



A Note from the Student Director, Bhakti Mamtora

This edition of the Speaking of Students newsletter introduces our two new student directors, and provides information on the Graduate Student Committee's (GSC) programming for the AAR Annual Meeting in November 2017. For this year's meeting, we are working with the [Wabash Center](#) in organizing a special presentation over lunch on *Pedagogical Uses of Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, and Beyond* on Saturday, from 11:30am to 1:00pm. In addition, we have cosponsored a session with the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Committee, themed, *Protecting the Vulnerable on Campus*, for this year's meeting. You can find additional information on GSC's programming for the AAR below, and in the [online program book](#). As a reminder, [advance registration](#) for the meeting in Boston ends on August 24th at 11:59 p.m. Eastern.



In early September, student members of the AAR will be receiving a survey designed by the Graduate Student Committee in order to assess how the GSC can better serve the needs of graduate students through its programming. Please keep an eye out for this message!

If you have any suggestions or concerns feel free to send us a message. You can find our contact information here: www.aarweb.org/about/graduate-student-committee.

Introducing Our New Regional Student Directors

Tekoa Robinson, Mid-Atlantic Region

Tekoa Robinson is a Presidential Scholar and MDiv candidate at Lancaster Theological Seminary, where she is preparing for PhD studies in the area of Kierkegaardian scholarship. She resides in Westminster, MD, with her husband, two children, and little cockapoo, Ollie. As student director for the Mid-Atlantic region, Tekoa is looking forward to building collaborative academic communities that foster a sense of connectedness between students as they progress through their studies. Through the creation of clear communication lines, she also

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hopes to grow student awareness of the bountiful supports available to them through the AAR at the national and regional levels.

Emma Rifai, Upper Midwest Region

Emma Rifai is a PhD student in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa. While at Iowa, she is also obtaining the graduate certificate in gender, women's, and sexuality studies as well as the graduate certificate in college teaching. Emma received a bachelor of music in horn performance and a minor in religion from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, followed by a bachelor of arts in the sociology of religion from Minnesota State University, Moorhead. She then went on to receive her master of arts in Middle East studies from the University of Washington. Her current primary focus is on Protestantism in America and its relationship to weight loss culture, gender, and body image issues. She is excited to assume the role of student director for the Upper Midwest region of the AAR.



Annual Meeting 2017

The American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, November 18-21. For general information including registration and housing, program units, sessions, the employment center and much more [here](#).

Student Lounge Roundtable Series

This year we've cosponsored a session on pedagogy with the Wabash Center and SBL's Student Advisory Board. Join us for lunch and an interactive presentation themed, *Pedagogical Uses of Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, and Beyond* on Saturday, November 18, 2017, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Student Lounge!

Many of us and our students use YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to curate our identities, present ourselves to our communities, and ascribe meaning to our worlds. What are effective ways to use social media in the classroom? How can it be integrated with more traditional teaching strategies? How can we increase critical thinking about social media? This session explores effective and critically aware ways to incorporate social media in the classroom and in public discussions of religion.

Panelists:

- Mary T. Stimming, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion
- Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Earlham College
- Brooke Lester, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

This presentation is one of many featured in the Student Lounge Roundtable Series. You can find additional information on the Student Lounge Roundtables in the [program book](#).

Cosponsored Session on Protecting the Vulnerable on Campus

The GSC has cosponsored a session on *Protecting the Vulnerable on Campus* with the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Committee.

For many of us who study or work in colleges and seminary campuses today it may be easy to ignore the vulnerable at our institutions. Yet the most vulnerable are often at risk or subject to discrimination and exploitation based on inequities of power, money, lack of social net, or means to voice their concerns about campus life and work. This panel will examine what needs attention and the strategies that vulnerable people and their allies can use to decrease vulnerability and increase solidarity. Special attention will be paid to the status of, and strategies being deployed by, the LGBT+ community, graduate students, people of color, low paid workers, and non-tenured faculty.

Presider: Eddie S. Glaude, Princeton University

Panelists:

- Cameron Partridge (St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, San Francisco)
"Although the Doors Were Shut": Cultivating Courageous Community at the Borders of the Academy
- Prea Persaud (University of Florida)
It Doesn't Always Feel Good: Redefining Notions of Inclusion and Moving beyond "Diversity"
- James Keenan (Boston College)
Solidarity within the Faculty
- Hussein Rashid (Islamicate, LLC)
Ad Junk: Accounting for Different Vulnerabilities in Vulnerable Professional Positions
- Kerry Danner (Georgetown University)
Just Employment: Solidarity among Campus Workers

GSC Special Topics Forum-Religious Studies Scholars as Humanitarians: Publications, Pedagogies, and the Protection of the Most Vulnerable

Be on the lookout for our upcoming Special Topics Forum (STF) during the Annual Meeting; it is sure to be an exciting discussion. Our debate this year will focus on the ethical obligations that religious studies scholars owe to the most vulnerable members of global society, particularly in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election. Through a combination of presentations and workshop activities, the forum will provide a safe space in which junior scholars can explore how they might develop their academic careers while simultaneously making meaningful contributions to the pursuit of social justice. The featured speakers of this STF work on a diverse range of topics at the nexus of humanitarian and scholarly work, including the advancement of nonhuman animal

rights, the lived experience of Muslim feminists, and the creation of public humanities projects that weave together knowledge about faith, the environment, and social equality for educational purposes. We hope to see you there!

Presider: Chase L. Way (Claremont Graduate University)

Panelists:

- Brianne Donaldson (Rice University)
Religious Studies and Ethical Curiosity: Class Projects that Reveal Unseen Stories in a Midwest Slaughterhouse Town
- Nayawiyyah Muhammad (Claremont Graduate University)
The Women's Mosque of America and Social Justice in American Mosques
- A. Whitney Sanford (University of Florida)
Sacred Waters, Contested Histories, and the Public Good in the American South

Respondent

- Greg Johnson (University of Colorado at Boulder)

Facebook Pages for Student Members

Our Facebook page, [Student Members and Friends of the American Academy of Religion](#), is available for all members and friends of the AAR. Members can post calls for papers, job listings, requests for information, forthcoming publications, and more.

Stay connected with students and events in your region by "liking" your regional Facebook page:

- [Student Members of the AAR EIR](#) (Eastern International Region)
- [American Academy of Religion, Mid-Atlantic Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Midwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR New England-Maritime Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Pacific Northwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR and SBL Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Southeast Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Upper Midwest Region](#)
- [Student Members of the AAR Western Region](#)
- [American Academy of Religion, Southwest Region](#)