September is "Teaching and Learning Month" in the AAR! The AAR's Teaching and Learning Committee welcomes you to explore some exciting new developments in teaching in our fields. Learn about our committee and our work on the AAR website.

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE AAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Colleagues:

We often think of the work of the AAR as primarily about research. Indeed, our motto, "Fostering Excellence in the Study of Religion," might be interpreted to mean that research is all we do. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. The AAR fosters research, but also supports professional development, several publishing efforts, and advocacy for the public understanding of religion. And we also think carefully about pedagogy. This fall our Teaching and Learning Committee is surveying our membership on several important questions about the teaching enterprise. I encourage each of you to complete the [survey](#). The Committee will publish the results later in the fall, and will also be discussing them at our Annual Meeting in Chicago. Please participate!

With every good wish and with thanks for your participation in the work of our Academy, I remain

Sincerely Yours,
A MESSAGE FROM THE AAR PRESIDENT

Like research and publication, teaching and learning are also crucial to the study of religion. For this reason, the American Academy of Religion is a proactive institution in the promotion of creativity in teaching, cooperation in learning, and the keen attention to the public understanding of religion in both areas. The AAR Excellence in Teaching Award is given this year to Martha Reineke, a colleague who distinctly exemplifies such qualities.

Warmly yours,
Otto A. Maduro
President

AAR TEACHING SURVEY

The AAR Teaching and Learning Committee invites your insights into the role of teaching in our academy! Please take just a few minutes to help us assess the needs and desires around teaching methods, theories, and practices. We appreciate your ideas!

Take me to the survey!

FOCUS ON TEACHING

Be sure to look for Spotlight on Teaching in the Religious Studies News! The upcoming October 2012 issue will focus on "Teaching Religious Studies in Stand-Alone MA Programs." One of the coeditors of Spotlight, Reid Locklin, explains: "The October 2012 issue on stand-alone MA religion programs offers a unique vantage on the distinctive character and needs of these programs, as well as innovative teaching and learning strategies that will travel well to other contexts! Articles take up the problems with treating MA students as 'little doctoral students'; suggestions for making the most effective use of 'split-level' graduate/undergraduate courses, the capstone course and MA thesis project, fostering mentoring relationships, maximizing limited resources for language acquisition, and integrating community engagement into graduate education."
Look for this issue in mid-October in Religious Studies News.

2012 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNER: MARTHA J. REINEKE

The Teaching and Learning Committee is pleased to announce Martha J. Reineke is the recipient of the 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award. Reineke, professor of religion in the Department of Philosophy and World Religions at the University of Northern Iowa, will make remarks and engage questions and answers from the audience during the Special Topics Forum at this year’s Annual Meeting in Chicago.

At a time when liberal education in public universities is being challenged as governing boards, state legislatures, parents, and students press for majors with narrow vocational application, questions that keep Reineke awake at night include:

1. How can we most effectively champion the value of the study of religion in public higher education and promote religious literacy as a vital outcome of higher education in a public context?

2. When others increasingly ascribe to public higher education as a narrow economic value, how can we demonstrate that knowledge of world religions builds intercultural competence that undergirds successful economic development and supports strong communities?
3. Believing that higher education furthers the development of persons by enhancing understanding of human intellectual and cultural accomplishments and by developing skills in the areas of critical thinking and writing, how can we clarify for others the profound difference, even an ethical difference, between viewing persons as recipients of education and as the subjects of training?

**Resources for Reflecting on These Questions:**


**Resources for Students to Make the Case for Liberal Arts with Future Employers:**


We welcome nominations for the 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award. Please nominate a deserving teacher!

**SYLLABUS COLLECTION**

This collaboration between the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and the American Academy of Religion (AAR) makes available more than 1,500 syllabi in a wide variety of courses in religious and theological studies. The syllabi are also integrated into the Wabash Center’s Internet Guide to Religion. The Wabash Center welcomes links and pdfs of current
syllabi. They do not accept Word document-formatted syllabi.

All submitted syllabi should have the following items prominently indicated at the top of the syllabus:

- Title of the course
- Professor's name
- Institution
- Semester/year
- Level (undergraduate introductory, undergraduate advanced, or graduate level)

Please submit syllabi to:
Charles Bellinger  
C.Bellinger@tcu.edu  
Theological Librarian  
Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics  
Brite Divinity School

For more information, please click here.

AAR members are encouraged to submit syllabi. To view some sample syllabi from members of the Teaching and Learning Committee, please click here.

EVENTS AT THE AAR ANNUAL MEETING IN CHICAGO

Please join us for the following special events at this year's Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

*Out of Many: Teaching Religion in Entry-Level Courses Across the Humanities* (A17-100)  
Saturday, November 17, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM  
McCormick Place South - 401D

*Imagined Solidarities: Common Cause or Conflicting Interests among Undergraduate Students and Their Faculties?* (A18-200)  
Sunday, November 18, 1:00 PM–2:30 PM  
McCormick Place East - 263

*Conversation with Martha Reineke, 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award Winner* (A18-250)  
Sunday, November 18, 3:00 PM–4:30 PM  
McCormick Place West - 183A
"GO-TO" TEACHING RESOURCES

We asked Teaching and Learning Committee members (and one former teaching award recipient, Barbara Patterson) what their "go-to" pedagogy books are when they are preparing syllabi or gearing up to start a new semester. The following are a few of the sources on their shelves:


For online teaching and learning, check out the [Wabash Center's website](http://www.wabashcenter.org).

For information about Religion in the Schools, click here. Also, the [Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K-12 Public Schools in the United States](http://www.aar.net/Teaching/Legislation/Guidelines) may be of interest.

The AAR's Teaching and Learning Committee welcomes your ideas and comments about the best way to celebrate this month's focus on teaching and learning. Send suggestions to the Committee Chair, Tina Pippin, at tpippin@agnesscott.edu.