have also been charged with producing their own five-year strategic plans within a short window of time. This requires a significant effort by our department and we are fortunate in having our colleague Ahmed Souaiaia leading the compilation of the plan. The plan will help us formulate a clearer vision of the future of our department, and we will no doubt emerge stronger in the end. I feel strongly we can all be both proud of our department and optimistic about its future.

Thank you to all alumni and friends of the department for your continuing support; your gifts have been a constant source of encouragement and have enabled us to strengthen the department in many ways.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Morten Schlütter".

Morten Schlütter
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Perspectives On Religion is published by The University of Iowa Department of Religious Studies. Publication of this newsletter was made possible by support from the M. Willard Lampe Fund and the Alice Marguerite Blough Development Fund.

Morten Schlütter
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Editor