



Fostering Excellence
In the Study of Religion

A Quarterly Newsletter for AAR Graduate Students
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Student Events at the Annual Meeting

The Graduate Student Committee has finalized a number of events specifically for graduate students at the 2009 AAR Annual Meeting Nov. 7-10 in Montreal. (Details about the Annual Meeting are available at [the AAR website.](#))

Beyond the Boundaries: Cutting Edge Research Goes to the Pub

Religion Beyond the Boundaries is a forum that allows students to step outside of the formal academic setting at the national meeting and present their work as part of a series of evening talks in a casual atmosphere. Come eat, drink, and discuss the following:

- **Poetic reflections on being aboriginal and a Christian theologian:** Rev. Carmen Lansdowne, Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., presents “My Reservations: Theo-poetic Reflections on Indigenous Canada,” 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 7) at Le Pharaon Lounge, 139 rue Saint-Paul Ouest.
- **Political apologies, first nations, and the United Church of Canada:** Barbara Greenberg Ph.D. Candidate, University of Toronto, presents “We Said We Were Sorry: Apologies and First Nations,” 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Sunday (Nov. 8) at Le Pelerin-Magellan, 330 rue Ontario Est.
- **Biblical myths and stories in film, television, popular literature, and fashion magazines:** Shelly Colette, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa, presents “Oh, the Stories We Could Tell: Religious Narratives in Popular Culture,” 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Monday (Nov. 9), Bar Cafe Grande Gueule, 5615A ch. de la Cote-des-Neiges.

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The Student Lounge: 12 Conversations About Academic Life

Contact Us

American Academy of Religion
825 Houston Mill Rd. NE

The Student Lounge is a place for students to relax during 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 open 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday-Monday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Tuesday. The Student Lounge will also be the site of a series of round table discussions on professional and personal topics regarding graduate student life. We invite you to join us for coffee and snacks as we discuss the following topics:

Saturday (Nov. 7)

- **Building Intellectual Community: The Graduate Student Imperative**, led by Christopher M. Rios, Baylor University, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.
- **Why Are They Writing? Tips for New Adjuncts and Those Looking to be Adjuncts**, led by Rob Huttmeier, Drew University, 10 a.m. -11 a.m.
- **A Career on Campus: Considering Academic Librarianship**, led by Christopher J. Anderson, Drew University, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.
- **Approaches to Effective On-line Teaching**, led by David Walsh, Arizona State University, 3 p.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday (Nov. 8)

- **Balancing School and Family: Making the Decision**, led by Ann Duncan, University of Virginia, and Shayna Sheinfeld, McGill University, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.
- **Writing Blocks**, led by Holly White, Syracuse University, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.
- **Personal Life and Grad School: Counterparts or Complimentary**, led by Xavier Gravend-Tirole, Universités de Montréal & Lausanne Universities, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.
- **Canadian Students in the Academy**, led by Janet Gunn, University of Ottawa, 3 p.m.-4 p.m.

Monday (Nov. 9)

- **Best Teaching Tips: Thirty Ideas in Thirty Minutes**, led by Dennis Feltwell, Duquesne University, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.
- **Practicing Faith in Graduate School**, led by Christopher D. Rodkey, Lebanon Valley College, 10 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
- **Balancing School and Family: Maintaining the Balance**, Led by Ann Duncan, University of Virginia and Shayna Sheinfeld, McGill University, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.
- **The First Year on the Job**, led by Cameron Jorgenson, Campbell Divinity School, 3 p.m.-4 p.m.

Promoting Diversity in Academia: Workshops for Underrepresented Groups

The Fund for Theological Education, in partnership with the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature, will host workshops at the Annual Meeting for students from under-represented racial and ethnic groups who are considering a Ph.D. or Th.D. in religion or theology. "Nurturing the Next Generation of Scholars" will be held on Sunday (Nov. 8). Student applications and faculty nominations are required. For more information e-mail doctoralinfo@thefund.org with your name, institution, position, and an e-mail address in order to receive updates and nomination/ application materials.

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First-Year Teaching: Luncheon Discussions

The Wabash Center and the Graduate Student Committee are sponsoring luncheon conversations on common teaching issues faced by newly minted faculty. The discussions, led by faculty hosts, will explore questions and concerns emerging in the first years of teaching. Box lunches will be provided. The event is from 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Monday (Nov. 9). Registration is limited to 49 students. Register at www.aarweb.org/jump/regteaching (Please register for the Annual Conference before signing up for this event.)

Report from Northwestern's Graduate Student Conference

Graduate students of Northwestern University's Department of Religion hosted a graduate conference on religion and identity April 24 and 25 at the campus and the conference center of the Hotel Orrington in Evanston, Ill.

The conference featured six graduate student panels and keynote addresses from Vanessa Ochs, associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Virginia, and Hille Haker, professor of moral theology and social ethics at the University of Frankfurt.

Twenty graduate students from nine universities presented papers that dealt with various aspects of the relationship between religion and identity. Panels addressed issues ranging from the construction and imposition of religious identities to religious identity in literature and theories of religious identity. Northwestern graduate students served as moderators and respondents.

One of the department's goals was to elicit dialogue on the subject of religion and identity among an array of scholars across disciplinary boundaries, so the conference included graduate students from departments of religion, anthropology, history, theology, international development and English. The panel on religion and nationalism featured presentations from four disciplines – religion, history, international development, and anthropology – and the panelists and audience members were able to offer different perspectives on this common theme.

Hayley Glaholt, a Northwestern doctoral candidate in religion who moderated the panel "Negotiating Imposed Identities," was impressed by the conference's interdisciplinary discussions. By participating in the conference, Glaholt said, students "were exposed to different areas of the study of religion that they hadn't been exposed to before.

"The conference facilitated ways of looking at religion that other departments don't always encourage or have resources for," Glaholt said. "By bringing these departments together we hoped to come up with new answers and new ways of doing things."

Alyssa Henning, a Northwestern doctoral student in religion who introduced Ochs' keynote address and moderated the panel on "Theories of Religion," enjoyed the conference because it suggested future directions in the study of religion. For Henning the highlight of the conference was "getting to see what graduate students all over the field of religion are doing, and getting to see how different scholars

who are still in school are approaching these questions.”

“The conference was truly outstanding,” said Professor George Bond, chair of the Northwestern religion department. “It was well planned and well organized. The panels and sessions were all very interesting and the respondents did an excellent job of analyzing the papers and fostering good discussions.”

Michal Raucher was the conference chair, and nearly all of the graduate students participated by serving on committees to select and invite keynote speakers, write grant proposals and a call for papers, vet submissions and make facilities arrangements.

Tina Howe, president of the religion department’s Graduate Student Association, provided important support, and Joseph Moser used his creative design skills to produce the conference’s posters and program. Rossitza Guenkova-Fernandez, the department’s graduate program assistant, provided essential support in arranging facilities details. Several Northwestern students hosted fellow graduate students in their homes to help defray travel expenses.

The conference was funded by nine sources, including the AAR and the Northwestern Graduate School.

(This report was prepared by Northwestern graduate student Amanda Baugh. For those who might be interested in hosting a graduate student conference at their own campus, the October issue of *Speaking of Students* will have a report from Northwestern graduate student Michal Raucher on the planning and staging of the conference there.)

A Facebook Conversation: Restructuring the Academy

In April the New York Times carried a provocative opinion piece by Mark C. Taylor, chairman of the Religion Department at Columbia University. In “End the University as We Know It,” Taylor argues that graduate schools (and eventually undergraduate schools) should be radically restructured because they are currently educating students to produce scholarship that no one reads and to fill jobs that don’t exist. The article is at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/opinion/27taylor.html?_r=1

Read it and post your thoughts on the **Student Members and Friends of the American Academy of Religion** Facebook page at:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=22651308863>

(Facebook members must become friends with the AAR Graduate Student page to get access. Those who are not Facebook members must first join, then become friends with the AAR Graduate Student page. Don’t worry. There’s no cost involved.)

If you have any comments about this issues, news tips or ideas for news features, contact SOS editor Charles Bernsen at cbernsen@comcast.net.

To read this issue online, go to:

http://www.aarweb.org/Publications/Online_Publications/Student_Newsletter/2009-30JUL.html