

Student Events at the AAR Annual Meeting in San Francisco, November 19–22, 2011

Student Lounge

Marriott Marquis - Pacific C

The Student Lounge is a place for students to relax in the midst of the hectic Annual Meeting. We hope that you will take advantage of the free coffee and chance to talk with fellow students. The lounge will be in the Marriott Marquis - Pacific C and the lounge hours are Saturday-Monday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Graduate Student Committee has also organized a series of round table discussions on topics related to professionalization and student life. We invite you to join us for coffee and snacks as we discuss the following topics.

Roundtable Discussions

Saturday, November 19, 10:00-11:00 am

Finding a Delicate Balance in Graduate Studies:

Trans-cultural Conversations

Leah Payne (Vanderbilt University) and Tim Lim (Regent University), Presiding

Can we excel in our graduate studies and still enjoy life? This one-hour forum explores how students balance graduate schoolwork with other life commitments. Let's love life and people even as we devour monographs, write book reviews, and present papers!

Saturday, November, 19, 4:00–5:00 pm

"I can hold up TWO books as I hop on a ball... But that is not all! Oh, no. That is not all!": Balancing Family and Work in the Academic World

Beth Stovall (St. Thomas University) and Jon Stovall (McMaster University), Presiding

Academic life is often a struggle to find a balance between one's academic and "real world" responsibilities. Beth and Jon Stovall have spent their marriage learning this fine art of balance as they studied together for their Masters and then PhD. Now standing at the conclusion of their studies and commencement of their careers, Beth and Jon will draw on their difficult (and often humorous) experiences.

Sunday, November 20, 10:00–11:00 am

Preparing for Teaching

Ryan Cumming (Loyola University), Presiding

Teaching is a great responsibility; while student-instructors may have the opportunity to improve on a class in future semesters or quarters, our students get one shot to learn what we have to teach them. I will focus on several vital considerations for instructors as they prepare for courses, especially developing substantive syllabi and fair classroom policies, preparing lesson plans, learning technology and grading systems, and balancing teaching responsibilities with research priorities.

Sunday, November 20, 3:00–4:00 pm

Tricks of the Trade: A Roundtable for Students Seeking Acceptance into Ph.D. Programs

Elaine Padilla (New York Theological Seminary), Presiding

Monica A. Coleman (Claremont School of Theology), Dwight L. Hopkins (University of Chicago), Dawn Martin (Drew University), Peter Phan (Georgetown University), and Joanne Rodríguez (Hispanic Theological Initiative)

The process of getting into a Ph.D. program can seem shrouded in mystery. Candidates often face seemingly innumerable questions, and venture into the unknown without the tools needed to succeed. In this roundtable we will have an informal discussion over coffee and cookies with selected directors, faculty, and students who are currently a part of several doctoral and/or funding programs to explore the dynamics or “tricks” involved in pursuing the “trade” of applying for a Ph.D.

Monday, November 21, 10:00–11:00 am

Creating Syllabi Your Students Will (Really!) Use

Kristy Slominski (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Amy Tiilikainen (The Catholic University of America), Presiding

A well-crafted syllabus can save a teacher time, increase student engagement, and decrease frustration for all, but how can you be sure your students will actually use your syllabus? At this roundtable discussion, you will learn how to transform your syllabus into a resource packet that helps students succeed in your course. Participants will view several syllabi and discuss the pros and cons of each design, and are encouraged to bring syllabi of their own to share.

Monday, November 21, 4:00–5:00 pm

Teaching Portfolios: From the Classroom to the Job Market

Leanna Fuller (Vanderbilt University) and Joshua Canzona (The Catholic University of America), Presiding

Developing a teaching portfolio will help you generate materials often requested by potential employers and also prepare you to talk effectively about your teaching in interviews. In this round table session we will discuss the following questions: What, exactly, is a teaching portfolio? What should it include? To enrich our conversation, please bring your own questions about teaching portfolios. Resources for getting started with your teaching portfolio will be provided.

Student Town Hall Meeting: *Stepping Stones: Finding Your Footing in the Academy*

Saturday, November 19, 1:00–3:30 pm

Location: Marriott Marquis - Yerba Buena 15

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee

Comprising one-third of the total AAR membership, student members bring innovative scholarship and fresh ideas to the table, but navigating the field as a budding scholar can be a daunting task! Please join the Graduate Student Committee and the National Student Director for an informal conversation about our place in the Academy. In addition to open dialogue regarding student issues, we will have members from various Task Forces and Committees to speak to us about the work they do on behalf of the students. The Town Hall meeting provides an important opportunity to meet your student representatives, learn about student programming, and voice your concerns and needs to us as undergraduate and graduate student members of the American Academy of Religion. Come for camaraderie, conversation and of course, coffee!

LGBTIQ Mentoring Lunch

Saturday, November 19, 11:45 am to 12:45 pm

Location: Marriott Marquis - Golden Gate C2

Sponsored by the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force

All graduate students and junior scholars who identify outside of normative gender histories and/or sexualities are welcome to join us for an informal lunch. No fee or preregistration is required; please bring your own lunch.

SWP, REM, and LGBTIQ Women's Mentoring Lunch

Sunday, November 20, 11:45 am to 12:45 pm

Location: Marriott Marquis - Golden Gate C2

Sponsored by the Status of Women in the Profession Committee; the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee; and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force

We invite women who are graduate students and new scholars to a luncheon with over thirty womanist and feminist midcareer and senior scholars. Women will have the opportunity to mentor and be mentored in a context where every question is valued. Pre-registration is required and the lunch costs \$10. See here for more information.

Special Topics Forum: Retooling for a New Job Market (A21-200)

Monday, November 21, 1:00–3:30 pm

Location: Moscone Center West - 3016

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee

Ben Sanders, Iliff School of Theology/University of Denver and Kristy Slominski, University of California, Santa Barbara, Presiding

Presenters:

Tim Renick, Georgia State University, chair of former AAR Job Placement Task Force

Jeremy Posadas, Austin College

Eleanor Moody-Shepherd, Dean of New York Theological Seminary

Jeffrey Kuan, Dean of Drew Theological School

Brenda Bailey-Hainer, ATLA director

In light of the economy's impact on employment opportunities in religious studies, the Graduate Student Committee is dedicating this year's Special Topics Forum to "Retooling for a New Job Market." This event will consist of two parts: the first will feature a panel of recently hired professors, professors who have been active on search committees, and a representative from the nontraditional (i.e. non-professorial) job market. The second part of this event will be a forum in which attendants will have the opportunity to engage in smaller, separate, round-table conversations with the panelists. Each panelist will lead a conversation aimed at addressing particular issues, such as how to prepare for the on-campus interview, how to creatively present and market yourself, how to determine which type of teaching position is best for you, and how to negotiate once a job is offered. Please join us for what promises to be an important and informative time!

“Beyond the Boundaries” Public Lecture Series

The AAR is committed to fostering the public understanding of religion. Inspired by this goal, the Graduate Student Committee has organized two evenings of public talks in San Francisco. Student members will present their cutting-edge research in these innovative evening sessions designed to move our discussions of religion out of the traditional academic setting of the Annual Meeting and into the community. This year’s talks center around two themes:

- American Religious and Spiritual Innovation: Marketing, the Law, and Marriage
- Intersections of Spirituality, Healing, and Medicine

Plan to join us for these stimulating talks and discussions! All will be held from 6:00–8:00 pm at the [California Institute of Integral Studies](#), 1453 Mission Street in San Francisco. (Saturday: room 307; Monday: room 207)

Saturday, November 19, 2011

American Religious and Spiritual Innovation: Marketing, the Law, and Marriage

Time: 6:00-8:00 pm

Location: California Institute of Integral Studies, Room 307

Steven Barrie-Anthony, Presiding

“I am a Mormon” and “I am a Scientologist”: Recent Marketing Efforts in Mormonism and Scientology

Donald Westbrook, PhD student, Claremont Graduate University

In addition to being uniquely American religious movements, the Mormon Church and the Church of Scientology were founded by individuals who perceived themselves as offering a unique theological or spiritual *corrective*. Joseph Smith re-established the one true Christian church; and L. Ron Hubbard’s techniques of Dianetics and Scientology put forward a spiritual view of the human person that challenged the materialism of modern psychology and psychiatry. This presentation offers a comparative analysis and critique of recent marketing efforts by both churches to introduce the public to ordinary Mormons and Scientologists as a means of introducing the Mormon Church and the Church of Scientology: the “I am a Mormon” and “I am a Scientologist” campaigns. Why are these churches marketing themselves in these ways? What do they reveal about the socio-religious dialectic and tension between new religious movements and mainstream American society? This presentation draws on video evidence, fieldwork, and interviews conducted with church leaders to elucidate the origin and aim of the campaigns from the perspective of Mormons and Scientologists themselves.

Circulating Religion, Owning Belief: Intellectual Property in the American Spiritual Marketplace

Andrew Ventimiglia, PhD student, University of California, Davis

This paper will discuss *intellectual property law* as it determines the function of religious goods within *contemporary, non-traditional spiritual communities*. The coherence of these communities lies not in a centralized space like the church but instead in the circulation and use of literary works and shared religious media. Thus, intellectual property law provides an effective means to administer the ephemeral beliefs and practices mediated by these texts. I will explore a number of cases to demonstrate how IP is used to establish canonical works, stabilize religiously-approved meaning, and patrol the channels of distribution that link members of newly-articulated communities. This project uses accessible case studies to address the status of *divine authorship, inspiration and mediumship* within religious practice in the U.S. and highlight the mismatch between theories of *creativity, originality and ownership* within spiritual communities and those embedded in the law.

Redefining Religion through the Lens of Interfaith Marriage

Erika B. Seamon, PhD student, Georgetown University

Contemporary interfaith marriage is a lens to the continual movement and redefinition of the boundaries of religious traditions and the boundaries of the religious and secular spheres in the United States. Historically, theological, legal, and social barriers to intermarriage made the practice highly taboo. However, in twenty-first-century America intermarriage has been liberated from many of these barriers. Christians and Jews, as well as younger generations of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are defying the boundaries prescribed by their families and religious traditions. They are not only intermarrying, but proactively redefining religion, spirituality, belief, practice, and community. Interviews with 43 individuals in interfaith marriages reveal that these non-traditional marriages are not simply forms of secularism or syncretism; they are much more complex. As these interfaith couples negotiate differences and build bridges between their families and communities, broad-based change in America's religious landscape is set in motion.

Monday, November 21, 2011

Intersections of Spirituality, Healing, and Medicine

Time: 6:00-8:00 pm

Location: California Institute of Integral Studies, Room 207

Steven Barrie-Anthony, Presiding

The Public Space of Spirituality: Emerging Health Care Models

Elizabeth Gordon, PhD student, Graduate Theological Union

This presentation looks at dynamics related to religious and secular aspects of American culture that contend to define spirituality in the public space of health care (Asad 2003, Orsi 2005). Specifically, attention to spirituality in public mental health services has grown with the support for more holistic recovery models of healing (Huguelet and Koenig 2009). This shift raises the question of whether the normative biomedical models of human development will remain culturally, fiscally, and institutionally dominant in the United States for purposes of publicly funded health care. Or, can new health care models emerge that embrace transcendent experiences which inspire hope and motivate change (Graves 2008, Repper and Perkins 2006, Swinton 2001)? Using ethnographic research with mental health clients and clinicians, I consider such new models and suggest terms and concepts that can communicate spirituality across the religious/secular divide.

Death and Pregnancy: Religion, Ritual and the Hospital

Kandace Geldmeier, PhD student, Syracuse University

Over the past thirty years there has been a gradual development and refinement of bereavement rituals surrounding perinatal loss (miscarriage and stillbirth). These rituals include naming, issuing birth *and* death certificates, funeral services, dressing and/or bathing post-mortem and post-mortem photography. This presentation will focus on how these rituals are often religiously "neutral" in the hospital context and so maintain a "spiritual but not religious" sense to them. Is this because many mainline religious traditions do not have rituals for these kinds of losses? From my discussions with OBGYN nurses and maternity department bereavement counselors, these rituals are understood as part of the mourning and healing process for mothers and families. But could they be harmful? How so? The significance of this presentation specifically for a public forum lies in the quite private nature of perinatal loss. The *silence* surrounding miscarriage and stillbirth is disturbed by these rituals in hospitals and I want to participate in that disruption by discussing the contestable "religious" nature of these rituals, their questionable beneficence and making public a tragically common event.

Social Defeat and Korean Shamanism

Connor Wood, PhD student, Boston University

Humans are animals. Few educated people would disagree with this simple biological statement, but it has concrete implications for our lives and health as social and religious beings. This talk will examine Korean shamanism in light of “social defeat.” All social animals, including humans, form hierarchies, and losing one’s place in such a hierarchy is profoundly physiologically disruptive: defeated individuals show reduced immune function, skewed sleep rhythms, and less exploring activity. In humans, social defeat manifests as depression, chronic pain, and even psychosis. Korean shamans are almost always impoverished, uneducated women — the lowest-ranking members of Korean society; they experience a characteristic “spirit sickness” that features persistent despair and hallucinations before accepting the call to become shamans. As religious leaders, they heal the social pain, or *han*, of others. This dynamic illustrates a powerful relationship between religion, suffering, and healing that is rooted in our identity as social, biological beings.