

PERSPECTIVES *On Religion*

Fall 2023 • Volume 30

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PAUL DILLEY RECEIVES NEH FELLOWSHIP

Paul Dilley, associate professor of ancient Mediterranean religions at the University of Iowa, and the University of Iowa Erling B. "Jack" Holtzmark Associate Professor in the Classics was named a 2023 National Endowment for the Humanities fellow.

Dilley's NEH Grant is specifically a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant titled "Communicating Revealed Texts: Best-Practices for Born-Digital Editions Using Enhanced Imaging." He is the PI, and will be working with co-PIs James Brusuelas and Brent Seales of the University of Kentucky, as well as a group of 12 other scholars, to produce a white paper describing the desired aspects of making editions of ancient texts that have been damaged, and are only visible with advanced imaging processes, such as multispectral or X-ray tomographic imaging.

The foundation awards this prestigious recognition to scholars who have shown tremendous dedication to their research and the field of humanities, and whose projects embody terrific research and rigorous analysis.

Dilley, whose College of Liberal Arts and Sciences appointments are in Religious Studies and Classics departments, says he is excited to receive this award and will use the fellowship to determine a way to publish damaged ancient manuscripts that have been photographed with advanced technology. "There's a lot of great interdisciplinary work going on in the humanities right now, and the support offered by the National Endowment for the Humanities has a tremendous positive impact on humanities research nationwide," Dilley explains.



Any talk or attention aimed towards the humanities is good, Dilley adds, because it shows current students and future students all of the work that is being done in the field.

"It also helps communicate to undergraduates all of the innovative approaches that are being considered in humanities departments," Dilley says. Dilley will use the research he conducts to improve his teaching and is eager to share and develop the great work being done in his field. Here is the link to the original story by Emily Delgado <https://clas.uiowa.edu/news/clas-faculty-member-receives-neh-fellowship-his-dedication-research-ancient-manuscripts>

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Department of Religious Studies has undertaken a number of new outreach initiatives that have greatly enhanced some very popular student events.

Religious Studies Social:

We have initiated a Religious Studies Social the first Wednesday of every month. We have pizza along with a different option each month during the noontime for undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. Our majors, minors, current students and those who have taken a number of courses in the past are specifically invited and encouraged to bring a friend! The second social coincided with Homecoming week so the third floor of Gilmore Hall was heavily decorated. All of the socials have been very well attended and spark many invigorating conversations!



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT *(cont.)*

Dungeons and Dragons Game Night:

Building on our highly successful Dungeons and Dragons night last year, this year's event was even better! On Wednesday September 27 we had six tables for students to complete a one-shot adventure.



Cemetery Walk:

Prof. Brandon Dean hosted a cemetery walk at Oakland Cemetery (home of the Black Angel) on Saturday October 28. Dean led about 50 attendees around the cemetery discussing the porous boundaries between the living and the dead.



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT (cont.)

Hot Cocoa on the Walkway:

David Cunning chose a couple of days in October to greet students on the T. Anne Cleary Walkway with hot cocoa and a chance to spin for other goodies! We shared information on the department major and spring classes as well.



Pre-Finals Survival Week:

Once again we will be hosting a pre-finals survival week at the end of the semester, on December 4-8. We will invite all students, undergrads and grads.

***Pre-Finals
Survival Week***

Come chill with us to prepare for finals!

DECEMBER 4TH - 7TH

free food & drinks, chair massage,
therapy dog(s), holiday music & decor,
cookie decorating, comfy study area, and more!

Full Info: bit.ly/31neJii
Department of Religious Studies

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS



Kaity Lindgren-Hansen received a CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship for Summer and Fall 2023.

“With the support of a CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship, I finished a full draft of my dissertation, *A Medium’s Media: Spiritualism and Women’s Writing in the Nineteenth-Century U.S.*, this summer. I also had the opportunity to visit the New York Public Library in July in order to access the Elizabeth Oakes Prince Smith papers which I will use to refine the third chapter of my project.

Now that I have a complete draft of my project to work with, I am spending the rest of my fellowship semester fine tuning my chapters so that I can defend my dissertation in the Spring 2024 semester. I am also busy preparing presentations for three academic conferences, submitting job applications, and revising one of my dissertation chapters into an article for the *Body and Religion* journal.

I am thankful for this protected time to dig into the final stages of my dissertation!”



John Sheridan received a 2023 Graduate College Summer Fellowship and a Marcus Bach Fellowships for the Fall 2023 semester.

“I conduct ethnographic research on Hutterite religion and society. The Hutterites are an Anabaptist communal group in North America. With the Graduate College Summer Fellowship I spent the summer organizing and processing ethnographic data that I collected over the course of five years at the University of Iowa. I was able to analyze thousands of photos for my dissertation chapters; transcribe hundreds of interviews; organize, copy, and expand my handwritten fieldnotes; communicate with interlocutors; and organize my data into fluent chapters with carefully crafted arguments.”

With the Marcus Bach Dissertation Fellowship I am completing the first three chapters of my dissertation, titled: “Hutterite Religion, Emotion, and Matter: How Hutterites “Dress” and are “Dressed” By Their World.” My dissertation, based on ten years of ethnographic fieldnotes and immersive visits to forty Hutterite colonies in the U.S. and Canada, argues that Hutterites are much more divided and diversified than previous scholarship has depicted. I will demonstrate that Hutterite religion is shaped by rural blue-collar values and practices as much as “traditional” Anabaptism; further, my analysis of Hutterite religion is important for understanding broader sociopolitical and economic divisions in the U.S. and Canada as well as unpacking socioreligious processes that construct and maintain rural-urban divides.”

The department is pleased to announce that for the Spring 2024 semester Kefas Lamak received a Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Fellowship; and John Sheridan received a Ballard and Seashore Dissertation Fellowship.

Publications & Presentations: Faculty

Diana Cates

Publications:

“How the Law of Love could Govern our Hatreds,” *Renovatio* 7.1 (Spring 2023)

“The Value of Religious Ethics” (Introduction to Special Issue). *Journal of Religious Ethics* 51.1: 7-10

“Thomas Aquinas’s Conception of Misericordia.” In *Barmherzigkeit: Das Mitgefühl in Brennpunkt von Ethik und Religion*. Roderick Barth, Ute Iva Eisen, and Martin Fritz, eds. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 191-225

Presentations:

“Happiness in a Difficult World.” Keynote Address for One Human Family QCA. Davenport, Iowa 2023

Hyaeweol Choi

Publications:

“Zen Buddhist Nuns Go Global: Temple Food in South Korea,” *Food, Culture & Society* 26, no. 3 (2023): 709-724. DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2022.2047567 (published online: 08 Mar 2022)

Presentations:

Closing Remarks, “Mainstreaming the Marginal,” at the Association for Asian Studies Symposium, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea, June 21-22, 2023

“Transpacific History and Culture,” Stanford University, April 28, 2023

“Home Meals in Global Korea: Gendered Labor in the Age of Neoliberalism,” Yale University, February 28, 2023

Paul Dilley

Publications:

(With Jason BeDuhn and Iain Gardner), *The Medinet Madi Library of Manichaean Codices at 90: Papers from the Symposium at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, 18-19 October 2019* (Brill, 2023)

Presentations:

Invited Lecture: “The Medinet Madi Library of Manichaean Codices: New Sources for the Global History of Religions,” Penn State University (March 2023)

Conference Presentation: Ninth Biennial Conference of the Association for Persianate Societies, Yerevan, Armenia, “Mani and Cultural Interaction at the Sasanian Court” (June 2023)

Kristy Nabhan-Warren

Publications:

“What the Pope’s Visit to Mongolia Says About His Priorities and How He is Changing the Catholic Church”, <https://theconversation.com/what-the-popes-visit-to-mongolia-says-about-his-priorities-and-how-he-is-changing-the-catholic-church-210447>

Media:

“The seen and unseen: Belief in Jinns, Marian apparitions and Japanese yokai”, <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/godforbid/god-forbid-jinns-genies-marian-apparitions-and-japanese-yokai/102949958>

Live interview on Aljazeera English about the Pope’s visit to Mongolia: <https://mediaview.aljazeera.com/video/uNxrtOsAYK>

Recent Presentations:

September 10. *Meatpacking America* book talk for their Adult Forum at Christ Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids

November 1-3. University of Illinois. The Thulin Lecture, and class visits, Celebrating the Religious Studies Department’s 50th anniversary

November 28-30. The Wilmur Endowed Lecture in Catholic Studies. University of Pittsburgh

Publications & Presentations: Faculty (cont.)

Morten Schlütter

Publications:

“Pojo Chinul 普照知訥 (1158-1210), the *Fabaoji tanjing* 法寶記壇經, and the *Platform Sūtra* in Korea.” In Jinhua Chen, ed., *Transmission of Buddhism in Asia and Beyond: Essays in Memory of Antonino Forte (1940–2006)*, World Scholastic, 2022, pp. 63-110

“The *Platform Sūtra* and the Evolution of Kōan Dialogues in Chinese Zen Buddhism.” In Charles Prebish, ed., *The Theory and Practice of Zen Buddhism*, Springer, pp. 65-90

Presentations:

“Meditation in Chinese Chan Buddhism Reassessed,” Annual Conference, Association for Asian Studies, Boston, MA, March 16-20, 2023

Zen Reading Group 9th Annual Meeting, respondent, Annual Conference, American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO, November, 19-22, 2022

“The Silent Illumination versus Kanhua Meditation ‘Debate’ Revisited.” How Zen Became Chan: Pre-modern and Modern Representations of a Transnational East Asian Buddhist Tradition. Glorisun Global Network for Buddhist Studies, with the assistance of the FROGBEAR Project based at the University of British Columbia, and Yale University, July 29–31, 2022

“The Evolution of Meditation in the *Platform Sūtras*.” Conference on Ritual and Contemplative Practices in Chinese Religions (500 to 1500 CE), Elling O. Eide Center Research Library and Preserve, and the University of Florida, Jan 27-30, 2022

Jenna Supp-Montgomerie

Publications:

“Divine Fragmentation.” (*Marginalia*, L.A. Review of Books). 2022, <https://themarginaliareview.com/divine-fragmentation/>

Partial View” – Dramaturg. Stephanie Miracle’s Partial View is a live micro-choreography for the camera. Drawing from New Materialism studies and film theory, this performance piece crafts a live projected short film with objects, body parts, and camera actions with a percussive sound score by Simon Camatta. Dramaturg: Jenna Supp-Montgomerie Open Air Media Festival held at PS1 in Iowa City, IA. Sponsored by Iowa Arts Council, City of Iowa City Public Art Program, and Veridian Credit Union.; June 3, 2023

Presentations:

National - Invited Presentation: Seminar in American Religions, New Frontier, Old Utopia, Princeton University Philosophy and Religious Studies Student Group, “What is a Network?”, Ball State University 2022

International - Invited Presentation: Ph.D. Pro-Seminar, The Politics of Failure, Concordia University 2022

Publications Presentations, and Grants: Graduate Students

Kefas Lamak

Publications:

Article: "Religious Appropriation of the Slave Trade: Conversion in Christianity and Islam at the Dawn of the Trans-Atlantic and Sub-Saharan Slavery," *Journal of Black Religious Thoughts*, pp. 247-263 online link: [Religious Appropriation of the Slave Trade](#)

Book Reviews:

Baranzan's People: An Ethnohistory of the Bajju of the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Dallas: SIL International, 2019. *Journal of the Anthropology Society of Oxford* November, 2023. 9-11

Rage and Carnage in the name of God: Religious Violence in Nigeria by Alao Abiodun. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, July, 2023. Pages 1-3

Nigerian Pentecostalism and Development: Spirit, Power, and Transformation by Richard Burgess. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. *Journal of Religious History*, May, 2020. Pages 1-3

Ecumenical Encounters with Desmond Mpilo Tutu: Vision for Justice, Dignity, and Peace by Sarojini Nadar, Tinyiko Maluleke, Dietrich Wenter, Vicnetia Kgabe, Rudolf Hinz. Oxford: Regnum Books, 2021. *Journal of Anglican and Episcopal History*, 92(3), 2023 479-480

A History of Nigeria, by Toyin Falola and Mathew Heaton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. *African Historical Review*, Routledge: Taylor and Francis, April 2023, 95-97

Emirs in London: Subaltern Travel and Nigeria's Modernity by Moses E. Ochonou. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston University

Presentations:

African Studies Association, San Francisco, November 2023: Title presentation, "Voices and Actors from the Margin: Women and Women Evangelists in the African American Protestant Christianity of the 1700s"

Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa, Washington D.C, November 2023. Title of Presentation, "History from the Margin: Indigenous African Women as Missionaries, Preachers, Evangelists, and Receivers of Christianity in the Interactions of Niger Missions in the Middle Belt States of Nigeria from 1860-1930"

Grants:

Association of the Study of the Middle East and African (ASMEA) Travel Grant 2023

Historical Society of the Episcopal Church (HSEC) Grant 2023

Student Impact Grant for Spring 2023, University of Iowa. 2023

Hasan Degerli

Presentations:

"From Great Persecution to Great Empire: The Role of Martyrs in the Great Transition" for the Societies in Crisis: Reactions, Resilience, and Resolutions. By The History, Classics, and Religion Graduate Students' Association (HCRGSA) at Alberta University, Canada; March 4 2023

"Religion in Life, Religion in Text: The Early Christian Case" at the Midwest American Academy of Religion at Missouri State University, Springfield, MO, USA, March 25, 2023

"Martyrdom in Early Christianity and Soldier Martyrs" at the The Turkish Association for the History of Religions, at Ankara, Turkey, September 29, 2023

"Military Martyrs In Early Christian Discourse" at the Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, TX, USA, November 18, 2023

Publications Presentations, and Grants: Graduate Students (*cont.*)

Allison Isidore

Presentations:

“Catholics for Social Change Before, During, and After “Bloody Sunday” American Catholic Historical Association, January 6, 2024

“Historical Sites and Memory: How Physical Sites Impact Scholarship,” North American Association for the Study of Religion/American Academy of Religion, November 17, 2023

Kaity Lindgren Hansen

Presentations:

“Gothic Now: Updates, Revisions, Adaptations, and Mash-Ups,” Modern Language Association, January 5, 2024

“Sensing Utopia: The Sensorium in Nineteenth-Century Spiritualist Fiction,” American Academy of Religion, November 19, 2023

Publications :

Review of *The Handbook of Religion and Communication*. Edited by Yoel Cohen and Paul A. Soukup. Oxford: Wiley and Sons, 2023 (Forthcoming in *Material Religion*)

“Old Time Religious Revivalism, Technology, and Media.” In *The Routledge History of Religion and Politics in the United States*. Edited by Cara Burnidge and Lauren F. Turek. (Forthcoming)

John Sheridan

Presentations:

January 2024: “Hutterite Religion, Emotion, and Matter: How Hutterites ‘Dress’ and are ‘Dressed’ by Their World,” Communal Studies Association Annual Conference, New Harmony, IN

March 2023: “The Identity Crisis of Hutterites in North America,” HCRGSA Conference, University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada

Grants:

October 2023: Ballard & Seashore Dissertation Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The University of Iowa

June 2023: Travel Grant, Communal Studies Association, Communal Studies Association Annual Conference

April 2023: President and Mrs. Eugene Gilmore Scholarship, Department of Religious Studies, The University of Iowa

March 2023:

Finalist for Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship in Religion and Ethics (from pool of 500 applicants), Institute for Citizens and Scholars

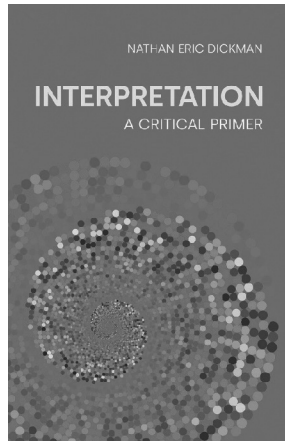
Graduate College Summer Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The University of Iowa

Travel Grant, Graduate Student Senate, The University of Iowa

Travel Grant, HCRGSA Conference, University of Alberta

August 2023: Marcus Bach Dissertation Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The University of Iowa

Nathan Eric Dickman (PhD 2009) Completes “Philosophical Trilogy”



Interpretation A Critical Primer

Nathan Eric Dickman

While many people engage in interpretation, it is not clear what interpretation is. This critical primer examines the nature of interpretation, strategies within interpretation, and negotiations about the adequacy of an interpretation, with special attention paid to possible roles hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation) plays in the academic study of religions.

This book addresses a number of fundamental questions posed throughout the history of hermeneutics:

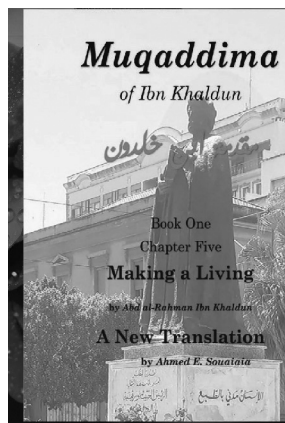
- What is an “interpretation”?
- What or who determines the meaning of a text?
- What helps in navigating competitions or conflicts of interpretation?
- What is the place of interpretation in the academy, relative to explanatory sciences and productive arts?

Many books have focused on historical developments of hermeneutics, on key modern hermeneutic philosophers, or on specific sacred texts such as in biblical or Quranic hermeneutics. The unique approach taken to interpretation here is based on the fundamental axiom of philosophical hermeneutics—the hermeneutic priority of questioning. Through this, the author makes a case for the critical value of interpretation.

Each chapter of this book refines a conceptual element that combines with others into a theory of interpretation useful for the classroom and in scholarship on hermeneutics.

The first two books in the series are *Using Questions to Think*, and *Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Priority of Questions in Religions*. An article from University of the Ozarks, where Dickman is an Associate Professor of Philosophy, discusses all three books in the trilogy and more: <https://ozarks.edu/news/dickman-completes-philosophical-trilogy/?fbclid=IwAR1DyEzTLkKddoiVbGkOKtnVsZLeJ1kpqtcwb7dCZ0L7V6XjrgeP9F7k1U4>

Ahmed Souaiaia Completes Important Side-By-Side Translation



al-Muqaddima: al-Ma`ash—English and Arabic Texts (Muqaddima of Ibn Khaldun)

Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (Author), Ahmed E Souaiaia (Translator, Introduction)

al-Muqaddima, often published in Arabic as Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun or simply as al-Muqaddima, is a remarkable work of scholarship by the Muslim jurist, historian, philosopher, and thinker Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, widely known as Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 CE).

In al-Muqaddima, Ibn Khaldun built an astounding body of knowledge covering broad areas of inquiry including history, philosophy, sociology, ethnography, economics, and other practical and abstract sciences.

This edition includes the Arabic text of al-Muqaddima, Book One, Chapter Five, Making a Living; and an introduction by the translator, Dr. Ahmed E. Souaiaia, highlighting some of Ibn Khaldun’s most significant theoretical contributions to economics.

From the Director's chair

Greetings from Gilmore Hall! The department has been extremely active this year, and we wanted to send an update about our many going-on.

One of the themes for the year has been to strengthen community. In August, faculty, staff, and graduate students gathered at the new downtown bowling alley – Spare Me! – to play video games, bowl, and enjoy each other's company. We also got to witness Maureen and Robin put on a display, knocking down pin after pin. Later in August faculty and staff participated in the annual Hawkeye Move-In Days event, assisting students and their families at the dorms. It was great to be part of welcoming students to campus, and of course we also made sure to let everyone know about Religious Studies. In September the department instituted a new tradition – the Religious Studies Social. Faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students met at the Gilmore Hall third-floor atrium to enjoy pizza and snacks, and to talk informally about classes and such. The turnout for the first Social was terrific, and we now host it on the first Wednesday of every month. For the October event, our staff decorated the atrium for homecoming – with displays of photographs and other campus imagery from the last 100 years.

The department has also enjoyed participating in other fun activities. We set up a table on the walkway outside of Gilmore Hall a number of times, serving hot chocolate and letting students know about our course offerings and about the opportunities that are available to a Religious Studies major. We had a spinner game that was a big hit – with prizes, etc. – but mainly students were interested to hear about courses on religion and its impact and influence. We also hosted a guided cemetery tour – led by Professor Brandon Dean – that drew over fifty students and community members. We learned about the history and development of cemeteries and about the many roles that they play in a community. It was also just really nice to hear the continued discussion on the bus trip back to campus.

Another theme has been to celebrate our students. In May we had our annual Adler Luncheon, at which our undergraduate and graduate students received awards for their outstanding work during the academic year. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni got to mingle over a catered lunch at the IMU ballroom, and faculty delivered brief presentations on the research and teaching achievements of the students they supervised. The energy in the room was remarkable, and we are already looking forward to the same event in 2024.

Under the leadership of our Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Diana Cates, we have also instituted a number of new initiatives to support our undergraduates. One is to raise awareness about the career possibilities that are available to a Religious Studies major. Our alumni have pursued extremely successful careers in law, health care, business, community work, and academia, and we are creating a new program to help students see the different trajectories that are possible and to learn about the practical steps to realize them. Another new initiative for undergraduates is the creation of a Research Assistant course, where students will work with a faculty member on a research project to learn first-hand about the creative knowledge-production that undergirds the reputation of a research university. Students tend to know about the kind of research that takes place in a lab, but we also want to provide them the skills that come with generating and publishing knowledge in the humanities.

We have also engaged a number of initiatives to support graduate students. Under the leadership of our Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Jenna Supp-Montgomerie, we have created structures that facilitate success in graduate research and teaching. The department supports a writing accountability group that meets twice a week at Tru coffee, where graduate students meet to write in community, and also to come up for air and discuss how their projects are going. In addition, the department sponsors a regular presentation workshop at which graduate students get practice presenting research to a live audience, fielding questions, and also asking questions. In addition, graduate students gather once every couple of weeks at a non-academic venue in the pedmall just to touch base and foster community.

We are very excited about all of our efforts as a department, and the energy that we have expended has led to the generation of further energy still. A final positive note is that although we had to suspend graduate admissions last year, we have been able to re-open graduate admissions for fall 2024, and we are already seeing a very large number of applicants. We have also seen a slow but steady increase in our number of undergraduate majors and minors, a reflection of efforts to increase the number of students who are selecting Religious Studies as a primary area of training. We look forward to additional positive developments to come.

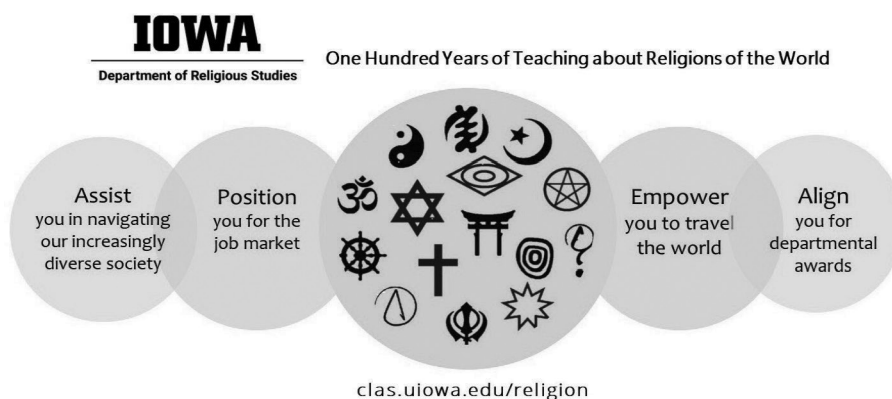
David Cuning
Interim Chair of Religious Studies

PERSPECTIVES On Religion

Address Service Requested

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

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David Cunning
Director
Maureen Waltherhouse
Editor

How you can Contribute:

The Department of Religious Studies aims to be a hub of interdisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, cultural expressions, and social movements. Religious Studies faculty makes use of multiple methods of study, including historical, philosophical, ethical, literary, linguistic, psychological, ethnographic, and digital approaches. We help students and the public to become better-informed, more nuanced thinkers who can successfully navigate a world of religious diversity. 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 [givetoiowa.org/2023RE99](https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion) or contact Travis Foss at the UI Center for Advancement (travis.foss@foriowa.org).