



# PERSPECTIVES

## On Religion

Fall 2013 • Volume 20

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## Participating in the Azekah Excavation: Summer 2013

*Leah DeGrazia*

Tel Azekah, nestled in the Judean lowlands, is a border city located between the ancient rival territories known as Philistia and Judah. Inhabited from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine era, Azekah's location exposed it to a rich history, including many episodes of conflict, destruction, and reconstruction. Tel Azekah is best known as the protective border city to ancient Jerusalem, conquered and destroyed by the Assyrian king Sennacherib during his campaign of annihilation against Israel and Judah. Furthermore, according to the Biblical account, the valley surrounding Azekah is said to be the location of the legendary battle between David and Goliath, a story comparable to the religious, political, and cultural strife that continues to dominate the region.

I participated in the Lautenschläger Azekah Excavation for six weeks this summer under the direction of dig supervisors Oded Lipschits and Yuval Gadot and Iowa supervisors Professors Robert Cargill and Jordan Smith. Sunday through Thursday mornings we woke up at 3:45 a.m., bussed to Tel Azekah from our camp at Nes Harim, and dug from 5 a.m.-1 p.m. with brief breaks for coffee, breakfast, and popsicles. After we began each morning by carrying our equipment up the hill as the sun rose, we then set up sunshades and performed our daily duties. Tasks varied from person to person but would include pick-axing top soil (my personal favorite), shoveling, hauling rocks, cleaning the area around the site, dismantling architecture and baulks, dusting in preparation for



photos, and making sure the section walls of each square were straight and clean. I was part of the team digging in the area called South 1. Area S1 is located on the top of the *tel* and has structures dating from the Iron, Late Bronze, and Early Bronze periods. In addition to uncovering architectural structures, in S1 we also discovered pottery, coins, Egyptian-style scarabs, an arrowhead, part of a clay *tabun* oven, and a ritualistic donkey burial site. I had supervisors in S1 who taught me the basics of digging (pick-axing, shoveling, maintaining sections, bucket lines, dusting, etc.) as well as the administrative side of archaeology such as opening loci, developing top plans, participating in pottery reading, and drawing sections.

My time spent at the dig was a positive and moving educational experience. Though I was initially nervous about devoting six weeks of my summer to an archaeo-

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## Azekah Excavation (cont'd.)

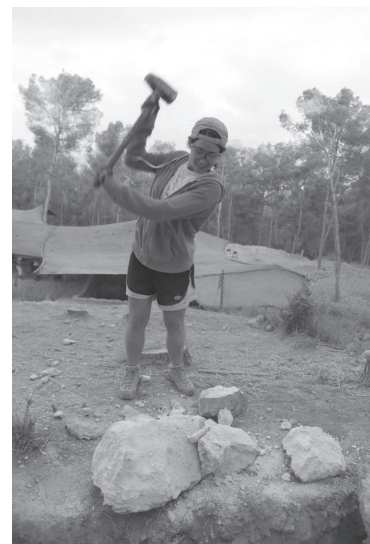
logical project, especially one that required waking up well before sunrise to participate in intensive and dirty manual labor in a hot desert, I grew to love the routine. The work was rewarding and the company stimulating and diverse. In my dig area alone we had participants from Tennessee, New York, Toronto, Alberta, Australia, Samoa, Germany, Brazil, South Africa, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

For me, the most gratifying parts of the dig were the finds. It is a powerful experience to uncover relics – from jars and bowls to beads and scarabs. Even the most unassuming of these buried and forgotten artifacts have stories to tell about the people that inhabited the Judean lowlands over two thousand years ago, and having the chance to gain an understanding of the histories of these communities is moving. Layers of destruction preserve in the same stratum the highest proportion of finds such as artifacts, pottery, architecture, and bones. Although uncovering a destruction layer is informative, it is nevertheless sobering to understand that the preservation of this moment

in history reflects a period of suffering and ruination.

We spent only five days out of the week digging at Azekah. The other two days were spent traveling to a variety of religious and archaeological sites throughout Israel and Jordan. We visited such sites as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, Masada, Wadi Rum, Petra, the Galilee, Akko, and Jaffa. These educational weekend tours led by Professor Cargill allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation for the sacred sites I have devoted much time to studying over the past two years. For example, beyond what could be learned in a classroom, encountering the immensity of the Western Wall in Jerusalem intensified my understanding of its spiritual significance as the most holy site in Judaism.

Everywhere we traveled I always felt safe and was grateful for the opportunity to experience the beauty of a region abundant with cultures and religious narratives. The weekend tours also revealed to me a parallel between the history of Azekah and the broader region of Israel and

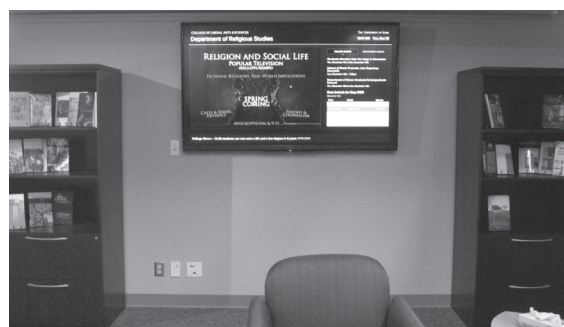


Palestine today where sectarian strife still continues. The dig in itself was rewarding because of the work we did to uncover the story of Tel Azekah. The opportunity to witness the conflict between peoples in the Holy Land was an unsettling but transformative experience. And I will always find meaningful and useful the lessons learned, people met, and stories discovered.

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## Space Matters

This summer the department began sprucing up the third floor of Gilmore Hall. We applied a fresh coat of paint, updated our photo gallery, installed two bookcases that feature faculty-student-alumni books, and reupholstered the furniture. In the center of the atrium, we installed a 70" digital screen that is now active all day. The department uses this screen to advertise our events, course offerings, publications, awards, and so on. The screen is also used for PowerPoint presentations and for Undergraduate Movie Nights, which are hosted by members of our Religion Graduate Student Organization. We hope you will stop by Gilmore Hall to see the new digs when you have an opportunity. It is a great place to relax, read, meet up with friends, and think.



## New Lecturer in Religious Studies, Dr. Robert Gerstmyer



Robert (Bob) Gerstmyer became a part-time Lecturer for the Department of Religious Studies in the Spring of 2013. He holds a PhD from Duke University, a ThM from Princeton Theological Seminary, an M Div from Fuller Theological Seminary, and a BS from MIT. Below, Bob shares some of his background and ideas for two of the courses he has developed.

“My undergraduate major was in engineering, but I decided to pursue graduate work in Religious Studies, eventually earning my doctorate from Duke. In addition to spending a lot of time during graduate school in the library, I spent time watching and enjoying Duke basketball. I’m looking forward to following Iowa basketball, especially with last year’s men’s team playing in the finals of the NIT tournament and the women’s team receiving an invitation to the NCAA tournament. Prior to moving to Iowa City, my family lived in Seattle, Washington. Iowa is the furthest from the ocean that I’ve ever lived.

During the fall semester I taught a class entitled “Religious Rhetoric: God and US Politics.” Religious rhetoric is a familiar feature of

the national political scene. As recently as 1960, during the presidential campaign of then-Senator John F. Kennedy, Kennedy spoke on multiple occasions to the worry voiced by the media, that his ultimate loyalty would be in question if he, a Roman Catholic, were to become US president. Well-intentioned suggestions were made that Senator Kennedy should run as the Vice-Presidential candidate, to help “ease the country’s transition” to the idea of a Catholic president. Approximately forty years later, in the Republican Candidates debate in Des Moines, then-Governor George W. Bush referred to Jesus Christ as his favorite philosopher. These are but two examples of the development of religious rhetoric in US politics—a development that extends into the presidencies of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and beyond.

The course covers a span of almost two-and-a-half centuries, beginning with the early founders and ending with the presidency of Barack Obama. In addition to examining religious language in the speeches and writings of political figures, it examines media responses to the religious views of political leaders, ranging from editorials that branded Thomas Jefferson an atheist in the election of 1800, to newspaper cartoons during the election of 1928 that fueled anti-Catholic sentiment against presidential candidate Al Smith, to internet web postings on the religious views of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

In the spring semester, I will teach a course entitled “Science and Christianity: Conflicts and Conversations.” We will begin with the Galileo Affair, which involves a sequence of events, beginning

around 1610, during which Galileo Galilei came into conflict with the Catholic Church over his support of Copernican astronomy and his opposition to geocentrism (the view that the sun orbits around the earth). Following mounting controversy over both theology and astronomy, the Roman Inquisition found Galileo “gravely suspect of heresy.” The Scriptural basis for the Church’s rejection of geocentrism was straightforward. Various verses from the Hebrew Bible or Christian Old Testament were used to prove the clear view of the Bible: the earth was fixed and the sun moved around the earth. Given the then-current context of the Protestant Reformation, church officials were understandably more concerned than ever about the proper interpretation of Christian Scriptures. Galileo was able to point to St Augustine’s interpretation of Scripture in his defense.

Moving ahead about two hundred years, we find striking similarities in the Church’s response to Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution. Again, questions are raised about whether the Bible’s meaning is set for all time or open to re-interpretation over time. In light of the scientific revolution, new questions are raised about what it means to be human. These questions are refined through the advancement of the neurosciences, which has led to a consideration of what it could mean to talk about religious dimensions of the human being or a ‘soul.’”

The department welcomes Bob and his family to Iowa. We are especially excited about the connections he will help us to strengthen with political science and the natural sciences.

## Fall 2013 Events Sponsored or Co-Sponsored by Religious Studies

Mustafa Bayoumi, "Islamophobia" (co-sponsored with Intellectual Dialogue Society) September 19

Kayla Wheeler, graduate student, department Colloquium, "Conducting Virtual Office Hours" September 24

\*Religion Literature and the Arts Conference: "Sacrifice, Terror, and the Good" (co-sponsored by Departments of English and International Programs) September 26-28

In conjunction with the RLA conference: Sonia Sands Lecture by Mark Bernat, September 26; and Ida Beam Lecture by Regina Schwartz September 27

Hal Roth, "Classical Daoist Meditation and the *Huainanzi*" (co-sponsored with Center for Asian and Pacific Studies) October 1

"Activism, Memorial, and Digital Collaboration" (co-sponsored with American Studies) October 11

Stephen Ramsay, four events during Open Access Week (co-sponsored with University Libraries and the Div. of World Languages & Cultures) October 21-22

Oscar Ranzo, Visiting Fellow at Iowa's International Writing Program for departmental colloquium on his creative writing and work as a coordinator of the Child Sacrifice Prevention Program, October 22

Steven Heine, "Sacred High City, Sacred Low City: Religious Sites in Two Tokyo Neighborhoods" (co-sponsored with CAPS) October 24

Kristy Nabhan-Warren, Bishop Martin Amos, Gerald Sorokin, "Conversation on Pope Frances" (co-sponsored with Newman Catholic Center) November 20

Paul Dilley, "Textual Scholarship in the Digital Humanities: TEI and EpiDoc" (co-sponsored with The Digital Studio for Arts and Public Humanities) November 14

James Moore, "Darwin's Sacred Cause" (co-sponsored with Obermann working Group, Old Capitol museums, and Department of History) November 18-19

\*The Department of Religious Studies wishes to express its gratitude to Professor Daniel Boscaljon (PhD, 2011) who directed the RLA conference for several years after it was established by Professor Emeritus David Klemm. This past summer Dan handed the directorship over to Professors Curley and Dilley. We know his influence will continue to be felt in the years ahead.

## Religious Studies Announces Revised Undergraduate Major

The Department of Religious studies has completed the most significant revision of our undergraduate major in over 20 years. We hope to meet the needs of students who participate every day in virtual communities that are potentially global in scope and influence.

In place of a three-tiered model based on the divisions of eastern, western, and indigenous religions, the new major approaches religious movements and social issues in ways that invite cross-traditional, transnational, and multi-disciplinary reflection. Because religion permeates nearly every aspect of human life, the Major in Religious Studies encourages students to integrate the study of religion with their other interests, such as science and medicine, psychology, digital media, history, or law.

The major has two specific course requirements—two book-ends, if you will.

The first course, "Religions in a Global Context," concerns the influences that religions have on international events. These influences are profound and undeniable; they are also easy to misconstrue. Our students need to understand religions if they are to understand their world.

The second required course, the "Senior Seminar," encourages students to integrate and share with each other the knowledge they have acquired through the study of religion. This course has the added benefit of helping our students to imagine themselves as "public educators" who can help the people in their communities to respond well to the challenges of religious diversity.

Beyond these required courses, the major is quite open. It is maximally flexible for students who wish to fulfill the requirements for multiple majors while keeping their time-to-degree to four years.

Our professors are redesigning and creating other courses as well, some of which meet General Education requirements and some of which are electives. We encourage you to visit our course offerings at The University of Iowa's website by clicking on the ISIS link.

## New Statement of Mission and Vision

### Our Mission

During 2013 the Department of Religious Studies enjoyed extended conversation about its mission and its vision for the future. The interests of our students are changing; higher education is changing; the forms of the world's religions are changing; and we as a faculty are recognizing new strengths and making new connections. We want to be sure that the university and the people of Iowa recognize the essential contributions that the study of religion makes to a well-rounded *education for life*.

The mission of the Department of Religious Studies is to be a hub of interdisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, cultural expressions, and social movements. Religion has taken myriad forms throughout history and around the world, and it continues to change and evolve in ways that challenge human understanding. To meet this challenge, the 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 other people to become better-informed and more nuanced thinkers who can successfully navigate a world of religious diversity. Through our graduate program, we prepare future scholars and teachers to extend our educational efforts in new directions and advance the critical study of religion.

### Our Vision

Founded in 1927, the Department of Religious Studies was the first department at a public university in the United States to devote itself to the academic study of religion. Since that time, dramatic advances in media and communication have brought geographically distant religious phenomena closer to home. Globalization has brought many people face to face with aspects of religion and spirituality that intrigue

them—and also aspects that disturb them. Today, it is more important than ever that people think wisely about religion and its influences.

At Iowa, students can study Song Dynasty Chinese Buddhism; modern Japanese Buddhism; ancient South Asian religions; Islam within and beyond the Islamic world; biblical and secular Judaism; ancient Mediterranean religions; medieval and modern Christianity in Europe and the U.S.; African American religions; and Native American traditions. Students can trace the development of a particular tradition through time. They can study more than one tradition in comparative perspective. They can analyze religion's relationship to other dimensions of culture by working with a common theme. They can take a further theoretical turn and study the concept of religion. They can examine the methods and theories that scholars bring to the study of religion. They can ask and explore "big questions" about life and death, suffering and meaning, while contemplating the wisdom of the ages. Through the study of religion, students can gain skills that allow them (with additional investigation) to understand nearly *any* religious idea or activity they encounter. Students can learn to converse about religion, wherever they go, in ways that raise the level of public discourse.

Our vision for the future is to continue to treat an impressive range of the world's religions, both large and small, while highlighting what binds us together and distinguishes us from other religion departments. What distinguishes us is the study of religions' influences on public life, especially on the ways in which people envision and seek to bring about—or resist—social change. Our focus is to trace changing forms of religions' influences through the digital revolution, always keeping historical origins and past developments in perspective.

## FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

**Robert Cargill** is entering his third year of teaching at Iowa, and this past year has been incredibly busy. Robert offered courses in Biblical Archaeology, Greek, and Biblical Aramaic in the spring, and is presently teaching courses in Mythology of Otherworldly Journeys and Targumic Aramaic. Dr. Cargill established a six-week summer Study Abroad archaeology program in Tel Azekah, Israel, and led a team of 14 students and staff participating in the archaeological excavation of the ancient city, just west of Jerusalem. Along with his graduate students Cory Taylor and Cale Staley, Dr. Cargill is continuing the development of a 3D virtual reality reconstruction of Tel Azekah. He also led the students on weekend tours of the Holy Land, including the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem, and a tour of Jordan with trips to Petra and a night sleeping under the stars in a Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum. Robert was again invited to give the Finn Lecture, a two-part lecture on “Twins in the Bible” at the Agudas Achim Congregation and First Presbyterian Church that promotes Jewish-Christian dialogue in Iowa City. He gave the Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) lecture entitled “The Five Defenders of Jerusalem” at Agudas Achim, and presented a four-week class on Genesis for the local Jewish congregation. He presented an invited lecture at the University of Maryland’s Michelle Smith Collaboratory for Visual Culture entitled “Toward an Archaeological Standard for Digital Imagery,” and a DSPAH Studio talk entitled “Digi-Tel Azekah: Digitally Modeling Archaeological Remains on the Judean-Philistine Borderline” on campus. He participated in a panel discussion on “Bringing Digital Archives and Research to the Classroom” as part of the “Rewiring the Classroom” conference at Iowa. He gave two papers at the Society of Biblical Literature’s Annual Meeting, including a “Preliminary Report on Tel Azekah” and one on

“The Problem of Critical Scholars at Confessional Colleges”. He presented two lectures on the role of the Digital Humanities at Iowa for the University of Iowa Foundation and at the kickoff of the “For Iowa, Forever More” fundraising campaign. Dr. Cargill had an op-ed published in the Des Moines Register entitled “Iowa View: 1 man, 1 woman isn’t the Bible’s only marriage view”, which was then featured in the Huffington Post. Dr. Cargill also served as Consulting Producer for a six-episode History channel documentary series entitled “Bible Secrets Revealed”, and appeared as an expert in each episode. He was interviewed by Ben Kieffer on Iowa Public Radio’s “River to River” program, and was featured in various articles appearing in the Iowa City Press-Citizen, the Cedar Rapids Gazette, the Des Moines Register, the Daily Iowan, DITV, The Blaze, and the Huffington Post all in connection with his History channel documentary. Dr. Cargill was also interviewed by Carl Wolfson on the “Carl in the Morning” radio show, as well as by KXIC AM 800 host Jay Capron on the “Your Town” show. Robert had an article published in the peer-reviewed journal Aramaic Studies entitled, “The Rule of Creative Completion: Neofiti’s Use of שכלל”. He is presently working on articles on the biblical figure of Melchizedek, and on the role of mandrakes as fertility drugs in antiquity. He is also writing archaeological reports for the water cistern he excavated in Area S2 at Tel Azekah, and is working on a book exploring the different marriage laws in the Bible. Dr. Cargill was selected as an Office of Digital Humanities grant review panelist for the National Endowment for the Humanities, and was named to the advisory board for the University of Iowa Obermann Center for Advanced Research, on top of all of this, Robert’s wife, Roslyn, gave birth to fraternal twins, a son, Quincy Enoch Domenico, and a daughter, Rory Kate Duvall in May.

They join their brother, MacLaren Grey, and their sister, Talitha Joy, in keeping Dr. Cargill busy.

**Diana Fritz Cates** had the joy of seeing two of her Ph.D. students earn their doctorates. Dr. Christine Darr defended her thesis, “The Social Practices of Consumption and the Formation of Desire,” and will continue to teach at Loras College. Dr. Abbylynn Helgevoold defended her thesis, “Humility, Oppression, and Human Flourishing: A Critical Appropriation of Aquinas on Humility,” and will continue to teach at UNI. Prof. Cates also celebrated Susan Woollever’s attainment of an MA degree with her thesis, “The Process of Self-Becoming in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard and Carl Rogers.” Prof. Cates is in her second year as Department Chair. She has been deeply engaged in this role. Above all, she has enjoyed supporting and touting the great success of her colleagues and raising the profile of the department. She was a radio guest on “Talk of Iowa,” hosted by Charity Nebbe; participated in two World Canvass programs, hosted by Religious Studies alumna Joan Kjaer; and gave other public presentations. She developed a new first-year seminar, “Religion and Body Modification,” to expose more first-year students to the possibility of studying religion while at Iowa. She led a committed and creative faculty to a reformulation of the department’s mission and vision. She oversaw a substantial revision of the undergraduate major. Prof. Cates presented a paper at the 2013 International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and she continues to make progress on her book, *The Ethics of Love and Hatred*. She serves her profession in many ways, most notably as a Trustee and manuscript reviewer for the *Journal of Religious Ethics* and as a long-term member of the Advisory Board of the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights.

**Melissa Anne-Marie Curley** devoted much of her time over the course of the year to co-chairing the department's ninth annual Religion, Literature, and the Arts conference, which took place in September; the conference was a wonderful opportunity to work closely with colleagues and graduate students in the department and across campus. In fall 2012, she gave invited lectures in Iowa City, Kamloops, and Vancouver, and contributed an essay on Fluxus and Buddhism to the volume *Flowers on the Rock*. In spring 2013, she presented new work on the prison diary of Kawakami Hajime at the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, and contributed an essay on Miyazawa Kenji to the volume *Hope and the Longing for Utopia*, as well as writing reviews for *Dissertation Reviews*, *Eastern Buddhist*, and *Religious Studies Review*. In May, she spent two weeks in Montreal as a visiting scholar participating in Conversations Across World Religions, an annual seminar hosted by McGill University; over the summer, she participated in the CAPS NCTA workshop for Iowa secondary school teachers, teaching a module on the triple disaster, and worked on a collaborative translation of an essay by the Japanese philosopher Keta Masako. She is currently co-chairing a working group on Asian studies and critical theory at the Obermann Center and preparing the final draft of her manuscript, *Back to the Land: Japanese Buddhist Visions of Utopia at War's End*.

**Paul Dilley**, during his second year at the University of Iowa, taught the Christianity portion of JCI, as well as the graduate seminar on Western Religious Traditions. He also developed a new introductory course, Religions in a Global Context, in collaboration with other department members, especially Melissa Curley and Jordan Smith. Paul also directed several graduate independent study courses, including an introduction to the Coptic language (ancient Egyptian written with Greek letters). He is

part of an international research team to publish the scriptures of Mani, early Christianity's "arch-heretic," from a Coptic manuscript at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. This research involved a month-long visit to the library in June 2013, as well as an invited public lecture on Manichaeism at London's School for Oriental and African Studies in September. Earlier in January, he attended a seminar on pre-modern transnationalism at the University of California, Berkeley, presenting on his recently published article in the *Journal of World History*, "Religious Intercrossing in Late-Antique Eurasia: Loss, Corruption, and Canon-Formation." He completed three chapters for a forthcoming multidisciplinary volume on the Red Monastery at Sohag, Egypt, where he has travelled over the past eight years as the inscriptions expert on an international conservation and research project funded by USAID. His work on this project forms the basis for the Christian Inscriptions of Egypt and Nubia database he is producing, with graduate and undergraduate research assistants, at the Digital Studio; as well as for an invited lecture and three days of seminars he delivered this May at UNESCO's Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Back at Iowa, he serves as faculty organizer (with Melissa Curley) of the new Religious Studies colloquium, as well as the department's 9th Religion, Literature, and the Arts conference, held on campus from September 26th-28th. Within the field, Paul serves on the editorial board of "Bible Odyssey," the SBL's new website supported by an NEH project grant; and is a member of the steering committee for the SBL's new 3-year Digital Humanities consultation. He was also a reviewer/panelist for NEH grants.

**Robert Gerstmyer**, part-time Lecturer in Biblical Studies, began teaching at The University of Iowa this year. He is offering two new courses in the Religious Studies Department. The first course,

"Religious Rhetoric: God and US Politics" examines religious language as part of American political discourse. While the course begins by considering our founders and early Presidents, it focuses on the last six decades. The second new course is "Issues in Science and Christianity: Conflicts and Conversations." The interaction between Science and Religion in Western Culture provides a storied history, particularly since the Church's condemnation of Galileo almost four centuries ago. Our topics range from evolution and Intelligent Design to The Big Bang, from the Human Genome Project to spiritual implications of the neurosciences.

**Jay Holstein** was named by the Provost's Office as one of twenty faculty and staff voted by graduating seniors as having a positive influence on their experience at The University of Iowa. He was invited to give two class presentations in Mitch Kelley's 2013 summer session course, *07P:217 Seminar in College Teaching*: (1) "How to Teach the Most Embarrassing Tale in the Hebrew Bible, I Kings 2: 23-25, 'Bears and Bugbears at Bethel'" and (2) "Don't Worry About Motivating Your Students; It is Self-motivation that Counts in the Classroom." He was also invited to give a joint presentation with Dan Gable in Mitch Kelley's Fall 2013 course, *07P:029 First Year Seminar: Factors That Hinder Success in Higher Education*: "Why Teaching is a Dangerous Profession." Holstein completed a full revision of the online version of 032:003 *Quest for Human Destiny*, incorporating video lectures, and robust interactive online features, including online assessments. He constructed a new course to be offered beginning in the fall of 2014, which has been approved for fulfilling a General Education Requirement: *032:021 Judaism: The Sacred and the Secular*. Holstein also participated in The University of Iowa 2013 Homecoming Parade as a Judge.

**Raymond Mentzer** continues to teach an entry level sequence on medieval and modern religious culture as well as more advanced courses on the history of early modern Christianity and the Reformation. Mentzer's research program led to the publication of *Les registres des consistoires des Églises réformées de France, XVIe - XVIIe siècles. Un inventaire*, Archives des Églises réformées de France 4 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2013). He also published several journal articles and book chapters this past year. Among them are "Reformed Liturgical Practices," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, Brill Companion Series, Edited by Lee Palmer Wandel (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 231-250; and "Textual Prescription and Ecclesiastical Practice in the Reformed Churches of France: Myths and Realities Surrounding the Consistory," in *Mélanges offerts à notre ami Bernard Roussel: Bible, Histoire et Société*, Edited by Gerald Hobbs and Annie Noblesse-Rocher (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 319-331. An edited volume on the Huguenots as well as several journal articles and book chapters are in various stages of production. Book reviews appeared in the *Sixteenth Century Journal, H-France* and *Renaissance Quarterly*. In April 2013, he gave a series of lectures on the French Reformation at the Université de Pau et les Pays de l'Adour, France. He organized a panel on "Understandings of Gender and the Practice of Discipline in Reformed Tradition," for the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference, meeting at San Juan, Puerto Rico, in October 2013. He continues to serve on the Governing Board of the H.H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Sixteenth Century Journal* and the American representative to the International Commission for the History and Study of Christianity, a subunit of the International Commission of Historical Sciences.

**Kristy Nabhan-Warren** is in her second year with the department. She is currently Associate Professor of Religious Studies and is the V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Catholic Studies Fellow. Her research and writing has been on U.S. Catholic and Protestant Christian experiences and she has focused on uncovering the complexities of U.S. Latino/a religious experiences and practices. She is the author of *The Virgin of El Barrio: Marian Apparitions, Catholic Evangelizing, and Mexican American Activism* (NYU Press, 2005) and *The Cursillo Movement in America: Catholics, Protestants, and Fourth-Day Spirituality* (UNC Press, Sept. 2013) as well as several essays and articles. Her third book project, tentatively entitled *Latino American Religions*, will be part of the University of Chicago History of Religion series. In addition to this new book project, Kristy maintains an active travel schedule and is chairing several panels at conferences this year and next. She has been invited to discuss *The Cursillo Movement in America* at Northwestern University, The University of Dayton, and Fordham University's Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies next year. At the university, Kristy is a member of the inaugural Humanities Advisory Committee and is co-chair (with Ali Hasan) of the Alt-Ac subcommittee. She is a member of the General Education Committee. Kristy is also faculty advisor for the University of Iowa Interfaith Student Service Group and will be travelling to NYC in the Spring for an interfaith gathering where she will take part in discussions on approaches to interreligious dialogue. As a public intellectual, Kristy enjoys being a part of community events and talks. She is passionate about graduate education and is excited about her new role as Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Religious Studies.

**Michéle Pesantubbee** continues teaching her courses on American Indian Environmentalism, Native American Sacred World, and

Native American Women and Religion. Last fall the students completed poster projects on environmental and sustainability issues for American Indian Environmentalism and exhibited their work in the department's atrium area. In June she presented a paper on "We are Land Named: Geopolitical, Georestorative Movements" for the Religion, Sovereignty and Revitalization in Native America Session at the annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) meeting in Uncasville, CT. She also presented a paper titled "Thinking Animals, Rethinking Race, Ethnicity, and Religion: Petticoat Bison and the Winning of the West," at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting in Chicago. In October she gave a public lecture on "Dancing our Troubles Away: Native American Ways of Alleviating Suffering" at Drake University in Des Moines. She continues to serve as Director of Undergraduate Studies and as a member of the editorial board for the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Religion*. She is currently working on her chapter on Lakota ghost dance for her book project on Native American women and religious movements.

**Morten Schlütter**, Associate Professor of Chinese Religions, stepped down after six years as the department's Director of Graduate Studies to take up the directorship of the UI Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS). As director of CAPS he facilitated talks on East Asian religion in the department by Harold Roth of Brown University and Steven Heine of Florida International University. Schlütter is continuing his teaching and research on Buddhism and Chinese religions. He is currently developing a new course on Asian traditions of meditation, and is among other things working on a book manuscript on the *Platform Sutra*, an important Chinese Buddhist scripture associated with the Chan (Jpn.: Zen) tradition. In the spring of 2013 Schlütter gave talks on his work on the *Platform Sutra*



at UCLA and University of the West. He also gave presentations at two conferences in China in the fall: “Holy Body, Sacred Space: The Creation of the Sacred in Medieval Chinese Chan Buddhism,” at the conference on Sacred Space and Spatial Sacredness: The Composition and Development of the Spatial Factors in Medieval Chinese Religions, at Fudan University in Shanghai, and “The Evolution of the Formless Precepts in the Platform Sutra,” at the Conference on Vinaya Texts and Transmission: New Perspectives and Methods, sponsored by the Peking University Research Center for Buddhist Texts and Arts, in Hangzhou. He also reviewed several book proposals for university presses and wrote book reviews.

**Frederick Smith** was on leave during the calendar year 2013. He spent the first semester, January until the end of June, in India, where he has a house in the Himalayas. He worked on his translation of the last five books of the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, and finished a few academic papers. He also spent ten days in Israel, his first trip there, and very much enjoyed it. He delivered papers in Kolkata and Mumbai, and consulted with scholars and libraries in Pune, Mumbai and Mysore. He was caught in massive floods in the Himalayas in June, in which approximately 8000 people died, electricity was cut off for weeks, all the roads were washed away, and food supplies dwindled seriously. But his house was unaffected, fortunately. He was also fortunate to make it back to Delhi in time for his flight back to the U.S. After a quiet month in Iowa City, he relocated for the fall semester to Princeton University, to serve as Stewart Fellow in the Princeton Humanities Center and Visiting Professor of South Asian Studies. He taught one course there, on the

Mahabharata. He gave guest lectures at NYU, Rutgers, and several at Princeton. He published one article on the well-known yoga guru B.K.S. Iyengar in a volume titled *Yoga Gurus* (ed. by Mark Singleton and Ellen Goldberg), a long review article of a path-breaking book on the history of world mythology by Michael Witzel in the *Religious Studies Review* (Fall 2013), and he wrote several other book reviews and papers that are due out in the next year. He continues to chip away as his Mahabharata translation.

**Jordan Smith**, Lecturer in Biblical Studies, has had a busy year as he continued to place his primary emphasis on teaching and strengthening our undergraduate program. In addition to his regular course load, advisees, independent studies courses, and directing an Honors Thesis, he has remained active in TAK, the Religious Studies Department’s honor society, assumed responsibility of faculty advisor for Discussions on Religion and Culture, a Religious Studies undergraduate student organization, and served as co-director for the University of Iowa summer study abroad program that includes a 6-week archaeological dig in Israel. He gave talks about the Bible at area churches and appeared in several episodes of the new History Channel documentary *The Secrets of the Bible Revealed*. In his spare time he is preparing a conference paper and finishing an article on the use of warfare and adoption imagery to create group identity in biblical and martyr literature.

**Ahmed Souaiaia** continues to research and write about the transformative events widely known as the “Arab Spring” taking place in the Arab world. He has published over twelve articles and essays about the subject in international newspapers and magazines

including *Asia Times*, *OpenDemocracy*, and *Eurasia Review*. During spring semester, he taught a new course, “Religion in the Public Sphere.” He has revised it based on students’ feedback and will be offering the revised version this coming academic year. In the areas of research and service, Professor Souaiaia continues to publish works on the topics broadly framed as law, religion, and society. Prof. Souaiaia is the managing editor of the *Journal of Islamic and Judaic Multidisciplinary Studies*. He serves on a number of university and professional committees and reviews manuscripts for academic journal and monograph publishers. His recent articles and essays on the current events taking place in the Islamic world can be accessed via his website [ahmedsouaiaia.com](http://ahmedsouaiaia.com).

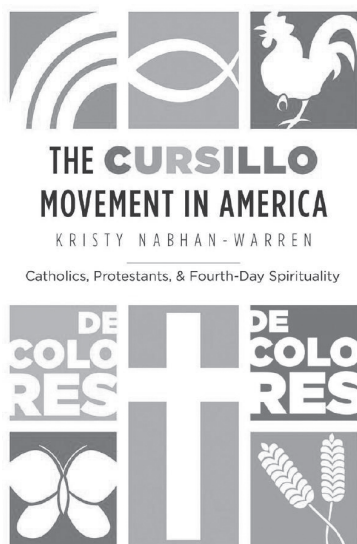
**Richard Turner** published a book chapter, “African Muslim Slaves and Islam in Antebellum America,” in Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 28-44. His book chapter, “Popular and Academic Images of African-American Islam,” in Aminah McCloud, ed., *The Oxford Handbook on African American Islam* (Oxford University Press) is now in press. Dr. Turner presented a paper, “Vodou and the Healing Arts in Post-Katrina New Orleans” at Harvard University in October, 2013. He also presented a paper, “Jazz, the Second Line, and Religious Internationalism in New Orleans,” at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in November, 2013. Dr. Turner continues to serve on the editorial board of the *Journal of Africana Religions* and on the board of directors for KOSANBA, an International Scholarly Association for the Study of Haitian Vodou (with headquarters at the University of California, Santa Barbara).

## Recent Books

### The Cursillo Movement in America

*Catholics, Protestants, and Fourth-Day Spirituality*

Kristy Nabhan-Warren



The internationally growing Cursillo movement, or “short course in Christianity,” founded in 1944 by Spanish Catholic lay practitioners, has become popular among American Catholics and Protestants alike. This lay-led weekend experience helps participants recommit to and live their faith. Emphasizing how American Christians have privileged the individual religious experience and downplayed denominational and theological differences in favor of a common identity as renewed people of faith, Kristy Nabhan-Warren focuses on cursillistas—those who have completed a Cursillo weekend—to show how

their experiences are a touchstone for understanding these trends in post-1960s American Christianity.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork as well as historical research, Nabhan-Warren shows the importance of Latino Catholics in the spread of the Cursillo movement. Cursillistas’ stories, she argues, guide us toward a new understanding of contemporary Christian identities, inside and outside U.S. borders, and of the importance of globalizing American religious boundaries.

For more information visit:  
[http://www.uncpress.unc.edu/browse/book\\_detail?title\\_id=3241](http://www.uncpress.unc.edu/browse/book_detail?title_id=3241)

### Readings of the Platform Sutra

*Edited by Morten Schlütter and Stephen F. Teiser*



The Platform Sūtra comprises a wide range of important Chan/Zen Buddhist teachings. Purported to contain the autobiography and sermons of Huineng (638–713), the legendary Sixth Patriarch of Chan, the sūtra has been popular among monastics and the educated elite for centuries. The first study of its kind in English, this volume offers essays that introduce the history and ideas of the sūtra to a general audience and interpret its practices. Leading specialists on Buddhism discuss the text’s historical background and its vaunted legacy in Chinese culture.

Incorporating recent scholarship and theory, chapters include an overview of Chinese Buddhism, the crucial role of the Platform Sūtra in the Chan tradition, and the dynamics of Huineng’s bio-

graphy. They probe the sūtra’s key philosophical arguments, its paradoxical teachings about transmission, and its position on ordination and other institutions. The book includes a character glossary and extensive bibliography, with helpful references for students, general readers, and specialists throughout. The editors and contributors are among the most respected scholars in the study of Buddhism, and they assess the place of the Platform Sūtra in the broader context of Chinese thought, opening the text to all readers interested in Asian culture, literature, spirituality, and religion.

For more information visit:  
<http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-15820-6/readings-of-the-platform-sutra>

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



Diana Fritz Cates

The past year has been a time of exciting rediscovery and redefinition in the Department of Religious Studies. Among the faculty, old lines of sub-disciplinary division have been dissolving, and new intellectual synergies have been forming. Vibrant connections to other units around the UI campus are being extended and enriched every day. It is a great time to be at Iowa.

We all know that the world is changing in dramatic ways. Our students are caught up in a digital media revolution that is transforming the ways in which they conceive of themselves and relate to each other. Our students are also feeling the pressure of complex economic changes that sometimes lead them to think of the study of religion as a luxury. Yet we know that this area of study is basic to an excellent education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Religion is an integral, if sometimes hidden part of virtually all the events that are unfolding around the globe. We must learn to think clearly and communicate effectively about religion if we are to understand our world and improve the conditions of human life.

There are concrete ways in which you can help us to meet the needs of students, while advancing the highest level of research into religion and its influences. I would like to highlight our new Study Abroad Program in Israel, which has been developed by Prof. Robert Cargill, with the help of Prof. Jordan Smith, and the financial support of the College and University. Imagine the impact of a summer that is spent on an archaeological dig of this caliber. Consider what Leah DeGrazia has to say (on page one). It is easy to make such an experience possible for more students through a gift that is targeted for student research travel. Please donate now through the UI Foundation website, and feel free to earmark your gift for a special purpose. Your contributions are critical to the vitality of our unit and our educational endeavors.

As always, we are grateful for your support, and we hope you keep in touch. Our physical space has been renewed, thanks especially to the creativity of Maureen Waltherhouse, and the virtual space generated by our website continues to evolve in remarkable ways, thanks especially to Robin Burns' skill and enthusiasm. So please stop by and see us or visit our website and Facebook page soon—and often.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Fritz Cates". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

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