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2009 Member Calendar

Dates are subject to change. Check www.aarweb.org for the latest information.

October

Religious Studies News October issue.
Spotlight on Teaching Fall issue.

October 1. Deadline for Additional Meetings inclusion into the Annual Meeting Program Book.

October 12. Annual Meeting Job Center pre-registration closes.

October 15. Regional development grant awards announced.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.
November 5. Regionally Elected Directors meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
November 5. Executive Committee meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
November 6. Fall Board of Directors meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
November 6. Leadership Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
November 6. Sustainability Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
November 6. Annual Meeting registration and housing opens for 2010 meeting.
November 7–10. Annual Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The AAR Annual Meeting, the world’s largest gathering of scholars of religion, anticipates some 5,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 125 hiring departments.
November 9. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. From 11:45 AM–12:45 PM at the Palais des Congrès, Room 518C.
November 20. New program unit proposals due.

December


TBD. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2010 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/Members/Due.

And keep in mind throughout the year...

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for the Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/Meetings/regions.asp.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. In the Field is a members-only publication that accepts brief announcements, including calls for papers, grants news, conference announcements, and other opportunities appropriate for scholars of religion. Submit text online at www.aarweb.org/Publications/InTheFieldSubmit.asp.

Job Postings. A members-only publication, Job Postings lists job announcements in areas of interest to members. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Career_Services/Job_Postings.
We hope that this issue of Religious Studies News finds you enjoying the beginning of a new academic year. We are very happy to announce that the election of our new Vice President and Student Director is now underway. The Vice President sits on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and the Program Committee, and will be in line to be confirmed as President-elect and eventually President. The Student Director also sits on the Board of Directors and communicates the concerns and issues of our student members. This is your chance to cast your vote to determine our future leadership, so please do so if you have not already. Go to www.aarweb.org to vote. A link to the elections ballot will be available on the home page. Elections close on Wednesday, October 28.

In 2009, we mark the beginning of our Centennial year. We have several unique events planned for the Montréal Annual Meeting to kick off a year of celebration. From a plenary panel focusing on global perspectives of religious Spirituality, and the Secular” by the American Lectures in the History of Religions program, to a Centennial Celebration reception, we hope you will take the time to help us commemorate this most auspicious time in American Academy of Religion history.

The October Spotlight on Teaching focuses on past Excellence in Teaching Award winners and asks them to relate how their pedagogy and teaching methods have changed in the years since they won their awards. This issue also has many suggestions of places of interest, things to do, and sessions to attend during the Annual Meeting in Montréal next month. We hope this Annual Meeting provides an enriching experience for all our members. We hope to see you in Montréal!

Stephanie Gray
Editor

AAR Officer Elections

The next issue of Religious Studies News will be released in March 2010 in online format. There will no longer be a print version of RSN.

Current 2010 members will receive an e-mail link to our new online version of RSN in early March.

From an open forum to comments on articles from readers, we hope that you will find the online version of RSN an exciting way to interact with contributors and the wider membership on topics of relevance and timeliness in the field of religious studies and theology.

A Message from the AAR Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is pleased to place four excellent names on the ballot this year for Vice President and Student Director. We are grateful to each of them for their willingness to serve the Academy in this way:

Once again, AAR members will be able to vote by electronic ballot. A paper ballot will be mailed to members whose e-mail addresses are not on file. Please know that we guarantee the privacy of your vote. We expect a large number of our members to vote in this election. Please be among them.

Rebecca Alpert, Chair
Nominations Committee

c) General: “electable,” “one the average member of the Academy will look upon with respect,” “one whose scholarship and manner is inclusive rather than narrow, sectarian, and/or exclusive.”

How to Vote

All members of the Academy are entitled to vote for all officers. The elected candidates will take office at the end of the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Please vote online at www.aarweb.org. Paper ballots are only sent to those without e-mail addresses on file or by special request (please call 404-727-3059). Vote by Wednesday, October 28, 2009, to exercise this important right.

Vice President

The Vice President serves on the Executive and Program Committees, as well as on the Board of Directors. He will be in line to be confirmed President-Elect in 2010 and President in 2011. During his tenure, the Vice President will have the opportunity to affect AAR policy in powerful ways; in particular, during the presidential year, the incumbent makes all appointments of members to openings on committees.

Student Director

The Student Director is a member of the Board of Directors, representing the particular concerns and issues of AAR student members at large. In addition, the Student Director works with the Graduate Student Committee (GSC).

See page 4 for candidates’ statements
Religious Studies News

Candidates for Vice President

Orlando Espín

Orlando Espín is professor of religious studies and theology at the University of San Diego, where he founded and directs the interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Latina/o Theologianism. Espín earned his doctoral degree at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, defending a dissertation on the grounds for dialogue between Catholicism and the Yoruba (Lukumi) religion in Cuba. He has specialized in the study of popular religions among United States Latina/o, as well as in Latina/o theology. Espín has also focused on the intersection(s) of interculturality, globalization, and religious dialogue. Author or editor of eight books and creator of an award-winning dictionary, Espín has published over three hundred book chapters and articles in professional journals. He has received several national and international awards, and holds an honorary professorship and a honorary doctorate. He has twice been elected president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), was the first Latina/o elected to the board of directors of the Catholic Theological Society of America, founded and was first chief editor of the Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology, and has served in various roles in the Hispanic Theological Institute and in the Hispanic Summer Program of Theology and Religion. Espín has been active in the American Academy of Religion, having served on the steering committee of the Latina/o Culture and Religion Group, as well as a member of the Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession.

Statement on the AAR

THE AMERICAN Academy of Religion has been an important venue for the exchange of ideas and dialogue among scholars of religion. But is the AAR poised to effectively respond to the rapidly changing methodologies and demographics of the twenty-first century? Are we? Who are the AAR, can dream our collective future role as scholars of religion if we are willing to commit to the necessary changes.

As American, the AAR should strive to be ever more inclusive of scholarship and methodologies from all United States ethnic and racial communities, and of the religion issues on which these scholars and methodologies focus their research and attention. Who are, the AAR, have a choice: either we become a truly inclusive society, representative of the evident future of the United States and of religion scholarship, or we will become increasingly associated with the methodological and demographic past. Furthermore, we must find efficient ways of expanding our contacts and dialogue with scholars of religion and methodologies from the other areas of the American continent (i.e., Central and South America, as well as all of North America), without disregard for other areas of the world, and especially those regions and peoples that have historically been disregarded by our religion scholarship or treated exclusively as voiceless objects of our study.

As an Academy, the AAR should strive to implement the original meaning of the term “academy” (i.e., a creative and multi-vocal ambience of dialogue and exploration). Hence, the twenty-first century — through ever more prominent new methodologies, and through significant demographic changes — is inviting us to devise effective new ways for interdisciplinary and intercultural conversations. Future scholarship will increasingly open new approaches and new perspectives, and present us with new issues, for such is the evident and proven thrust of history and of scholarship.

As an academy of scholars of religion, we must strive to understand our scholarly craft through methodological prisms that emphasize the religious and intercultural, inasmuch as religions (the objects of our study) are no longer merely or even mainly expressive of the issues of the Eurocentric world. Therefore, the scholarly study of religion in the globalized world of the twenty-first century needs to challenge the historical preference granted a handful of disciplines and a handful of First World methodologies.

If elected, I hope to contribute to our Academy’s becoming more of what it can be — a twenty-first century society of scholars who are active contributors in both the intellectual and public spheres. The AAR will not respond to the present century by “tweaking” our conventions with “trendier” offerings. What we, who are the AAR, need is to call ourselves into this century, with its challenges, its promises, and its innovative and committed scholarship.

Needless to add that the practicalities for the implementation of the above will depend on our mutual support as AAR members — support sought and earned through dialogical, inclusive means. I commit myself to just such dialogical, inclusive leadership.

Otto Maduro

Otto Maduro earned his Ph.D. from the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) in 1977. He is currently professor of World Christianity at Drew University Theological School (since 1992). Maduro has chaired Drew’s Church and Society Division and the PhD program in Religion and Society. He has printed nearly two hundred articles in twelve languages in journals in more than twenty countries. Maduro’s books in English include Religion and Social Conflicts (Orbis 1982), and the edited volumes The Future of Liberation Theology (Orbis 1989), Expanding the View (Orbis 1990) and Judaism, Christianity, and Liberation (Orbis 1991). Additional books in languages other than English include Mapas para la Fiesta, which was published in Spanish in the United States in 1998 and in seven editions in South America. Maduro’s essay “Marxismo y Religión” won Best Essay of the Year, 1977–1978, in Venezuela. Maduro is associate editor of Cristianismo y Sociedad, Concilio, SIC, Liasiones Internacionales, Matébica, the Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology, and the Journal of World Christianity; formerly also of Social Compass, JAAR, and the Journal of Contemporary Religion. He has also been the director of the Hispanic Summer Program since 2006 (www.hispanicsummerprogram.org). Maduro has won Drew University’s Will Herberg Distinguished Professor Award (1997) and Drew University Scholar/Teacher of the Year Award (2007).

Statement on the AAR

FOR A VARIETY of reasons, the gap in the array of phenomena that we tend to loosely associate with the word “religion” continues to increasingly come under public scrutiny throughout the world. What a growing number of scholars and political leaders in most urban centers of the globe saw for more than a century as a waning, decreasingly influential occurrence in public or private lives — religion — is, at least since the 1960s, on the contrary appearing in more and more corners of the globe, and in a mounting array of dimensions of human life, proving to be a lively, complex, explosive, influential, ambiguous, changing, rich, and in too many ways crucial reality.

This, of course, has a continuous, significant impact in, among others, academia, politics, the media, and the editorial world — in the United States no less than in the rest of the nations of the north Atlantic and the “two-thirds” world. Higher demand of, and interest in, the study of religion, new sources of funding for research on religion, novel opportunities, and requests to publicly discuss religious issues; a broadening of the regions, cultures, traditions, and aspects being considered in the teaching, research, writing, and public policy in relation to religion; as well as wider innovative channels for all of the above, are among the consequences of this heightened presence of religious phenomena.

A key component of this new scenario is what the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez called “the irruption of the poor in history,” i.e., the increasingly visible, challenging, and decisive influence of movements, groups, ideas, traditions, and claims of populations hitherto invisible and marginalized — not just in the religious arena, but, typically in some relation to it (also in politics, the economy, ethical discussions, public policy decision-making, etc.). In the specific area of the study of religion, this irruption of the poor and marginalized has been gradually more and more evident in the AAR — in its membership, committees, and program units, as well as in the variety of presenters, themes, approaches, papers, and discussions of our Annual Meetings.

We can, indeed should, do more in this latter direction, particularly in these challenging but also stimulating times of crisis, with their sudden, unexpected opening of possibilities for the public debate of claims, debates, and perspectives very much stifled throughout the last quarter of a century in the major international decision-making instances, in most of the global media, as well as in significant sectors of academia across the continents — an opening that already begins to show not only in the study of religion, but also in the ways in which diverse religious bodies relate to each other and to public issues, as well as in the conduct of global media and public officials in relation to issues until recently caught within monolithic perspectives with strong religious overtones. This, which is indeed true in the United States, seems to be the case in a rising number of nations today.

Simultaneously, this critical epoch also presents us with novel hurdles for funding our research and its related travel, for presenting and publishing our work, for keeping our jobs and hiring our recent graduates, as well as for financing our graduate students and employing them at teaching and research assistants. There are so many tasks before us to summon our membership to be creative, share information, join efforts, and effectively tackle the tests lying before us.

This is the time, therefore, of both new-fangled hindrances and fresh occasions for expanding the scope and impact of our field.
Candidates for Student Director

Elizabeth V. Lawson

Elizabeth V. Lawson is a doctoral student in Temple University’s Department of Religion. She received both her BA in anthropology/archaeology with honors (2000) and her MA in religion/Islamic studies (2004) from the University of Georgia. Her Master’s thesis surveyed feminist commentary on women’s roles in Islam as prescribed by the Qur’an. Elizabeth currently serves as an AAR student representative for the Mid-Atlantic Region. She is also the head of TUDOR’s Graduate Student Association (GSA). In this role, Lawson is the student liaison for the department, where she is actively involved in Temple’s Teaching and Learning Center, presenting at their annual conferences (2008 and 2009). Her presentation at last year’s conference, “Learning Differently: Teaching Differently: Ways to Accommodate Various Student Learning Styles,” was adopted as a seminar offered throughout the year for faculty and adjuncts at Temple. Lawson has just completed her course work, is studying for her exams, and preparing her dissertation proposal. Her dissertation research focuses on identity constructions for converts to Islam and Judaism in America.

I would like to expand on these programs and events to reach out to students who are not yet ABD. Talking with colleagues across universities, I repeatedly hear them ask how one goes about selecting a dissertation topic. Sessions that focus on formulating a dissertation proposal, engaging in preliminary research, and support for those of us just beginning the writing process would all be beneficial additions to AAR’s graduate student-oriented programming. Such programs can broaden AAR’s outreach by appealing to students who may not quite feel ready to present their research but still want to actively engage our organization and the profession at large.

The workshop from the last Annual Meeting that most caught my interest was “If I Knew Then What I Know Now: Lessons for the First Year Teaching.” I would very much like to see this become an ongoing conversation in the AAR, as I have found in speaking with peers at other institutions that teaching support can be a difficult resource to tap into for some students. As many of us will likely find ourselves with a heavy teaching load as we begin our careers, it is important to develop ongoing mentoring programs to help us prepare for “the trenches,” and to further lay the groundwork for dynamic, successful career development.

In my quest to find these answers, I discovered that many of my peers were in the same confused position, often not knowing who to turn to for answers. This predicament motivated me to become the head of TUDOR’s Graduate Student Association. In the past three years, I have implemented a new orientation program for incoming graduate students, aimed in the coordination of Temple’s internal program review for the department, and helped coordinate professional conferences and social gatherings. My goal as student liaison is not only to facilitate relationships between students, but also students and faculty. Supporting these interactions is the reason why professional graduate communities like that of AAR is of great importance to us as budding teachers, scholars, and mentors.

In recent years, the AAR Graduate Student Committee (GSC) has dedicated itself to incorporating programs that bring together our community of graduate students, focusing on initiatives that aim to provide professional support (i.e., last year’s session on “Careers beyond the Academy”). The GSC also sponsors social gatherings, which serve as a more informal way of networking. In many cases, valuable academic connections are made over a beer or a cup of coffee—useful information is shared and professional collaborations are formed.

In short, I would be honored to serve as Student Director and would be committed to the development of existing programs while also seeking to respond to stated student needs with the creative and institutional resources available from the Board of Directors.

Statement on the AAR

Being a Graduate student is a juggling act. We simultaneously must attend seminars, stay on top of our research, learn new languages, teach, and maintain commitments and relationships in our nonacademic lives.

As Student Director, I would plan to support the already strong resources of the AAR Graduate Student Committee on a number of these topics (including, for example, Special Topics Forums at the Annual Meeting). I would also hope to develop ways to address some of the other issues listed above in collaboration with graduate students and younger faculty members who are navigating similar professional constraints.

During my time at Yale, I have been a teaching fellow for a range of courses, including “Religious Ethics and Modern Moral Issues” with Gene Outka; “Faith and Globalization” with Tony Blair and Miroslav Volf; and “Variations: Religion and Politics in the Black Community” with Emilie Tornes, with whom I also had the privilege of helping to organize (as staff assistant) the interdisciplinary Middle Passage Conversations conference at Yale in April 2008. Thus, in addition to my academic location in a department that houses a significant number of subspecialties in the study of religion, I have other experiences that have contributed to my conviction that interdisciplinary work in the study of religion is both difficult and vital. Of course, the question of what constitutes the study of religion poses a challenge for those of us in our classrooms and in our theorizing.

Along with extant programs of the Graduate Student Committee and in conjunction with other committees, I would hope to contribute to a conversation about the importance of graduate courses on Theories and/or Methods in the Study of Religion. Such a conversation might focus on resources on these topics from the syllabus Project. It might also take conceptual cues from forthcoming issues of the JAAR as to what “growing edges” and challenges remain in our theorizing and our teaching about the study of religion.

Finally, it might also be worth exploring whether and to what degree the offering — perhaps even (at-will) departmental requirement? — of such courses might be recommended by the AAR as a “best practice” for graduate education in the study of religion.

In short, I would be honored to serve as Student Director and would be committed to the development of existing programs while also seeking to respond to stated student needs with the creative and institutional resources available from the Board of Directors.

Statement on the AAR

A N AAR MEMBER since 2003, I have attended all but one of those Annual Meetings (2007, for the birth of my daughter the day after the conference ended) and have been active in the Religion and Ecology Group and presented a paper at the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Group at the 2008 Annual Meeting. I received a MA in religion from Yale Divinity School and am currently a doctoral candidate in the department of religious studies at Yale University. My interests include environmental ethics, especially the ascription of value to freshwater, which is the topic of my dissertation; the poetry, ethics, and legacy of civil rights activist Pauli Murray; and bioethics at the edges of life.

Through my degree programs and in conversation with peers at other institutions, I have become attentive to a range of issues facing graduate students, including mentorship (with faculty and with doctoral students who are farther advanced in their degree programs), as well as the experience and voicelessness in the classroom and in the wider academy. A particular concern for doctoral students in the next few years will be career development — navigating the demands of publication with concern for pedagogy and the formation of students (to which the AAR has been attentive), as well as currentization of labor and, more recently, the effects of the contemporary economic downturn on academic hiring. As Student Director, I would plan to support the already strong resources of the AAR Graduate Student Committee on a number of these topics (including, for example, Special Topics Forums at the Annual Meeting). I would also hope to develop ways to address some of the other issues listed above in collaboration with graduate students and younger faculty members who are navigating similar professional constraints.

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In short, I would be honored to serve as Student Director and would be committed to the development of existing programs while also seeking to respond to stated student needs with the creative and institutional resources available from the Board of Directors. 
**AAR Launches Centennial Celebration at the Montréal Meeting**

IN 2009, we mark the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the organization that became the American Academy of Religion. Beginning in 1909 as the Association of Biblical Instructors in American Colleges and Secondary Schools and continuously known as the National Association of Biblical Instructors, the AAR took its current name in 1963. Over the last century the study of religion has grown in nearly every way possible. The number of scholars interested in religion has expanded dramatically. In the same century, the number of theological schools and religious studies departments in North America has also grown. The field itself has become far more rich and complex. And the membership in our Academy has increased markedly, from a few hundred to over 11,000.

In order to celebrate this century of scholarship, the AAR will launch a series of special events and programs. These will begin at the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal and continue through the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta. Here is some of what is in store:

In addition to preparing his presidential plenary address, 2009 AAR President Mark Juengensmeyer has put together a unique set of plenary panels for the Montréal meeting. For the Centennial kickoff, these panels will replace our usual single plenary speaker system. Mark has gathered a truly remarkable group of speakers for the Centennial in Montréal. One panel, featuring Asyamardi Arza (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University), Shirinata Goonwani (Radha Raman Temple), Koshi Mori (Doshisha University), Kim Knott (University of Leeds), and Sylvia Marcos (Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos and Claremont Graduate University) will treat "Global Perspectives on Religious Studies." Another panel, entitled "Rethinking Secularism," will bring Charles Taylor (McGill University), José Casanova (Georgetown University), Saba Mahmood (University of California, Berkeley), and Craig Calhoun (New York University) together to address this timely topic. And a third panel, entitled "Islam and Modernity," will feature Tariq Ramadan (University of Oxford), Nilüfer Golé (L’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), and Robin Wright (Washington Post), with Reza Aslan (University of California, Riverside) presiding. The sole single plenary speaker for the Montreal meeting (finally) is Tariq Ramadan, whose address will be entitled "Contemporary Islam: The Meaning and the Need of a Radical Reform."

We will do other special programming in Montréal, notably at a Centennial Reception that will honor past presidents, past executive directors, and distinguished guests. Following Mark Juengensmeyer’s Presidential Plenary, we encourage conference participants to attend the reception in the Palais des Congrès (PDC–710) to reflect on the history of the AAR and envision the future of the Academy. Please join us to help celebrate this special evening!

The American Lectures in the History of Religion program, a longstanding AAR enterprise, has made special plans for the “AAR/AHRLC Centennial Scholars and Artists Panels” that will convene both at the Montréal and Atlanta Annual Meetings. The Montréal event is entitled “Our Home and Native Land: Colonial Encounters and the History of Religion, Spirituality, and the Secular” and will feature George Elliott Clarke (University of Toronto), Alanis Obomsawin (National Film Board of Canada), Nelson Maldonado-Torres (University of California, Berkeley), and Irén M. Talamantez (University of California, Santa Barbara). The AAR/AHRLC event in Atlanta in 2010 will be entitled “Bondage and Liberation: Questioning Deeds to Slavery and Endurement to Debt.”

The **Journal of the American Academy of Religion** is also helping to observe the AAR’s Centennial. The editorial board of JAAR has put forth a formal call for papers that examines the ways in which the study of religion has changed over the last several decades. This special issue of JAAR will be entitled “The AAR at 100: A Centennial Reflection.”

Over the last year, the AAR Executive Staff has worked closely with our Board of Directors and a local Atlanta marketing firm to “rebrand” the AAR for the Centennial year. Last November, the Board approved a new logo; and beginning this fall, we will rework all of our publications into a common format and look. The Executive Staff has also made arrangements for a special sponsorship program that will allow publishers and other friends of the Academy to recognize our Centennial. These “gold sponsor” organizations will receive special attention in the Montréal Programs Book. Edwin Melissen Press and the American Theological Library Association have already become sponsors and we expect several other groups to do so as well.

In an effort to support AAR student members and as a means to forward our international connections efforts, this fall we will announce the start of our Centennial International Travel Awards for Dissertation Research. Our plans are to hold a competitive program in which we will award two $5,000 research grants to students who plan to do dissertation research abroad. The inaugural awards will be funded with unrestricted contributions to the Academy Fund received during the previous fiscal year. The Centennial Fund, a special fund for contributions secured during the Centennial Celebration, will provide AAR members and friends an opportunity to help secure the future of the International Travel Awards. 2010 AAR President Ann Taves will continue the Centennial celebrations at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta. In addition to her Presidential Plenary, under Ann’s guidance the Atlanta program will return to single plenary speakers who will address the broad theme of “Religion and Science,” with particular attention to the ways that new research on the brain/mind and new scholarship on psychology can inform thinking about religion.

Plenary speakers for the Atlanta Annual Meeting include Frans de Waal (a noted primatologist from Emory University), Anne Harrington (who teaches the history of science at Harvard University), and Jonathan Z. Smith (who will speak at our Lifetime of Learning Plenary).

We hope that the AAR membership gathered at the Annual Meetings in 2009 and 2010 will take advantage of the many special programs we have planned to help the American Academy of Religion celebrate its Centennial!

---

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Donate online at www.aarweb.org/donate
Centennial Scholars Panel

“Our Home and Native Land”: Colonial Encounters and the History of Religion, Spirituality, and the Secular

O colonial powers depend on the force of religion to subjugate peoples and occupy land. Do colonized peoples, by contrast, resist their colonizers by means of a spiritual encounter with the land they inhabit? Both concepts – religion and spirituality – live in the academy alongside the concept of the secular. With these terms in mind, we ask how the study of religion focus or obscure the meanings of colonialism and the hybrid traditions that live in its wake, especially in the Americas?

Seeking both to recognize and interrogate the history of our discipline, the History of Religions Jur, under the auspices of the American Lectures in the History of Religions, has convened the Centennial Scholars Panel. Four distinguished scholars and artists will discuss how their work explores some of the ways that colonialism has shaped categories of religion, spirituality, and the secular, especially within the Americas. With increasing awareness of the legacies of colonialism for the study of religion, scholars have gained perspective on the discipline’s contributions both to naturalizing colonialism and to confronting colonial and postcolonial uses of religion for identity creation and domination. The title, taken from the Canadian anthem, points to the unavoidable ambiguity of being “at home” in postcolonial worlds. Gathering together such creative and interdisciplinary conversation partners, the panel offers an extraordinary chance to rethink what it is to be at home in the study of religion.

Alanis Obomsawin
Alanis Obomsawin, a member of the Abenaki Nation, is one of Canada’s most distinguished documentary filmmakers. Her body of work speaks profoundly to the continued legacies of colonial power for the religious and political contexts of First Nations peoples in North America. For almost forty years, Obomsawin has directed documentaries at the National Film Board of Canada, including Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance. In 1985, she was made a member of the Order of Canada, in recognition of her dedication to the well-being of her people and the preservation of the First Nations’ heritage through her filmmaking and activism. In 2009, she was honored with the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Toronto Hot Docs Documentary Film Festival, which cited her as a “master storyteller” with a profound ability to clarify the complicated histories of First Nations living within colonialism.

George Elliott Clarke
George Elliott Clarke is one of Canada’s leading poets, playwrights, and literary critics. He has long taken religion as a critical and creative entry point for his scholarly and artistic explorations of many dimensions of African-Canadian history and experience. His essays in Odyssey Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature (University of Toronto Press, 2002), especially “Meat All Blackness Be American?: Locating Canada in Border’s Tightrope Time,” “Nationalizing Gilroy’s The Black Atlantic,” and “Treason of the Black Intellectuals,” adroitly navigate the complex relationships among nation, community, language, and race, and confront directly the question of what it is for intellectuals to be “at home” in postcolonial contexts. His Execution Poems (Gaspera Press, 2001) won the Governor General’s Award for Poetry. In 2005, Clarke was given the Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award and was named a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Fellow. In addition to being a poet, playwright, librettist, and literary critic, Clarke is the E. J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres
Nelson Maldonado-Torres is associate professor in the department of ethnic studies at the University of Berkeley, and the author of Apaíta’s Way: Views from the Underside of Modernity (Duke University Press, 2008). He has thought critically and compassionately about how a variety of colonial and postcolonial encounters have shaped our understanding of religion. Religion, in his view, has informed and manufactured civilizational boundaries as well as shaped constructions of the modern versus the nonmodern with all its withering negative stereotypes. Maldonado-Torres also examines how the process of “othering” has informed our notions of religion and spirituality. Not only does he look at the way human beings were treated as colonial and racial subjects in the Americas, but he also examines how the “black” person, the Jew, and the Muslim are treated in religiopolitical and philosophical discourses. His ongoing work is on the construction of the idea of religion, namely the genealogy of religion in imperial and colonial contexts.

Inés Talamantez
Inés Talamantez, a long-time AAR member, is a professor in the department of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she displays a wide range of pedagogical and research interests ranging from gender and religion and ritual studies to religion and ecology. Talamantez’s defining contributions have been to the burgeoning fields of Native American religions and indigenous studies. Through both impassioned and inspired teaching and creative and lyrical scholarship, her work often opens ways to imagine the colonial encounter. Her research on Mescalero Apache cosmology and ceremonialism, with a specific focus on the initiation rituals of Apache girls, has forwarded critical scholarship in religion in many ways: from challenging assumptions about the measure of time to rethinking the relations among human embodiment and natural environments.

The Past Look of the AAR

The New Look of the AAR

The AAR Centennial Fund

In 1996 the American Academy of Religion formally launched the Academy Fund, the core of AAR’s fundraising program. Encouraged by an earlier capital campaign and quiet giving opportunities, the Academy Fund has continued to attract donors and has seen increasing financial support over the past thirteen years.

As the AAR turns 100 we introduce the Centennial Fund, a special edition of the Academy Fund. The Centennial Fund will be supported by donations which are received during the AAR’s Centennial Celebration, from August 1, 2009 – December 31, 2010. Members can choose to have their gift support the General Centennial Fund or can designate their gift toward the International Dissertation Research Grants.

The General Centennial Fund will provide operational and program support to the AAR, including individual and collaborative research grants and exciting new technological enhancements and networking opportunities that will benefit members. Keep an eye on the Bulletin and RSN for more news about this.

The International Dissertation Research Grant is a new program that will provide a much needed resource to our junior scholars by providing funding to perform dissertation research outside their home country. In the future, we hope to endow this project.

We have asked our staff and our board to carefully consider their donations to either of these funds and we encourage every member to make a charitable contribution to support the Centennial Fund. We suggest any new donor consider a minimum initial gift of $100 to commemorate our 100 years. In an effort to enable more members to support the Centennial Fund we have introduced recurring giving, which allows the donor to make payments on a credit card, on a schedule of your choice. Members can also make a pledge to support the Centennial Fund. To ensure your pledge is credited toward the Centennial Fund, pledges must be completed by December 31, 2010. Each gift makes a difference.

As the AAR begins to celebrate the second century and as the Centennial Fund kicks off, we thank you for your generosity and ask for your continued support.

The AAR Centennial Fund gives cause to examine the history of what the AAR has accomplished and to give thought to future goals. With this in mind, AAR has worked with Spitfire Media in Atlanta over the past year on new branding. The AAR Board of Directors accepted the recommendation of Executive Office staff and adopted a new logo for the organization. The new logo embraces a fresh, clean look and is evocative of the new horizons of scholarship the Academy will explore. AAR is in the process of changing over all of its branding to this new design and aesthetic. The goal is to showcase a cohesive and professional look for the organization and to get us started on the next one hundred years.
Montreal, the metropolis has everything a big city can offer. **BUT MONTREAL IS ALSO ONE OF A KIND, A MULTICULTURAL CITY THAT BLENDS ITS FRENCH ACCENT WITH THAT OF OVER EIGHTY OTHER ETHNIC COMMUNITIES AND CHARM VISITORS WITH ITS EURO-AMERICAN AMBIANCE. MONTREAL IS INNOVATIVE AND INVIGORATING, OFFERING A WHIRLWIND OF CULTURAL CREATIONS, BOTH TRADITIONAL AND MODERN. ITS DOWNTOWN BUSTLES WITH LIFE AT THE FOOT OF ITS MOUNTAIN, WHILE HISTORY IS ROOTED IN THE OLD QUARTERS NEAR THE RIVER. WITH ITS YEAR-ROUND PARTY ATMosphere, MONTREAL BEATS TO THE RHYTHM OF ITS FESTIVALS: JAZZ, COMEDY, CINEMA, FIREWORKS, AND MORE! STROLL THROUGH ITS COLORFUL STREETS AND TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOODS REPRESENTATIVE OF A MOSAIC OF NATIONS. . . .**

The architecture of Montreal is characterized by the juxtaposition of the old and the new and a wide variety of styles, the legacy of two successive colonizations by the French and the British, and the close presence to its south of the architecture of the United States. Much like Quebec City, the city of Montreal had fortifications, but they were destroyed between 1804 and 1817. For over a century and a half, Montreal was the industrial and financial center of Canada. The variety of buildings included factories, warehouses, mills, and refineries that today provide a legacy of historic and architectural interest, especially in the downtown area and in Old Montreal. Many historical buildings in Old Montreal are still in their original form, notably the impressive nineteenth century headquarters of all major Canadian banks on Saint Jacques Street.

In 1958, Montreal started development projects for a new subway system and underground city, enlarged the harbor, and opened the St. Lawrence Seaway. New buildings replaced the old, including Montreal's two tallest skyscrapers: the forty-nine-story Royal Bank of Canada Building and the forty-six-story Place Victoria. The Summer Olympics arrived in 1976 and with them, one of Montreal's most recognizable landmarks, the Olympic Stadium.

Chinese, Eastern European, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, and Thai — provide sufficient diversity for culinary feasting at area restaurants representing some seventy-five ethnic groups. Other restaurants offer fare ranging from appetizers of sweet breads in gingerbread crust to entrees of chicken legs stuffed with parsley pâte. Bring your own-wine restaurants on Prince-Arthur Street and the Square Saint-Louis are popular year-round. Days tend to start with café au lait sipped at a leisurely pace while evening meals often end with platters of Quebec-produced cheese. While diners can order à la carte, the table d'hôte — two- to four-course offerings — are typically more economical. For pricier splurging, the menu dégustation — a five- to seven-course tasting showcase — includes soup, salad, fish, sorbet, meat dish, dessert, and coffee or tea. Such a meal, along with a bottle of wine, can last for hours and provide a lifetime of memories.

**Performing Arts**

Inherit the Wind

5170 Côte-Ste-Catherine
Segal Center for the Performing Arts at the Saidye Bronfman Center for the Arts
Presented by Ernst and Young
By Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee
Directed by Greg Kramer
Thursday, November 5, 8:00 PM
Saturday, November 7, 8:30 PM
Sunday, November 8, 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
Speaking truth to power and exposing ignorance, intolerance, and injustice — these are the powerful themes at the heart of Inherit the Wind, one of the twentieth century’s most compelling and enduring dramas. The play is a fictionalized telling of the infamous “Monkey Trial” of 1925 — when a Tennessee schoolteacher named John T. Scopes challenged a state law banning the teaching of evolution by introducing his students to Charles Darwin’s theories. He was prosecuted by William Jennings Bryan and defended by star attorney Clarence Darrow in what would turn out to become one of the greatest trials of the century.

**Cinémation Film Festival**

Cinema Imperial
1430 de Bleury Street
www.cinemationfilmfestival.com
Since its inception in 1995, the Cinémation French Film Festival has presented audiences with French-language films of the highest quality and originality. Cinémation is the annual rendezvous of cinephiles to discover exceptional new feature films judiciously selected from nearly 200 entries viewed annually by its professional team of programmers. The festival will run November 5–15.

**Museums**

Biosphère, Environment Museum
160, Chemin Tour-de-l’Ile
Sainte-Hélène Island
514-283-5000
www.biosphere.qc.ca
The Biosphère is an exclusive venue to better understand major environmental issues, including those related to water, air, climate change, sustainable development, and responsible consumption.

Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre
5151, Côte Ste-Catherine Road
514-345-2605
The exhibition weaves the catastrophic events of the Holocaust into a tapestry of Jewish history and heritage, exploring the richness and diversity of Jewish life before, during, and after the Shoah. What makes the exhibition unique is its connection to Montreal. Approximately 5,000–8,000 survivors live in the Montreal area, making the city home to the third largest survivor population in the world. Over 418 original artifacts (bequeathed to the museum by Montreal survivors), 372 photographs, and twenty films give visitors a “locally focused” lens through which to reflect on the Holocaust.

**Montreal? Oui, s’il vous plaît!**
NAVIGATING the Annual Meeting may seem a little more challenging this year in Montréal, since the headquarters hotels are about a kilometer away from the Palais des Congrès, where Registration, the Exhibit Hall, Job Center, and the majority of sessions will be located.

Shuttles
To facilitate easy movement between locations, the AAR will be running three complimentary shuttle buses in a loop stopping at the La Centre Sheraton, the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth, and the Palais des Congrès. Buses will depart every fifteen minutes on the following schedule:

- Friday, November 6: 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday, November 7: 6:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday, November 8: 6:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Monday, November 9: 6:30 AM – 8:00 PM
- Tuesday, November 10: 6:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Métro
In addition, Annual Meeting attendees may want to use Montréal’s Métro system. Fares are CAN$2.75 each way, but a three-day tourist pass with unlimited rides is only CAN$17.00. The Palais des Congrès is located adjacent to the Place-d’Armes station, making it accessible from locations throughout the city. From La Centre Sheraton it is a short walk to the Bonaventure station, and from the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth, it is a short walk to the Square-Victoria station.

More information about the Métro, including maps, fares, and hours of operation, can be found at www.mtm.info/English/metro/index.html.

Underground City
Finally, Montréal’s underground city provides an easy way to get between destinations without having to brave the cold November weather. The city’s vast network of pedestrian walkways below the city. There are thirty-three kilometers of walking, with the métro (subway), commuter trains, and buses also converging here. The passage ways also serve a more leisurely purpose as they provide access to forty entertainment venues and attractions.

Crescent Street
Known as one of the world’s friendliest and liveliest cities, Montréal is recognized for its cosmopolitan side and its openness. In the middle of it all is famous Crescent Street, the heart of downtown Montréal for tourists and locals alike. A wonderful sense of hospitality characterizes this tiny strip. Its typical architecture tends to create a warm and atmospheric Famous for its specialty shops, art galleries, and designer boutiques, the likes of Paradox, Hugo Boss, and Matt Bailey, Crescent shopping is the ideal mix of style and class.

Marché Bonsecours
350 Saint-Paul Street East
Recognized as one of the ten most beautiful heritage buildings in Canada, the Marché Bonsecours is a proud showcase for Québec artists, designers, and artisans. It houses fifteen boutiques, including the Comité des métiers d’art du Québec (Québec’s Craft Council), which offer original creations at artisan prices. Watch glass-blowing artists at work in the Gogo Glass boutique and enjoy Québec cheese products in the three restaurants and cafés-terrasses.

Getting Around in Montréal

Annual Meeting Performances and Exhibitions

THE AAR is showcasing the following performances and exhibitions during this year’s Annual Meeting.

Sweetgrass Singers (A8–402)
Sunday, 8:30–9:30 PM
The Sweetgrass Singers are a group of Kaniengkha (Mohawk) women from the community of Kahawake. The singers are a nonprofit singing society that supports Mohawk language and cultural initiatives. The women are a group of mothers who are raising their children with the language, culture, and traditions of the Kaniengkha people. They are part of the six-nations Haudenosaunee confederacy and are known throughout the confederacy for their songs. The women have traveled throughout Eastern Canada and the United States sharing their stories, songs, and dances with both First Nations and nonindigenous people. The Sweetgrass Singers always encourage audience members to participate in the songs and dances that celebrate Kaniengha culture and look forward to the opportunity to share their stories, songs, and dances with members of the AAR.

Bharatanatyam by Hari Krishnan and inDANCE (A8–403)
Sunday, 8:30–9:30 PM
Bharatanatyam is a dance form traditionally performed by courtesans and temple-women known as devadasis or bhogamullus in South India. When their lifestyles were criminalized by the state in 1947, their practices were reinvented, “classicalized,” and reinterpreted by upper-class elites. Hari Krishnan, artist-in-Residence at Wesleyan University and Artistic Director of inDANCE, has studied dance with women from over ten different devadasi lineages and this session will offer excerpts from their very rare repertoire. It presents a counterpart to the universalized and reinstated forms of “classical Indian dance” seen elsewhere. Commentary on the pieces will be provided by Davesh Soneji of McGill University, and will be accompanied by live music.

The Red Box (A9–403)
Monday, 8:00–10:30 PM
The Red Box is a play whose love story begins in modern-times with Victor, who has never before told his story. Barbara, with a hidden agenda of her own, gets Victor to confront his complicated past as a Holocaust survivor. As the play travels through his memory, Victor relives falling in love for the first time with a non-Jewish boy, coming to terms with his sexuality, and experiencing his own family’s dysfunctions, all while the Nazi party is rising to power. He then lays out the series of mistakes he made from thinking with his heart, including running away to decide Berlin, until he finds himself as a prioner in a concentration camp. Victor is perceived for being both gay and Jewish. It is Victor’s detailed path of survival and the people he meets along the way that cause him to question relationships, spirituality, and the unfathomable atrocity he was forced into.

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Sacred Africa: Ancient Art from Sub-Saharan Africa at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts
1380 Sherbrooke Street West
514-285-2000
www.mmfa.qc.ca

The exhibition features fifty stunning pieces of high-quality, traditional African art—objects, sculptures, and masks—from the Sub-Saharan region.

Notre-Dame Basilica
110 Notre-Dame Street West
514-842-2925
www.habitatpamdim.org/en

Montréal’s Notre-Dame Basilica has nothing in common with Paris’s except the name. It is a neogothic building dating from 1829, constructed on the site of a much older and smaller church, which had been outgrown by its parishioners. Notre-Dame is noted for its lavish and beautiful interior—stained glass windows, paintings, statues, gold-tipped polychrome carvings, and a rich altarpiece. It also has a notable Casavant organ and its largest bell, le Gros Boudin, is the biggest on the continent.

Mount Royal
1260 Remembrance Road
514-843-8240

The lookout on top of Mount Royal is an excellent goal for an urban walk. It is in Mount Royal Park, laid out long ago by Frederick Law Olmsted, who is best known for landscaping New York’s Central Park. From the beautifully appointed lookout terrace, downtown Montréal is at your feet, with a view to the river and beyond to the Montreegian Hills. Sightlines to landmarks are marked. The top of Mount Royal is divided between the park and two large cemeteries, the Catholic Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and the nonnondenominational Mount Royal. Both cemeteries can provide interesting walks for those of poetic tastes and together they form a necropolis among the largest in the world.

The Olympic Stadium
4141 Avenue Pierre-De Coubertin
514-252-4141

The Olympic Stadium was built for Montréal’s 1976 Olympics and is still used for some sports events and major concerts. An elevator ascends the world’s tallest inclined tower to a lookout on top; tickets are for sale at the base. The stadium is one of Montréal’s most curious pieces of architecture.

Biodôme
4777 Avenue Pierre-De Coubertin
514-868-3000
www2.ville.Montreal.qc.ca/biodome

The word Biodôme comes from the Greek bios, life, and dome, house. An oasis of Québec-grown products in the three restaurants and cafés-terrasses.

SHOPPING

Underground Pedestrian Network

The name “Underground City” refers to the vast network of pedestrian walkways below the city. There are thirty-three kilometers of connecting passageways beneath downtown, with the métro (subway), commuter trains, and buses also converging here. The passageways also serve a more leisurely purpose as they provide access to forty entertainment venues and attractions.

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A T THE ANNUAL Meeting in Montréal, the AAR’s Sustainability Task Force will host a half-day workshop addressing the roles and methods of religion and theology teachers wanting to infuse sustainability topics into the curriculum. The workshop, “Religious Studies in an Age of Global Warming: Transforming Ourselves, Our Students, and Our Universities,” will be from 1:30 pt to 5:30 pt on Friday, November 6, and will be led by Roger S. Gottlieb, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and task force member, and Stephanie Kaza, University of Vermont. Task Force members Barbara A. B. Patterson (chair), Emory University; Isabel Mukonyora, Western Kentucky University; Laurel D. Kearns, Drew University and Drew Theological School; and Sarah McFarland Taylor (former chair), Northwestern University, will serve as breakout group facilitators at the workshop.

Gottlieb teaches in the Department of Humanities and Arts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and is one of the world’s leading voices of religious environmentalism. His works in this area include This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment (the first comprehensive textbook in the field); A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet’s Future (the first book-length analysis of religious environmentalism); The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology; Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change; and A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth.

Kaza is Director of the Environmental Program at the University of Vermont, where she teaches environmental humanities. She is best known for her work in Buddhist environmental thought and Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Her books include Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism; Hooked: Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume; and Mindfully Green. At the University of Vermont, Kaza works closely with the Office of Sustainability on campus greening and socially responsible investing.

Teaching the environmental crisis poses unique challenges and opportunities for higher education. The scope and extent of the threat demands that faculty inform themselves about a host of practical, theological, moral, historical, and political concerns that probably were not part of their original scholarly field. At the same time, the encompassing nature of the threat touches all of our lives.

Faculty, like students, experience fear, grief, and despair as we witness the vanishing species, changed weather, and polluted waters of our planet. Yet the very universality and severity of the environmental crisis also provide a unique opportunity to make our teaching intensely relevant to the world outside the classroom, and to experience the deep satisfaction of offering teaching that is personally, morally, and politically important.

This workshop will explore these challenges and opportunities, giving participants the chance to examine their own responses to the environmental crisis, to engage with faculty concerning teaching resources, sample syllabi, course modules, and instructional themes, and ways to connect with other academic departments and the wider campus sustainability movement. Material will be provided to support the development of “Religion and Environment” courses, and integration of environmental themes into courses such as “Introduction to Religious Studies,” “Social Ethics,” “Religion and Politics,” or studies of particular religions.

The workshop will take up relevant theological issues (e.g., ecological interpretations of scripture), moral problems (e.g., stewardship versus biocentric ethical models), the role of religious environmentalism in relation to other social movements (e.g., feminism, racial justice), and engaged teaching techniques designed to (re)connect students to these crucial moral issues and their meaning for life on earth.

“This workshop crosses a multitude of subfield boundaries and appeals broadly to scholars across the curriculum who wish to address the most critical issues facing the Academy — and the world — today,” said Sarah McFarland Taylor, former chair of the Task Force. “If you attend one workshop in Montréal this year, make it this one!”

You may register for the workshop when you register for the Annual Meeting, or by using the form on this page and faxing it to 301-694-5124. The registration fee for the workshop is $50 until October 20, 2009. After that, registration is $75 onsite only. You are encouraged to register early as the workshop is limited to the first seventy-five participants.
T HE ACADEMIC Relations Committee will begin a three-year sequence of workshops exploring the implications of the Teagle/AAR White Paper “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” at the Annual Meeting in Montreal on Friday, November 6, 9:00 AM-3:45 PM.

This year’s daylong workshop, “Three Religion Majors Meet in a Café: What Do They Have in Common?” will address five common characteristics the White Paper identified of a religious studies major: intercultural and comparative, multidisciplinary, critical, integrative, and creative and constructive. In this interactive workshop, participants will have an opportunity to discover and discuss this constellation of characteristics.

Participants will then explore the presence of these characteristics in the design of majors in different institutional contexts (small public, large public, private, and theological). The workshop will conclude with presentations and discussions about how we address these in ways attentive both to our responsibilities as educators and to the students and the reasons they are in our programs. “In light of the findings of the AAR/Teagle Working Group and from our own conversations with department chairs over the past few years, sustained discussion about the shape of the major in religious studies and its relation to liberal education in the twenty-first century is more important than ever,” said Fred Glennon, chair of the Academic Relations Committee.

The interactive workshop will feature several speakers, panels, and breakout sessions. Eugene V. Gallagher will open the workshop with a discussion titled “The Convergent Characteristics of the Religious Studies Major: Findings of the Teagle Working Group.” Gallagher, the Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies at Connecticut College and founding director of the Mankoff Center for Teaching and Learning, was a member of that working group.

A panel will follow addressing how the five characteristics play out in different institutional contexts. A breakout session led by members of the Academic Relations Committee immediately follows, which will allow participants to discuss these issues in depth.

Following lunch, which is provided, will be a session on student dynamics, their motives for study, and how students can be targeted with the characteristics in mind. Another breakout session will allow for participation from attendees.

The workshop will conclude with a plenary address from Gallagher.

“Our hope is that this workshop will not only continue the conversation begun by the AAR/Teagle Working Group but also extend it to illuminate some best practices for curriculum and program development,” Glennon said.

Colleges in your institution, such as chairs, other faculty members, faculty being developed to assume leadership responsibilities, and deans, may be interested in attending this workshop. Chairs may want to bring a team of faculty or send a designated faculty person.

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. The cost for the workshop is $100, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a book on the topic.

The topics for past chairs workshops have been:

- 2008 Annual Meeting
  Leadership Workshop — Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know

- 2007 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Faculty Conversations

- 2006 Annual Meeting
  Leadership Workshop — The Religion Major and Liberal Education

- 2005 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Expanding the Pie: Strategies for Managing and Growing Departmental Resources

- 2004 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Being a Chair in Today’s Consumer Culture: Navigating in the Knowledge Factory

- 2003 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair

- Summer 2003
  Chairs Workshop — The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building and Sustaining Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands

- 2002 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department

- 2001 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Evaluating and Advancing Teaching in the Religious Studies Department

- 2000 Annual Meeting
  Chairs Workshop — Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department

We look forward to seeing you in Montréal!

The Academic Relations Committee: Fred Glennon, chair, Edwin David Aponte, Chester Gillis, L. DeAné Lagerquist, Rosetta Ross, and Steve Young.
As religious studies teachers, we tend to be skilled at integrating textual material, social historical analysis, ethnography, sociological study, and other approaches into our courses, but we often neglect to include a sensitivity to and sensibility of religious constructions of space and place, despite the fact that these components are central to religious experience. This half-day workshop is intended to aid faculty in the development of classroom techniques that incorporate the study of religious space and place into our courses. Participants in the workshop will: 1) Deepen their intellectual sensitivity to space and place as components of religion; and 2) Learn specific techniques to employ religious space and place in the classroom.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA:

12:00–1:00 PM
Jeanne Kilde, University of Minnesota
Introductions and Address on Theoretical Understandings and Methods in the Study of Space and Place and Religious Meaning
This session will be to provide an overview of approaches to the study of space and place for nonexperts. It will focus on how the various approaches can be deployed in the classroom to help students ground their study of religious space and place.

1:15–2:15 PM
Lunch (provided). Lunch groups will be encouraged to reflect on how the theoretical material presented in the first session might be applied to special places they already use in their classrooms and lectures, or locations they have been to or plan to visit that they would like to incorporate in their courses. Participants will begin to think critically about the types of spaces/place they might integrate into their courses.

2:15–4:00 PM
Panel discussion with audience on the use of space and place by professors of religious studies whose work focuses on a variety of religious traditions and geographical locations. Panelists include:
- Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Syracuse University
- David Simonowitz, University of California, Los Angeles
- David R. Bains, Samford University
- Susan L. Graham, St. Peter’s College
- Barbara Ambros, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Leonard Norman Primiano, Cabrini College
Each of these scholars focus their research on the study of space/place and will share their classroom strategies pertaining to the study of a range of religious traditions.

4:00–4:15 PM
Coffee/Tea Break

4:15–5:15 PM
Small group break-out sessions. Group members will focus on the syllabi they have brought with them, discussing ways to incorporate strategies posed during the panel discussion.

5:15–6:00 PM
Full group discussion, questions, and answers.

Registration is limited to the first 45 participants. No fee is required. Lunch will be provided.
Religion and Media Workshop

**Texts, Scripts, Codes: How Religions and Media Make the World We Live In**

Katharine Rhodes Henderson, Auburn Theological Seminary, Presiding

Friday, November 6, 2009
9:30 AM–5:00 PM
Montréal, QC, Canada

TO REGISTER

You can register online when you register for the Annual Meeting at www.aarweb.org/meetings/annual_meeting/current_meeting. Or complete the information below, arrange payment, and send via fax (1–330–963–0319) or surface mail (Religion and Media Workshop, c/o Experient, 2451 Enterprise Parkway, Twinsburg, OH 44087, USA).

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Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. Send your registration form and payment of USD $55.00 before November 6, 2009 (after November 6, register onsite with an increased registration fee of USD $70).

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

- **Check:** (Payable to “AAR Annual Meeting,” include “Religion and Media Workshop” on the memo line)
- **Visa**
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**ANNUAL MEETING NEWS**

**Religion and Media Workshop**

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Katharine Rhodos Henderson, Auburn Theological Seminary, Presiding

Friday, November 6, 2009
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**Cell Phones in Canada**

SOME CELL PHONES or calling plans may not allow your phone to work in Canada. Please check with your carrier. Even if your phone will work, another consideration you may have is the cell phone bills that you may face when you return home. International roaming charges can cost USD $0.29–0.69 per minute, depending on your carrier. And if you have a “smartphone” like an iPhone or BlackBerry that is constantly checking for new e-mail, you will be charged for every minute that your phone is on. Please check with your cell phone carrier about international plans that may help you avoid these costly surprises. Below are some links to help:

- AT&T
  www.wireless.att.com/learn/international/roaming/affordable-world-packages.jsp

- Sprint/Nextel

- T-Mobile
  www.tmobile.com/international/LongDistanceOverview.aspx

- Verizon
  http://www.verizonwireless.com/international/Global_Travel/index.html

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**Registration and Housing for 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta to Open Early!**

Early Bird registration and housing for the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta will open on November 6, 2009. Both registration and housing will be open on this date at www.aarweb.org.

Computers will be available in the Cyber Café and the AAR Booth in the Exhibit Hall of the Palais des Congrès for AAR members to preregister during the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal.

Early Bird registration will run through the dates of the 2009 Annual Meeting and will close on March 31, 2010. Registration for tours and workshops will be available beginning April 1, 2010. Members who have preregistered for the meeting will be sent an e-mail giving them the opportunity to add these to their registration.

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**October 2009 RSN • 13**
A7–108 North American Religions Section
Saturday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: The History of Religion in Quebec
This panel provides a comprehensive and critical look at the history of religion in Quebec, from the earliest encounters with native peoples to the present day. Each panelist, who are eminent senior scholars of Quebec religious history, will examine a particular aspect and period of this history.

A7–129 North American Hinduism Consultation
Saturday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Hinduism in Montreal and Canada: Communities in Community
This panel presents four papers and a respondent discussing the variety of expressions of Hinduism found in Montreal and in other regions of Canada. The papers emphasize the subidentities among South Asians within the Hindu diaspora in a manner that reflects the substantial status of Quebec within the broader context of Canada. As a whole, the papers suggest some differences in the Canadian Hindu context in relation to other diaspora groups.

A7–131 Religion Education in Public Schools: International Perspectives Consultation
Saturday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Quebec’s New “Ethics and Religious Culture” Program
As of September 2008, a new course entitled “Ethics and Religious Culture” (ERC) became mandatory for all Quebec primary and secondary schools (except for grade nine). The program represents a radical departure from previous programs. This panel examines the new program from diverse perspectives. The panel was constituted in the spirit of an “episodic community,” where the individual members share common values and purposes, but where salient issues are examined and knowledge is constructed through very different lenses.

A7–208 Theology and Religious Reflection Section
Saturday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Theological Contributions in the Work of Gregory Baum
The work of Canadian theologian Gregory Baum has spanned more than fifty years, revealing his astonishing openness to being attentive to the theological questions that animated his inquiry. This panel presentation will consider some of the key themes within Baum’s theology, exploring his faithfulness to the Christian mission of solidarity and why that mission speaks to twenty-first century challenges. A central goal of the panel is to reflect on the continued relevance of Baum’s theology, and to situate it in the context of Quebec.

A7–304 Comparative Studies in Religion Section
Saturday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Multiculturalism and Religion in Quebec: Negotiating Religious Pluralism
In this panel, papers engage in comparative explorations of how Canadians and Quebecers in particular have developed a full range of strategies for negotiating religious pluralism in an increasingly multicultural context.

A7–317 New Religious Movements Group
Saturday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Quebec’s New Religious: Inside, Outside, or Parallel to the Catholic Church
This panel will describe and analyze some of Quebec’s indigenous new religious movements that have been shaped by the rapidly changing relationship between the province’s ultramontane Catholic Church and an increasingly secular society. A typology of integrators/individualists/religious/traditionalists formulated by Quebec sociologists will be utilized to analyze four apocalyptic new religious movements in terms of their orientations towards the Church, Vatican II, and secularization resulting from the “Quiet Revolution.”

A8–103 Arts, Literature, and Religion Section
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Jewish Peop of Montreal
This panel examines the bearing of religion upon the lives and writings of four of the most prominent Jewish artists in early twentieth century Jewish poets of Montreal — A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, and Chava Rosenfarb, a Holocaust survivor who writes in Yiddish.

A8–104 Arts, Literature, and Religion Section
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Ways of Looking at Jesus of Montreal: From the Streets of St-Denis to Mont-Royal
The aim of this panel is two-fold. The first is to offer examinations of a film that has been popular in religion and film circles. Panelists here will offer several takes on the film from various perspectives: sort of a Wallace Stegner’s “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” mixed with a John Berger “Ways of Seeing” approach. But instead of simply piling on more commentary to the film, our further aim is to stimulate a metacritical dialogue on religion and film research. That is, in and through the multiple approaches to a specific film, we make clear that there are myriad ways to view a singular film religiously.

A8–250 Special Topics Forum
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
Sponsored by the Public Understanding of Religion Committee
Theme: The Commission on Reasonable Accommodation in Quebec: Reflections on Coauthor Charles Taylor and Gerard Bouchard
In February 2007, Premier Jean Charest called upon Charles Taylor and Gerard Bouchard to head up a commission on the question of Reasonable Accommodation. The commission was in response to a series of highly publicized events in which non-Christian immigrant minority groups were made to feel “unreasonable” demands upon the people of Quebec to accommodate their religious requirements. The commission was unique in that it included twenty-one regional citizen’s forums in which individuals were given ninety seconds to voice their opinion, concerns, and desires for the future of interreligious relations in Quebec. The final report, delivered in May 2008, has had mixed reviews from politicians, religious, and nongovernmental interest groups. This forum provides the opportunity for the coauthors to offer their reflections on this process, the issues raised, and the future of interreligious relations in Quebec and beyond.

A8–307 History of Christianity Section
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Monastic Reflections in Contemporary Quebec
Although monasticism is seen to be out of place in contemporary Quebec, it has importance both socially and intellectually. Indeed, it continues to develop socially, taking on new forms and in new physical locations, but also intellectually, helping to address some of the most pressing questions of modern society. This panel is dedicated to papers addressing the changing “place” of monasticism in the province.

A8–312 Study of Judaism Section
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Yiddish Montreal: From the Political Left to the Religious Right
Although seemingly distinct, the political and religious right were both significant and interdependent in Yiddish Montreal of the twentieth century. Not only did they share common educational and social antecedents, they often shared strategies, where rabbis used tactics of the labor movement to ameliorate their situation. As well, the major communal structure of Jewish Montreal in the prewar years was the Jewish Community Council (Vaad Hatz) wherein not only were all political positions represented, but the Council funded all Jewish schools, including the socialist and communist as well as the traditional yeshivas. Although each presentation focuses on very different periods and milieus, they all bring to the fore two crucial issues in understanding the evolution of Yiddish-speaking Montreal: religion and politics.

A9–103 Buddhism Section
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Buddhism in Quebec
The growth of Buddhism in Quebec resembles that of the growth of Buddhism across Canada and North America. Quebec now has dozens of Buddhist temples and meditation centers, of which about half cater to a Western-born membership. Still, because Quebec is a francophone region, Buddhism in Quebec has some unique accents. Researchers in this sexual and urban setting have been studying these features and will present on unique aspects of Buddhism in Quebec.

A9–117 Contemporary Islam Group
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Attraction and Repulsion: Muslim Identity in Contemporary Quebec
This panel explores fear of and fascination with the “other” by examining interreligious and secular-religious encounters of Muslims and non-Muslims in Quebec, where anxieties arising from conquest, language, and accelerated immigration have led to striking instances of “attraction” and “repulsion.”

A9–126 Religion and Popular Culture Group
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Folklore in Quebec: Intangible, Essential, Cultural, and Religious Knowledge
The linguistic and religious particularity of Quebec and the complex politics that emerged from centuries of relations from the metropolitan states (France and England) have created an environment extremely sensible to the specifics of its different communities. While recent history has given us examples of a society trying to define its own identity, scholars are going back to the roots of Quebec’s culture, hoping to get a better understanding of the contributions made by the people. Spreading through time, cultures, language, and religious belief, the papers of this panel explain how, in a given milieu, the motives and figures of the oral tradition and religious influences can help us learn about what Quebec was and is becoming.

A9–329 Religion and Migration Consultation
Monday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Greater Montreal Area
This panel will present the results of the four years of research of the CRIMER (Groupe de Recherche sur le Montréal Ethno-Religieux), an interdisciplinary research group affiliated with the religious studies and geography departments of the Université du Québec à Montréal. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the group’s general goal is to analyze the role of religion and its various expressions amongst different religious or ethnic groups in Montreal: its history, particularities, and its future. The purpose of this consultation is to present some of the results obtained in this four-year project.

A10–106 North American Religions Section
Tuesday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Managing Religious Diversity and Articulating Identity in Quebec
The papers on this panel explore the recent efflorescence of debate over the proper management of religious diversity in Quebec. In response to several high-profile legal cases involving the notion of reasonable accommodation of minority religious practices, many Quebec communities, politicians, government agencies, and private citizens have sought to weigh in on this issue. While there is a clear thematic coherence to the papers on the panel, they are also diverse in that they consider issues of religious pluralism, secularism, gender, race, memory, and historic preservation in both rural and urban settings.

A10–125 Childhood Studies and Religion Consultation
Tuesday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Adolescents, Young Adults, and Religion: Canadian and Quebec Studies in a Global Context
Beliefs and religious practices are just part of what could be called youth religion or religiosity. Many studies show that spiritualities, religious and non-religious orthodoxies often adopt the diversified ways or styles of youth subcultures. In this regard, one could ask if it is really relevant to conclude that adolescents and young adults have truly distanced themselves from religion, or are adolescents and young adults forging new relations to their religious heritage that is notably founded on a dynamic of choice that typifies the globalized world they negotiate. In this panel, the presenters will consider the role of the religious in adolescent and young adult religion in Quebec and the rest of Canada that suggest new theoretical ways to reflect on the religion or religiosity of youth in the global context.
Sessions with a Focus on Canada

A7–226 Wesleyan Studies Group
Saturday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Methodology and Wesleyan Traditions in Canada

A8–108 Bible in Racial, Ethnic, and Indigenous Communities Group
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Minority Biblical Interpretation in Canada

A8–210 Study of Islam Section and Women and Religion Section
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Shariah Courts in Canada: Islam, Gender, and Public Policy in Family Law Arbitration

A8–212 Anthropology of Religion Group
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: The Anthropology of Religious Pluralism in Canada

A8–222 Native Traditions in the Americas Group
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Issues for Canada’s First Peoples

A8–269 Law, Religion, and Culture Group
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
Theme: First Nations, Islam, and Secularism: Religion and Law in the Canadian Context

A9–108 Religion and Politics Section
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Religion, Politics, and Law in Canada

A9–222 Buddhism in the West Consultation
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Buddhism in the West: A Canadian Focus

A9–328 Pentecostal–Charismatic Movements Consultation
Monday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Origins and Identity of Canadian Pentecostalism

A10–100 Wildcard Session
Tuesday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: The Revitalization of Aboriginal Spirituality in Canada

A9–226 World Christianity Group
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Global and Local Perspectives and Patterns in World Christianity

A8–200 Special Topics Forum
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Transnationalism and Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning beyond Borders

A8–226 World Christianity Group
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Recent Research on Immigrant Christianity in North America

A8–229 Religion and Colonialism Consultation
Saturday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Theme: Colonialism and Empire

A8–258 Religion and the Social Sciences Section
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
Theme: Multiculturalism and Pluralism in Canada, the United States, and Europe

A8–262 African Religions Group
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
Theme: Religion and Power in Africa and the Diaspora: Conversations with Jacob Olupona

A8–266 Confucian Traditions Group
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
Theme: American Confucianism

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Theme: American Confucianism

A8–304 Wildcard Session
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Studying Religion and International Development: Affinities, Intersections, and Potentials

A8–308 North American Religions Section
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Redefining Religious Identities East to West

A8–313 Teaching Religion Section
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Globalization and Pedagogy: Practical and Theoretical Approaches

A8–315 African Religions Group and Religions, Medicines, and Healing Group
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Permutations of West African Healing Traditions: Amãari Indigenous Healers in Nigeria, Senta Practitioners in the United States, and Unhanda Practitioners of Paris

A8–317 Black Theology Group
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Black Theology across Borders

A9–100 Special Topics Forum
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Global Economies of the Sacred

A9–112 Teaching Religion Section
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching “Faith and Globalization”

A9–133 Religion and Migration Consultation and Space, Place, and Religious Meaning Consultation
Monday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Theme: Sacralizing Space in Exile and Diaspora

A9–200 Plenary Panel
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Global Perspectives on Religious Studies

A9–202 Wildcard Session
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Approaches to the Study of African Diaspora Religions

A9–223 Religion and Ecology Group
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Theme: Exploring Ecological Discourse in Global Contexts: Tenets and Tropes Rooted in Local Soils

A9–318 Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Group
Monday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Mapuche Christianity: Pluralities and Theologies in the New World

A9–333 Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Group
Monday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Theme: Overcoming Colonialism: Four Perspectives on Pluralism in Asia
Reel Religion

Malls R Us (A6–403)

Friday, 9:00–11:00 PM

This film shows how malls are the new sacred spaces in which people experience a secular version of transcendence and communal identity, an environment in which we “lose ourselves” in amusement and splendor. But the film also asks whether the “religion” practiced in malls brings liberation, or simply creates more consumers for global capitalism.

Shugendo Now: The Creative Re-invention of a Japanese Mountain Ascetic Tradition (A6–404)

Friday, 9:00–11:00 PM

Shugendo practitioners perform ritual actions from shamanism, “Shintō,” Doaism, and Tantric Buddhism. The filmmakers represent their creative reinvention of hallmark practices, including a twenty-six-kilometer lasso race, Three Day Monk Camp, and shōkōgēisei.

Jésus de Montréal (A7–406)

Saturday, 9:00–11:00 PM

A band of actors performs a critically acclaimed and updated rendition of the Passion Play, only to come into conflict with the Roman Catholic hierarchy that hired them. As events in the actors’ lives begin to follow the Passion narrative they are dramatizing, questions of what is real and what is imagined emerge, along with issues of artistic integrity and the commercialization of art.

Pray the Devil Back to Hell (A8–404)

Sunday, 8:30–10:30 PM

This film offers an arresting account of Liberian women’s nonviolent, interreligious resistance to Charles Taylor and the warlords who sought to overthrow him. In the face of brutal civil wars, these women reached across an entrenched Muslim-Christian divide to start a grass roots movement for peace.

Eve and the Fire Horse (A8–405)

Sunday, 8:30–10:30 PM

This film traces the life of nineteen-year-old Eve and her Chinese Canadian immigrant family. Eve attempts to make sense of her female religious environment: her father’s traditional ways, her mother’s embrace of Buddhism, and her sister’s conversion to Catholicism. Amidst this spiritual chaos, Eve maintains ties to her Chinese religious roots and comes to her own religious synthesis.

Religious (A9–401)

Monday, 8:00–10:00 PM

Bill Maher’s film Religious is a carefully orchestrated tour through some of the most controversial arenas of modern Christian, Jewish, and Muslim practices today. Despite its limited portrayal of religion, however, the film does raise pertinent questions about what makes religious beliefs legitimate, and what exactly constitutes a “national religion” of religion today.
Wildcard Sessions

A8–102 Priestly and Lay Dimensions of Zoroastrianism
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM
It has been nearly twenty years since an academic panel on Zoroastrianism was offered at an AAR Annual Meeting. This Wildcard Panel consists of five internationally renowned scholars of the religion, representing a wide scope of research interests. The presider of the panel is also a highly respected scholar, whose work on Parsi identity and history is seminal. This diversity of interest is reflected in the papers presented. The topics of the papers range from a discussion of the historical use of Zoroastrian texts as a means of other circum-scribing or opening up the religion to the laity; the role of the Internet in defining the religion today; priestly and lay attitudes to the priesthood will be explored alongside the continuity of lay ritual; and the impact of the religion on the development of Sinhalese culture.

A8–204 International Christian Perspectives on Christian Zionism
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
The phenomenon of Christian Zionism (in its contemporary forms, faith-based Christian political support for the state of Israel) provides opportunities for reflecting on the interactions of religion with history, popular culture, domestic political movements, foreign policy analysis, and interreligious engagement, among other topics. Specifically, the subject is becoming a focus of interest to other Christian denominations, including matters of biblical interpretation, fundamentalism, and evangelicalism. Although Christian Zionism is largely an Anglo-American phenomenon, the diverse international perspectives included in this panel discussion will reflect on the global expressions of the movement and its significance. The exchange will be directed toward seeking methodological consensus on this broadly interdisciplinary subject.

A8–251 Paul Ricoeur and Theology: The Hermeneutics of Texts and the Phenomenology of Experiences
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 PM
This session will address the work of the late French philosopher Paul Ricoeur and his enduring influence in contemporary theological discourse. By giving equal weight to texts and actions, his method creates a charitably philosophical dialogue that resonates deeply with concerns expressed by scholars of lived religious experience (sociologists and philosophers of religion and practical and contextual theologians). In recent years, several studies of Ricoeur’s work in the fields of theology and religion have emerged — submissions from contributors that make use of Ricoeur’s work in the context of theological and religious studies. This panel of established and emerging Ricoeur scholars will provide new opportunities for critical engagement with Ricoeur and promote creative applications of his work in contemporary academia. The session will address future topics for consideration and we encourage scholars interested in planning for a future Ricoeur and theology program unit to attend.

A8–252 Whither the “Death of God”: A Continuing Currency?
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
This session features a conversation between prominent radical theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer and well-known cultural critic Slavoj Žižek on the continuing forafuture Ricoeur and theology program unit to address the work of the late French philosopher Paul Ricoeur and his enduring influence in contemporary theological discourse. By giving equal weight to texts and actions, his method creates a charitably philosophical dialogue that resonates deeply with concerns expressed by scholars of lived religious experience (sociologists and philosophers of religion and practical and contextual theologians). In recent years, several studies of Ricoeur’s work in the fields of theology and religion have emerged — submissions from contributors that make use of Ricoeur’s work in the context of theological and religious studies. This panel of established and emerging Ricoeur scholars will provide new opportunities for critical engagement with Ricoeur and promote creative applications of his work in contemporary academia. The session will address future topics for consideration and we encourage scholars interested in planning for a future Ricoeur and theology program unit to attend.

A8–303 Building a Successful Academic Center: Religion, Politics, and Public Engagement
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
One potential venue for building knowledge and understanding about the intersection of religion and public life are academic centers housed in universities, but independent from any particular department or discipline. A few university centers have gained significant reputations as prominent public venues for critical scholarship and cutting-edge knowledge resources. Participants in this wildcard session will critically reflect on this phenomenon and think through the challenges and potentials that these centers can offer to the study of religion and the role of academia in building public knowledge about religion. Questions addressed include: In what ways does the knowledge and reflection fostered by academic centers differ from that of department-based scholarship? How can academic centers cross disciplinary boundaries and foster cutting-edge research and scholarship? What are the challenges and limits of starting and running a successful center — both in terms of the home institution and the external partners and audiences?

A8–304 Studying Religion and International Development: Affinities, Intersections, and Potentials
Sunday, 5:00–6:30 PM
A small yet growing body of literature on religious aspects of economic development is now forthcoming from international development scholars and institutions such as the World Bank. This largely follows upon the critical review of how conventional approaches to development have often failed to deliver theoretically and practically. The study of “religion” fits perfectly with this insistence on revision of supposedly universal understandings of personal and collective welfare. Curiously, there is relatively little focus on this topic among religious studies scholars. This panel session will explore some of the insights and creative potential for the study of “religion and development.” Scholars whose teaching and research focuses on this topic will outline its dimensions and propose trajectories for further inquiry.

A9–202 Approaches to the Study of African Diaspora Religions
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM
This panel session features a conversation between prominent radical theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer and well-known cultural critic Slavoj Žižek on the continuing forafuture Ricoeur and theology program unit to address the work of the late French philosopher Paul Ricoeur and his enduring influence in contemporary theological discourse. By giving equal weight to texts and actions, his method creates a charitably philosophical dialogue that resonates deeply with concerns expressed by scholars of lived religious experience (sociologists and philosophers of religion and practical and contextual theologians). In recent years, several studies of Ricoeur’s work in the fields of theology and religion have emerged — submissions from contributors that make use of Ricoeur’s work in the context of theological and religious studies. This panel of established and emerging Ricoeur scholars will provide new opportunities for critical engagement with Ricoeur and promote creative applications of his work in contemporary academia. The session will address future topics for consideration and we encourage scholars interested in planning for a future Ricoeur and theology program unit to attend.

A10–100 The Revitalization of Aboriginal Spirituality in Canada
Tuesday, 9:00–11:30 AM
This roundtable provides an opportunity for a group of religious studies scholars who work in the area of aboriginal religious traditions to convene a conversation started at the Aboriginal Policy Research Conference and the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion Annual Congress. Participants present results of their recent research and discuss contemporary issues related to the revitalization of Aboriginal spirituality in Canada. Implications for government policy will be addressed. The panel organizers encourage members of the AAR Native Traditions in the Americas Group to join the discussion and provide insight into related issues in the United States context.
The Student Lounge

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 the chance to talk with fellow students. The lounge will be open Saturday through Monday, 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM and Tuesday, 8:00 AM to 12:00 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 as we discuss the following topics.

The student round-table discussions are sponsored by the American Theological Library Association.

Saturday, 9:00–10:00 AM Building Intellectual Community: The Graduate Student Imperative
Led by Christopher R. Bini, Baylor University
Saturday, 10:00–11:00 AM Why Are They Writing? Tips for New Adjuncts and Those Looking to Adjunct
Led by Reb Hestrin, Drew University
Saturday, 2:00–3:00 PM A Career on Campus: Considering Academic Librarianship
Led by Christopher J. Anderson, Drew University
Saturday, 3:00–4:00 PM Approaches to Effective Online Teaching
Led by David Walsh, Arizona State University
Sunday, 9:00–10:00 AM Balancing School and Family: Making the Decision
Led by Ann Duncan, University of Virginia, and Shynna Steinfeld, McGill University

Special Topics Forum

“The Cracks in the Tower”: Barriers to Careers in Religion
Sunday, 3:00–4:30 pm (A8–279)
Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and the Job Placement Task Force

This special topics forum addresses many of the barriers that make navigating the academy a difficult process (for example, issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, physical mobility, etc.). Panelists will share strategies for negotiating many of these barriers and for maintaining human flourishing in the academy. Panelists will also address the current job market and the many challenges that graduate students may face in the job application and interviewing process.

Moderator: Davina C. Lopez, Eckerd College
Panelists:
Josie Hendrickson, Whitman College
Kate Orr, Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing
Lisa Sternmark, San Jose State University
Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary

Student Town Hall Meeting: “Yes We Can!” The Future of Students in the AAR
Saturday, 9:00–11:00 AM (A7–100)
Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee

Students comprise one third of the membership of the AAR. We bring renewed vitality and fresh perspectives to the study of religion. And yet, we know how to have a good time.

Can we shape the future of the Academy? Yes we can! Join us for our Student Town Hall, a forum where you can offer your suggestions, hear about new initiatives led by the Graduate Student Committee, and get a preview of a this year’s student-focused programming.

Topics about which we are most concerned include: how to keep the student voice alive in the AAR, ways you can be a force for positive change in your department, and of course, how you can secure research funding and navigate the career search. Our future is full of promise. Yes we can! Reception provided.

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 established this series of public talks to be held in a variety of Montreal cafes. 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 three themes: the relationship of aboriginal peoples and the church in Canada; the rich Jewish identity and culture in Montreal; and religion and multiculturalism in Canada. Plan to join us for these stimulating discussions on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday evenings between 6:00 and 8:00 PM. Consult the AAR website and “Especially for Students” materials for venue details and speaker information.

My Reservations: Theopoetic Reflections on Indigenous Canada
Saturday, 6:00–8:00 pm (A7–376)
Pharaoh Lounge, 139 rue Saint-Paul Ouest
Reverend Carmen Lansdowne’s poetry is a personal reflection of her interdisciplinary inquiries into indigenous epistemologies and Christian missiology. As a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation on the central West Coast of British Columbia, Lansdowne holds a particular perspective on the relationship between the church and aboriginal peoples in Canada. Her poetry will offer a fresh poetic reflection on being aboriginal and a Christian theologian.

Lansdowne is a doctoral student at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada, and a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation in Bella Bella, British Columbia.

“We Said We Were Sorry”: Apologies and First Nations
Sunday, 4:00–6:30 pm (A8–351)
Le Pelletin-Magellan, 330 rue Ontario Est
Barbara Greenberg, PhD candidate, University of Toronto

In 1986, the United Church of Canada (UCC) offered an apology to First Nations peoples for the UCC’s role in residential schooling. The UCC’s apology is unique in that their apology was acknowledged by the First Nations community, but was not accepted. In 1998, another formal apology was presented and accepted. Barbara Greenberg will examine the 1986 and 1998 apologies using the psychanalytic theories of Melanie Klein. In order to gain an understanding of the important role apologies play in making amends for past injustices. It is Greenberg’s belief that Klein’s theories will provide a new, psychological lens to discuss and understand the interaction between the UCC and the First Nations peoples. She will discuss how her thesis work has potential beyond the “ Ivory tower” discussing the pros and cons of political apologies that could help to mend relations between First Nations and the UCC in Canada.

Religious Studies News

Don’t forget to join us on Facebook if you haven’t already: “Student Members and Friends of the American Academy of Religion.” We are in the process of updating the student member portion of the AAR’s website. Stay tuned for more information at www.aarweb.org/ Members/Students.

There are now two AAR publications especially for students. “From the Student Desk” is published twice a year in Religious Studies News. See the current and past issues at www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN. The Graduate Student E-Newsletter, Speaking of Students (SOS), is a quarterly publication sent to all AAR student members. Past issues can be found at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Online_Publication/Student_Newsletter. If you have an idea for a news/feature related to religious studies in your department, please contact SOS editor Charles Bernsen at cbbernse@comcast.net.

Student Events at the Annual Meeting

Student Events at the Annual Meeting
Gregory Baum is a prominent Canadian theologian and sociologist, and professor emeritus at McGill University in the religious studies department. He has written several books and articles that examine the question of religious pluralism particularly within the Catholic tradition. Baum’s most recent book is Theology of Tariq Ramada: A Catholic Perspective (Notre/Dame Press, 2009).

Laurie Lamoureux Scholes is a doctoral candidate in the religion department at Concordia University. Her research explores interfaith relations in Canada.

In 1971, the Canadian federal government defined Canada as a bilingual and multicultural society. English and French are the official languages, but there are no longer any privileged cultures in Canada. That is, the cultures brought by recent immigrants deserve equal respect. However, the Quebec provincial government did not accept the multicultural policy adopted by the federal government. Instead, Quebec makes a clear distinction between the host culture, which deserves protection, and the arriving cultures of the more recent immigrants whose human rights are assured by the Quebec charter of 1975. Quebec has called its own policy intercultural.

Although a key objective of both approaches to cultural pluralism is that immigrant cultures be respected and deserve public support, calling the Quebec policy “intercultural” has symbolic importance for French Quebecers as it displays clear government support for the primacy of the Francophone host culture.

As such, since the 1971 introduction of the Canadian multiculturalism policy and later Multiculturalism Act, successive Quebec governments have defined the relation of the host culture and the incoming cultures in various ways. One proposal advocated a policy of interculturalism that promoted the “convergence of cultures”; it recommended an ongoing interaction between the host culture and the other cultures, thus fostering their convergence, each coming closer to the other, yet each preserving its identity. Another government proposal advocated “a common public culture,” i.e., a set of cultural values, including the French language, that would allow citizens of the various cultures to cooperate in the building of society. More recently, interculturalism is understood to emphasize the “common citizenship” enjoyed by all Quebecers, whatever their cultural origin.

This distinct approach to cultural diversity is due in large part to the fact that Quebec is a small French-speaking society shaped by its particular historical experience. It is situated as a tiny minority on the vast English-speaking North American continent and hence always remains in need of protecting itself against assimilation and the loss of its distinct identity. In part, this need to protect Quebec culture was born of the social and political freedoms gained through the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. As Donald Boisvert explained in a May 2009 RSN article, the period was marked by a massive rejection of the Catholic Church, which many recognized as a dominant social, cultural, and political force that had defined French Quebec culture for generations. This significant shift in the moral authority from the Catholic Church to the government of Quebec has meant that, for many Quebecers today, Catholicism is not a religious faith, but a cultural inheritance — one that is celebrated but that will never again achieve the political power it once enjoyed in the province.

The minority status of Quebec society, its rejection of Catholicism, and its need to defend its cultural identity offer some insight as to why French Quebecers perhaps react more nervously than English Canadians to some of the cultural and religious symbols brought by recent immigrants. Nonetheless, Quebec has not shied away from public discussion of how to negotiate this cultural diversity, particularly when it comes to questions about religion.

This special "Focus on Religion in Quebec" series also includes panels that explore the history of religion in Quebec, religion in Quebec culture, and several panels that examine specific issues of concern to many religious communities in Quebec (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, First Nations, New Religious Movements, etc.). Look for the fleur-de-lis in the Annual Meeting Program Book when planning your meeting schedule. More information about the special panels and other events sponsored by the Montreal Venue Committee can be found at http://religioninQuebec.ca. Le Quebec vous attend!
Cone Wins Marty Award

JAMES H. CONE, a premier theologian who has educated scholars and the public about the importance of the theological reflections of oppressed black people, will receive the 2009 Martin E. Marty Award at the Annual Meeting in November.

The Martin E. Marty Award recognizes extraordinary contributions to the public understanding of religion. The award — which has recognized Wendy Doniger, Robert Bellah, Andrew Greeley, John Esposito, and Diana Eck — is given to someone whose work resonates with the public as well as with scholars, and whose work is known through a variety of media.

Cone, the creator of black liberation theology in the United States, has participated in numerous international conferences focused on comparative liberation theologies in Africa and South Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He has appeared as a major commentator in the Blackside series on “This Far by Faith,” focusing on the role of religion in African-American communities past and present. Cone and his work have been featured by Bill Moyers’ Journal on PBS. In 1992, Ebony magazine awarded Cone the “American Black Achievement Award” in the category of religion. With its focus on religion and social transformation and its critique of racism, Cone’s black liberation theology has been controversial, often accused of reverse racism by conservatives. Cone has patiently responded to the controversy in numerous newspaper interviews, most recently during Barack Obama’s public disagreement with his pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright.

Cone is the Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary. He is the author of eleven books (with translations in eight languages) and more than 150 articles. He is best known for his groundbreaking works Black Theology and Black Power (1969), A Black Theology of Liberation (1970), God of the Oppressed (1975), and Martin and Malcolm: A Dream or a Nightmare? (1991). Cone is currently working on The Cross and the Lynching Tree.

The annual Marty Forum at the Annual Meeting will be a lively intellectual conversation because Cone will be interviewed by Cornel West, the Class of 1943 University Professor in the Center for American Studies at Princeton University. West will interview Cone from 1:00–2:30 PM on Sunday, November 8, 2009.

LAURIE GOODSTEIN of the New York Times, Tracy Simmons of the Waterbury (Conn.) Republican-American, and David Gibson, writing for the Star-Ledger of New Jersey and the Wall Street Journal, won the 2009 American Academy of Religion Awards for Best In-Depth Reporting on Religion.

Goodstein won the contest for journalists at news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation or on the Web; Simmons for journals at news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation; and Gibson for opinion writing.

The annual awards recognize “well-researched newswriting that enhances the public understanding of religion,” said John R. Fitzmier, Executive Director of the AAR.

Goodstein submitted articles on the authorship of the Serenity Prayer; the battle in California over same-sex marriage; and a three-part series on Roman Catholic priests recruited from overseas to serve parishes in the United States. The judges highlighted Goodstein’s “unflinchingly honest quotes,” and praised her series on foreign Catholic clergy as a “sustained take on how the priest shortage plays out in everyday religious life.” “Too much religion writing is depoliticized. These three pieces really got to the heart of living and preaching the Gospel,” added one judge.

Simmons submitted articles on Christian sexual ethics; the 2008 Lambs’ Conference and the split over homosexuality in the Episcopal Church; religious fundamentalism; and the Green Bible. “In taking on hot-button issues — a Catholic nun whose liberal take on sexual ethics in the church won a national award, the Episcopal Church’s Lambeth debates, and a green Bible — this writer shows a desire to include scholarly voices and give readers perspective,” said the judges, impressed with Simmons’s entries.

Gibson submitted opinion articles on defining secularism; Pope Benedict XVI’s vestments; and the abortion debate during the 2008 presidential campaign. “This was a ‘wow!’ entry from a journalist with a strong, sure voice and inviting writing style,” wrote the judges. “The article on abortion displayed a sensitive approach to this volatile issue, shedding a lot more light than heat,” remarked another.

In the more than 100,000 circulation or on the Web contest, Barbara Bradley Hagerty, writing for National Public Radio’s website, placed second, and Michael Paulson of the Boston Globe placed third. The judges praised Hagerty for a “great storyteller who knows how to get people to talk and then tells their stories so that you can’t put them down,” and Paulson for his strong, impressive reporting using “facts, figures, and personal stories” and “literary and historical insights” to inform readers.

In the less than 100,000 circulation contest, Brad A. Greenberg of the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles placed second, and Brett Buckner of the Anniston (Ala.) Star placed third. The judges praised Greenberg for his “meticulousness,” adding “the hallmark of this writer was the immense amount of reporting that went into the piece,” and Buckner for his “engaging writing style,” noting that “all of the pieces, in one way or another, offered a clear insight into spiritual experiences.”

In the opinion writing contest, Douglas Todd of the Vancouver Sun placed second, and Tom Krattenmaker, writing for USA Today, placed third. The judges praised Todd for taking on tough topics, adding he “dissects conventional wisdom and offers a new perspective,” and Krattenmaker for challenging popular belief and showing that “something new, something more complex and subtle is going on — a great goal for religion commentary.”

Each contestant submitted articles published in North America during 2008. Names of contestants and their news outlets were removed from submissions prior to judging. Each of the first-place winners receives $1,000. The judges for the contests were Judith Cebula, director of Butler University’s Center for Faith and Vocation and a former religion reporter for the Indianapolis Star; Diane Connolly with ReligionLink, a former religion editor at the Dallas Morning News and a member of the AAR’s Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion; and Robert F. Keeder, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and editorial writer for Newday.

Source: Religious Studies News

The AAR Public Understanding of Religion Committee invites nominations and self-nominations for the Martin E. Marty Award for Contributions to the Public Understanding of Religion.

The award is intended to bring greater recognition to scholars whose relevance and eloquence speaks not just to scholars, but more broadly to the public as well. Nominees for this award do not have to be AAR members. For nomination details, see www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/Marty_Award, or mail the name of the nominee, his or her affiliation, and any supporting information by January 25, 2010, to Marty Award, AAR 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 300 Atlanta, GA 30329.
Kwok to Receive Excellence in Teaching Award

Tina Pippin, Agnes Scott College

K WOK PUI LAN, William F. Cole Professor of Christian Theology and Spirituality at the Episcopal Divinity School, will be awarded the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal. Kwok teaches in a variety of translacultural areas: history of Christian thought, feminist and postcolonial theologies and criticisms, spirituality, sexualities, and Asian religiousities. Her focus is on marginalized groups and the possibilities of religion in the work of love and justice.

Kwok’s interests in pedagogical methods and the scholarship of teaching include her lectures on teaching and her published work (see, for example, Jesus/the Native: Biblical Studies from a Postcolonial Perspective” in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy, Orbis, 1998; and “Spirituality of Healing” in Spotlight on Teaching, May 2004). Out of her involvement in a Wabash Center workshop for mid-career theological faculty, Kwok offered her own case study in a coauthored article celebrating classroom surprises (“Taking with Surprise: Critical Incidents in Teaching,” Teaching Theology and Religion, Vol. 8:1, 35–46, 2005). Kwok moves beyond the idea of creating a “safe space” in the classroom to one that is more mutually challenging. In doing so, she asks provocative questions: “Instead of safe space, can we speak of nonviolent space, hospitable space, or honorable space in which people and their traditions are honored?” And in creating a challenging space for the classroom community — one that does not avoid or ignore difficulties of communicating across boundaries of race, status, gender, age, sexuality, etc. — she asks, “What does it take for a teacher to walk on slippery ice to stimulate students’ thinking about difficult issues in life and help them to confront each other with courage and moral imagination? And what does it take to do this not just once but again and again, even when one has slipped or fallen flat?” Kwok shows how such questions can lead to creating an honorable space for both teachers and students.

In addition to her research on teaching, Kwok has authored several books in Chinese and English, including Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology (Westminster, 2005); and Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World (Orbis, 1995). She edited a major reference work, Women and Christianity, four volumes (forthcoming from Routledge), and coedited several books and journal issues; for example, Empire and the Christian Tradition (Fortress Press, 2007), and Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse (Routledge, 2002).

Kwok uses her scholarship to inform her inclusive teaching practices. Kwok’s MDiv and DMin students comment on her pedagogical commitment and the varieties of pedagogical strategies she utilizes in her classrooms, from group workshops to different leadership models. Kwok has continued to expand her repertoire, incorporating more media (music, poetry, and art) into her teaching. One student comments that she “has found a constructive way to blend her intellectual labor with her spiritual journeying in her own academic work . . . and she is able to model this type of intellectual-ly healthy integration for her stu-dents.” Further, students note her “synergistic energy” in working with a diverse student body and with contested issues. Students appreciate the ways in which Kwok creates spaces for them to come to awareness over issues and self-awareness (of their own social locations, biases, etc.) as they engage the issues and each other in the classroom.

Both students and colleagues note Kwok’s commitment as an advisor and mentor “who is helpful in negotiating the vagaries of learning theology across cultures” and “in promoting excellence in teaching, especially among the racial and ethnic minority colleagues of the academy.”

Colleagues especially note her service at Episcopal Divinity School and beyond: as the first chair of the AAR’s Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee, as a faculty advisor to the Pacific, Asian, and North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry network, and in her interfaith work in Boston.

Attendees at this year’s Annual Meeting will have two opportunities to converse with and learn from Kwok Pui Lan on the subject and practice of teaching in two special sessions. The first is a conversation with the Excellence in Teaching Award winner, scheduled for Sunday, November 8, at 5:00 PM, which will be chaired by Tina Pippin. Kwok’s materials are posted on the AAR website, www.aarweb.org/

The AAR invites nominations for the Religion and the Arts Award

T HE AWARD in Religion and the Arts is presented annually to an artist, performer, critic, curator, or scholar who has made a recent significant contribution to the understanding of the relations among the arts and religions, both for the Academy and for a broader public.

Nominations are accepted for AAR members, though nominees need not be AAR members. Nominations must include a supporting letter (no more than 1,000 words), and any relevant supporting materials (images, DVDs, books, catalogs, etc.). Please, no self-nominations. To be considered for the 2010 award, nominations must be made by February 28, 2010, and sent to Brent Plate, Dept. of Religious Studies, 198 College Hill Road, Clifton, N.J. 07012, USA. Electronic submissions can be sent to: spleat@hamilton.edu.

In the Next Issue of Spotlight on Theological Education: Exploring the Transition from Graduate School to Seminary Teaching

October 2009 RSN • 21
AAR Honors Five Authors in Its Annual Book Awards

The American Academy of Religion offers Awards for Excellence in order to give recognition to new scholarly publications that make significant contributions to the study of religion. These awards honor works of distinctive originality, intelligence, creativity, and importance—books that affect decisively how religion is examined, understood, and interpreted.

Awards for Excellence are given in four categories: Analytical—Descriptive, Constructive—Reflective, Historical, and Textual Studies. Not all awards are given every year. More than one book may win an award in a given category. In addition there is a separate competition and prize for the Best First Book in the History of Religions. For eligibility requirements, awards processes, and a list of current jurors, please see the Book Awards rules on the AAR website, www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/book_awards.

The AAR is pleased to announce this year’s recipients of the Awards for Excellence in Religion and the Best First Book in the History of Religions:

**Analytical—Descriptive**


**Constructive—Reflective**


**Historical**


**Textual Studies**


**Best First Book in the History of Religions (Cowinners)**


In order to create public awareness about Sikh Religion in the world, the Sikh Missionary Center has published, “SIKH RELIGION” (Revised 2005) and also “Pearls of Sikhism,” (May 2008), which have been sent to various libraries. The books give the History and Fundamentals of Sikhism.

A complimentary copy will be sent to AAR Members if you provide your address. Please send your address for a free copy to: Email: sikhmissionary@yahoo.com

Our Multiple Language website is at: http://www.sikhmissionary.net

SIKH RELIGION

God is One but One

Sikh Missionary Center
P.O. Box 62521
Phoenix, Arizona 85082 USA
Two New Coeditors of Spotlight on Teaching Announced

Reid Locklin

Reid Locklin holds a joint appointment in Christianity and culture at Saint Michael’s College and at the Centre for the Study of Religion, both at the University of Toronto. A graduate of Boston University and Boston College, he is also an author of Spiritual but Not Religious? (Liturgical Press, 2003) and other works in comparative theology, Christian ecumenics, and spirituality. Locklin currently serves as president of the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies and codirector of a two-year workshop on "Pedagogies for Civic Engagement," funded by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and the Lilly Endowment. He can be reached at reid.locklin@utoronto.ca.

Ellen Posman

Ellen Posman is an associate professor of religion at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. She holds degrees in religious studies from Stanford University, Harvard University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her expertise lies in the area of comparative religion, with specializations in Buddhism and Judaism. Posman can be reached at ellenposman@bwc.edu.

I was surprised and delighted to be invited to serve on the Committee on Teaching and Learning and to become coeditor of Spotlight on Teaching alongside Ellen Posman. While I find the prospect of taking on the responsibilities of this very public work of Tazim Kassam rather daunting, I am also very grateful for her example and for the opportunity to collaborate with Ellen, Tina Peppos, and other committee members to facilitate critical conversations about effective pedagogy and the teaching vocation at the AAR.

My own teaching vocation began long before my studies in theology and religion. I started out as an erratic school bus driver and teacher’s aide in English, mathematics, and computer science in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. After obtaining a MTS degree at Boston College and a PhD in comparative theology at Boston College, I taught religious studies for two years at Saint Joseph College, a women’s liberal arts college in central Connecticut. Thereafter, I assumed my current post in the interdisciplinary Christianity and Culture Program at Saint Michael’s College, University of Toronto. Like Ellen Posman, I view myself as a generalist. Though my research focuses on questions of religious pedagogy and community formation in Hindu and Christian traditions, my teaching has run the gamut: systematic theology; world religious surveys; introductions to the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Catholic tradition; science and religion; social justice; and new, at the senior undergraduate and graduate levels, comparative theology and interreligious dialogue.

Perhaps because I started in mathematics and English, or perhaps because both my own interests and my institutional settings have encouraged me to pursue interdisciplinary work, I have always placed greatest importance upon helping students in my classes develop better skills in critical thinking, argument, and effective research and writing, whatever the subject of enquiry.

More broadly, however, I believe that the classroom encounter ideally implicates students and teachers in a kind of learned disorientation in the face of complex realities that make real claims and invite real commitments. Jack Mezirow (In Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning, Jossey-Bass, 1991; and Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Theory in Progress, Jossey-Bass, 2003) has argued that transformative critical reflection starts with a “disorienting dilemma” and encourages the formation of new integrative perspectives. Others speak of students’ cognitive and moral transitions from relatively simple “dualist” patterns to more complex “evolving commitments” (William G. Perry Jr. “Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning,” in A. W. Chickering, ed. et al. The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981: 76–116). Both proposals have suggested to me that one of my primary goals as an educator is to cultivate a self-consciously problematized engagement with the sources we read and the ideas we consider. Challenging positions alone is not adequate, in my view, since this can actually confirm a dualistic frame. It is the interpretive framework themselves that should be analyzed, in order to empower students to articulate and to embrace new perspectives — or even to affirm old ones — on a transformed intellectual basis.

How is this accomplished? This is one of the primary questions I hope to bring to my new role as coeditor of Spotlight on Teaching, so as to learn from my fellow coeditor, from guest editors, and from readers. In the mid-1990s, I and the many diverse contributors who have consistently made this publication such a valuable resource, I, of course, bring my own grab-bag of teaching innovations, successes, and failures. In my career thus far, for example, I have remained committed to integrating collaborative and experiential learning methods into the religious studies classroom. In the past three years, this interest has assumed more sustained, concrete, and activist forms through my work with both international immersion and local, community-based service-learning courses. While somewhat skeptical about at least the most dramatic claims made by advocates of service-learning — whose rhetoric sometimes verges on the melodramatic — I have become convinced that sustained, engaged experiences across boundaries of cultural and religious difference represent a very effective tool for problematizing interpretive frameworks and pressing questions of commitment on the part of teacher and student alike.

It is very telling, I think, that the three future topics Tazim Kassam suggested in her recent interview with Religious Studies News (May 2009) all deal, like service learning, with the problematization of familiar boundaries: definitional boundaries of the category “world religion,” boundaries between teaching and activism, and boundaries between religious studies and other scholarly disciplines. It seems obvious that the boundaries that have previously governed our disciplines and our institutional environments are, once again, entering a period of dramatic change. The role of Spotlight on Teaching will be not only to provide concrete strategies and inspiration for transforming our classroom instruction in these environments, but also to help each and all of us to navigate the changing landscape of our fields in a way that is responsible, creative, and fruitful for our students and ourselves.

I cannot imagine a more worthwhile project nor better colleagues with whom to pursue it. I am profoundly honored and humbled to have been given this opportunity.

Ellen Posman

I feel both honored and humbled to have been asked to serve on the Committee on Teaching and Learning and to become coeditor of Spotlight on Teaching alongside Reid Locklin. I come to this position as an early career, but what I lack in experience I hope to make up for in my passion for teaching.

In terms of my research interests, as well as my teaching repertoire, I am truly a generalist. My specialization is in the area of comparative religion, with a primary emphasis on Buddhism, and secondarily on Judaism. As a result, I end up teaching themed comparative courses, survey courses on Asian Religions, Judaism, and Hebrew Bible, as well as a whole host of upper-level special topics and seminars. I find that my research interests often not only inform but also stem from courses I teach, a topic I hope to explore more frequently during my tenure as Spotlight on Teaching coeditor.

After obtaining my MTS degree from Harvard University and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, I settled into my current position at Baldwin-Wallace College, a small liberal arts college in Berea, Ohio, dedicated to excellence in teaching. I have been here seven years now, and have spent my time engaging in what I would happily call “experiments in pedagogy.” I have tried on a lot of teaching strategies with a wide range of success rates: I have struggled with the traditional issues of being an insider (when teaching Judaism) versus an outsider (when teaching anything else) and with traditional teaching strategies ranging from the use of reading quizzes, field trips, and guest speakers to small-group work and fast feedback forms. And, in what could have been either a brilliant or brainless move, I took twenty-two students to South India for a two-week immersion course.

I am also a pedagogy junkie, leaping at every opportunity to attend a workshop or institute dedicated to learning new pedagogies or improving teaching techniques. In the process, I have become especially interested in discussions surrounding teaching in a diverse classroom. In addition, I am fascinated by conversations surrounding how to meet the learning goals of both students and professors without compromising integrity, especially in our field of religious studies, where students often enter the classroom with very different ideas about what they hope to learn. I am excited to utilize this position to seek out those of you who are engaged in innovative teaching, who are struggling with pedagogical issues, or who have had success with a particular teaching strategy in order to learn more myself, to expand topics of conversation, and to relay possibilities to the AAR community at large.

I believe we are at an exciting, though sometimes terrifying, juncture in the world of teaching at institutes of higher education, and the fact that this publication itself will no longer be available in print form is a symbol of all that. I would be lying if I didn’t admit that I sometimes tense up at phrases such as course-embedded assessment, distance learning, utilizing technology in the classroom, assigning multimedia projects, immersion formats, kinesthetic learning, experiential learning, service learning, faculty-student collaborative research, short-term study abroad courses, etc. And while I understand that it is necessary to discuss the pros and cons of whether some new formats, strategies, and pedagogies are worthwhile, I also hope that Spotlight on Teaching can highlight successful attempts at breaking new ground in order to encourage experimentation. Indeed, I hope it can provide detailed, practical guidelines for such experimentation that can be incorporated into all types of religious studies courses and in all types of institutional settings.

I am especially delighted to be partnered with Reid Locklin in this endeavor. Our collaboration will allow us to come to each issue with multiple perspectives and to consider applications to both theology and religious studies, and to both large university and small college settings. I greatly look forward to this collaboration and to this opportunity.
Court Rules that Religion Scholar Tariq Ramadan Due Additional Judicial Process

This summer a federal appeals court ruled that Ramadan’s request for entry into the United States as a violation of the First Amendment rights of members of the American Academy of Religion, American Association of University Professors, and PEN America Center—explains its decision in the case — to engage in dialogue with Ramadan in the United States.

Ramadan has been denied entry into the United States since 2004, when he was scheduled to become a professor at the University of Notre Dame and to deliver a plenary address at the AAR Annual Meeting. As a consequence of the visa denial, he addressed the Annual Meeting via live video rather than in person. Ramadan will, however, deliver a plenary address in person to the 2009 AAR Annual Meeting, which takes place in Canada.

Ramadan has acknowledged making the donations to the charity but says that he understood those donations to be for humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees, that the charity was recognized as legitimate by the Swiss government, and that when he applied for his visa he informed the United States government of the donations.

Ramadan was recently appointed His Highness Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Chair in Contemporary Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford.

Boston University to Open New Religion and Graphica Collection

Boston University has begun collecting for a new Religion and Graphica Collection. This collection, to be housed in the School of Theology Library, is exclusively dedicated to comics surrounding religion—either its advocacy, its criticism, its satire, and its consideration—the first of its kind in the United States, despite enthusiasts and scholars’ long-time encouragement. The Religion and Graphica Collection will feature works including the seminal MAUS, Persepolis, Palestine, Promethea, and Sandman graphic novels as well as scholarly works on comics and religion. Purchasing for the collection has already begun and the collection should be available for viewing beginning in Fall 2009.

In Memoriam: Peter Homans (1930–2009)

Peter Homans, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Religious Studies at the University of Chicago and long-standing member of the AAR, died on May 30, 2009, at a nursing home in Evanston, Illinois, at the age of seventy-eight. The cause was complications from a stroke. Homans was the author of three books, The Psychology of Religion, Jung in Context, and, most notably, The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychopathology. All three showed his lifelong interest in the historical displacement or erosion of traditional religious authority and the birth of modern psychology and sociology. Homans was especially concerned with loss and mourning as sources of individual and cultural transformation. His last book was an edited collection, Symbolic Loss: The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century’s End.

Homans was born in New York City and graduated in the humanities from Princeton. He briefly attended medical school at Johns Hopkins University before completing a PhD at the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1964. He also held a degree from the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary. From 1964 to 1979, he taught psychology, social science and the history of religion at the University of Chicago, where he was also a member of the Committee on Human Development and the Committee on the History of Culture. A deeply caring and considerate teacher, he engaged several generations of students with his wide-reaching and cross-disciplinary approach. His research ranged from psychiatry to religion, from poetry and art to social science and medicine; and he was quietly encouraging and sympathetic to individuals and approaches that departed from the ordinary.

Homans is survived by his adoring wife Celia, three daughters, Jennifer, Patricia, and Elizabeth, and six grandchildren.

2009 Carnegie Scholars to Focus on Islam

The Carnegie Corporation of New York named twenty-four new Carnegie Scholars for 2009. The new Scholars are selected for their compelling ideas and commitment to enriching the quality of the public dialogue on Islam. The 2009 awardees are the fifth class to focus on religion at Temple University. For twenty-five years he was visiting professor in the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He was the first Christian to be appointed to the International Governing Board of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Littell is survived by his wife of thirty years, his four children and three stepchildren, eleven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

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Association of Theological Schools and Luce Foundation Name Six Faculty Members as 2009–2010 Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology

Selected on the basis of the strength of their proposals to conduct creative and innovative theological research, the six Fellows will engage in year-long research in various areas of theological inquiry. The 2009–2010 Fellows constitute the sixteenth class of scholars to be appointed since the inception of the program in 1993, bringing the total number of Luce Fellows to one hundred and eleven. The program is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, honoring the late Henry Luce III.

J. Matthew Ashley, University of Notre Dame

Randall Davis Bailey, Interdenominational Theological Center

S. Mark Heim, Andover Newton Theological School

Mia M. Mochizuki, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union

Barbara R. Rossing, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago

Grant Wacker, Duke University

2009–2010 Lilly Theological Research Grant Recipients

Congratulations to the following 2009–2010 Lilly Theological Research Grant winners:

For Faculty Fellowships:

Joseph Patrick Chinnici, Franciscan School of Theology

Emmanuel Larruy, Emory University

Ian Christopher Levy, University of Notre Dame

For Theological Scholar Grants:

James K. Bruckner, North Park Theological Seminary

Loi M. Farag, Luther Seminary

Cynthia Holder Rich, Western Theological Seminary

For Research Expense Grants:

Thomas Carter, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley

Monica A. Coleman, Claremont School of Theology

Pamela D. Couture, Saint Paul School of Theology

Robert C. Fennell, Atlantic School of Theology

Tat-siong Benny Liew, Pacific School of Religion

Robert Joseph Priest, Trinity International University

For Collaborative Research Grants (project leader is listed first):

Duane R. Bidwell, Phillips Theological Seminary; and Donald L. Batsly, Ohio State University

Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, Ashland Theological Seminary, Jeanine K. Brown, Bethel Theological Seminary, and Carla M. Dahl, Bethel University Graduate School

See BRIEFS, page 33
The Academic Study of Religion in the Face of Budget Cuts

A MIDST the economic downturn, many departments and schools of religion or theology are facing the prospect of severe budget cutbacks. This spring, for example, the religious studies department at Florida International University and the University of Florida faced the prospect of closing down the entire religious studies department. The University of Florida, which has bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD programs and fifteen full-time faculty positions, faced a cutback to four full-time positions. At one point, Florida International University (FIU) faced the elimination of its bachelor’s and master’s programs in religion and half of its thirteen full-time faculty. In response, the AAR sent each of these university administrations a letter strongly urging continued support for their religion programs.

Independently, FIU received support from another faculty association as well, a $100,000 contribution from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The university has since embarked on a “Religious Studies Endowment Campaign,” which aims to raise $5 million and as RSN we support such efforts. It looked as if it was the university that had decided to keep the department, all full-time faculty positions, and the bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. FIU lost no religious studies faculty, one position from another department is being added, and TA support has been increased. However, “it’s unclear what will happen next year,” said Department Chair Christine Gudorf, if the fundraising campaign is not successful.

By May, the situation at the University of Florida had brightened as well. Except through attrition, no religion faculty positions were lost, and all degree programs are still being offered. At several institutions elsewhere, mergers have been under discussion. In the Northeast, for example, the University of Vermont and Adelphi University have agreed to merge, and Andover Newton and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity schools have discussed merging.

At the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, the administration proposed merging the religious studies and philosophy departments. Although the faculty spent “many anxious and chaotic hours, days, weeks, and even months meeting, discussing, and crafting responses to the college’s proposal,” one upside was that “the faculty had to put aside individual agendas and work together for the good of the whole, which made this a unitifying experience that strengthened us internally.” Concerns cited by Gilya Gerda Schmidt, who was recently involved in encouraging University of Tennessee at Knoxville to reconsider its proposal to merge its religion and philosophy departments.

RSN: In light of the current economy, what efforts would you suggest that chairs and faculty of religion departments take toward preserving adequate funding for their programs (even if not currently under threat of substantial funding loss)?

Juergensmeyer: The allocation of funds is a political decision, and campus administrators are political animals. So make your department visible — both on campus and in the community (commuity leaders can be your biggest supporters in a time of need) — and encourage members of your faculty to be on campus-wide committees and take administrative assignments. Show that you’re central to the university, not peripheral.

Narayanan: I would add that in large universities the administration may not be aware of what religion departments really do; it would be helpful for chairs or associate chairs to regularly meet some of the administrators and talk directly to them. Invite the administrators to some of your talks or functions, so they get to know you.

Schmidt: The head and faculty of religious studies departments must aggressive- ly pursue raising private funds. To this end, our department has a board of visitors whose members have been helpful in various ways in our fundraising efforts. Individual faculty, in cooperation with the college development officer, and at times the dean, also have raised funds for positions, salary supplements, conferences, and symposia. The department has one endowed chair, and we will continue to actively and persistently work on bringing in private funds to endow other positions. This will become necessary for all humanities departments as state funds for higher education shrink.

RSN: In some recent cases, it seems that religion departments have been far more successful in targeted fundraising arts and sciences programs. Why do you think this happens? What implications are there, if any, for the kind of education programs and other positions? This will become necessary for all humanities departments as state funds for higher education shrink.

Juergensmeyer: The prejudice against religious studies is not what you think it is. When we checked into the reasons for religion being targeted in recent budget cuts, we expected to find the old Sunday school image of religion and the mistaken notion that religious studies departments are propagating religion or training clergy. But that was not the reason most often given; rather, it was the idea that the study of religion does not need to have its own department. Many of our colleagues and administrators think that religion can be studied sufficiently through other disciplinary perspectives, such as philosophy or sociology or anthropology.

So we need to educate our colleagues — through campus newspaper articles, symposia, and informal conversations that promote the idea that the study of religion requires the interdisciplinary balance and focus that only stand-alone religious studies departments and programs are able to provide.

Though economics and mathematics can be studied in many departments, no university in its right mind would use the economics and mathematics departments. The same should be true of religious studies.

Schmidt: The department of religious studies at the University of Tennessee was not more heavily targeted than other arts and sciences programs. Many other departments also lost a large percentage of their faculty to retirements and attrition. We do know, however, that in the future we will have to collaborate more closely with other humanities and social science departments, perhaps in sharing positions and/or staff resources.

RSN: If a religion department does find itself disproportionately targeted for budget cuts, what resources are available for making the case for better funding?

Juergensmeyer: Once your head is on the budgetary chopping block, you need to go immediately into crisis mode. First, take the inside strategy and quietly set up meetings with administrators to make your claims and present counterarguments to ones they may give. If this does not work, then shout like hell.

Don’t go quietly to the sacrificial altar. Do what you believe the University of Florida and Florida International University department did when they were threatened — marshal internal support, evoke outcries from community leaders, exert political pressure from leading politicians, excite media attention including interviews and op-ed pieces, present letters from kindred departments around the country, and gain national support — including letters and statements from your AAR leaders, who are ready to help you.

Narayanan: If you think your department is vulnerable, please encourage me to have a “fire aid” kit ready. Get in touch with the chairs of departments in peer institutions. Consult your faculty and have a list of the contact information for a number of institutions and people who head various organizations. I am thinking of presidents of the AAR, Association for Asian Studies, Middle East Studies Association, Society of Biblical Literature, American Oriental Society, et al. Have a list of people within the university who can support you. You need to them in a hurry when the administration is moving swiftly. These people can be invaluable in writing letters on behalf of your department or supply you with crucial numbers.

(continued on next page)

Mark Juergensmeyer is president of the AAR. He is also professor of sociology, affiliate professor of religious studies, and director of the Oralceas Center of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). He has served as chair of UCSBR Global and International Studies Program, dean of the University of Hawaii’s School of Hawaiiana, Asian, and Pacific Studies, and chair of the AAR’s Public Understanding of Religion Committee.

Vanadha Narayanan is distinguished professor, interim chair of the department of religious studies, and director of the Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is also a past president of the AAR and of the Society for Hindu Christian Studies.

Gilya Gerda Schmidt is professor and head of the department of religious studies and director of the Oralceas Center of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). She has served as chair of UCSBR Global and International Studies Program, dean of the University of Hawaii’s School of Hawaiiana, Asian, and Pacific Studies, and chair of the AAR’s Public Understanding of Religion Committee.

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To help people who are writing letters, you should have a packet of materials ready — information which you can send electronically. They may not have the time to go through the websites and find out about your colleagues; your “Cliff notes” should have the highlights of your department, the major grants/fellowships the faculty have received, their publications, the courses the department teaches, what your alumni do — that kind of thing.

In getting letters, you have to decide whether it is useful to deluge the administration with letters or get a few which may carry more weight. Do you want professional organizations to write (may not be of any use if your university does not care about them) or local people? The letter the AAR did for us carried the full force of the academy and was very impressive. Other colleges may pay more attention to donors or well-known alumni.

I would also suggest contacting peer institutions and marshalling basic numbers — full-time faculty, number of undergraduates, graduate students taught (or equivalent student credit hours), number of majors, etc. We have to get these numbers when our departments have external reviews anyway, and chances are that at least one of the peer institutions went through this review process in the last year and has the data handy.

**Juergensmeyer:** Remind administration of all that they get out of religious studies departments. They are cost effective, especially in smaller institutions where they provide comparative cultural studies, ethics, and the study of ancient societies all in one department. They give luster to a university’s reputation as a cultured repository of the traditions of humanities and liberal arts.

And they’re visible — unlike a lot of arcane subjects the university teaches, the public easily understands what religion is and why it’s important. And for this reason, you might quietly add, it would be politically embarrassing if an administrator tried to axe one of them — or to put it more bluntly, the phrase “holy hell” comes to mind.

**Narayanan:** Above all, the administration of your university may want to see how your “numbers” stack up against peer institutions. I know this is not what we were trained to do in graduate school; nevertheless, this is crucial. Administrators need to know that while the number of your majors may not be as much as in, say, psychology, it is comparable to your peer institutions. Many administrators in your university are there to work with you — these numbers help them.

Be sure that the administration has the right statistics for your department. Frequently the grants you get may go uncounted. In large universities, there are different ways of counting external grants, and unless a grant is recorded and disbursed through the office of grants/divisions of sponsored research or its equivalent, it is invisible to the administration. In some universities only “expenditures” are tracked — the method favored in disciplines like chemistry; in the humanities, however, many fellowships are given directly to the applicant and bypass the university — so they are not noted. Keep a list of all the monies received in the department through grants, fellowships, and private donations.

If faculty lines in your department are being cut purely on budgetary grounds, it does not help to tell the administration, “not us, cut them.” The administrator may want suggestions on what to cut if your lines are going to be saved. Work with colleagues to think of various alternatives about where cuts can be made and propose them. Obviously I am not talking about suggesting cutting other units, but sometimes, mergers or “clusters” may be preferable to the firing of faculty. In having clusters, for instance, the administration may save on chair’s salaries, supplements, etc.

Certainly this is not the best option, but it may save your faculty positions if worse things are being contemplated.

**Schmidt:** Oddly enough, teaching large numbers of undergraduates, perhaps more than some other humanities departments, may not be seen as sufficiently meritorious. Our college administration would have been more favorably impressed by a large number of majors; the collectively small number of majors over the past five years was cited again and again as one reason for merging us with philosophy. Administrators need to be educated that numbers (especially of majors) are not everything. Nevertheless, our department implemented a new undergraduate honors program and new 200-level courses that correspond to areas of focus and strength within our major, hoping that these efforts will eventually translate into more religious studies majors. Administrators official find outcomes the most persuasive argument — in funding, publications, good graduate programs, and so on.

**RSN:** Economic downturns don’t last forever. Looking long term over the coming decade, what should religious departments be doing to strengthen their position for receiving strong financial support from their universities?

**Juergensmeyer:** Departments endure when they are seen to be central to the university’s mission, indispensable to its operations, and valuable for its future. In addition to developing ties to the administration and to campus governance committees, the religious studies department should demonstrate the distinction of its faculty — for instance, it might hold events to recognize its faculty members when they publish articles and books and receive grants and other recognitions.

Departments should also look outside the university for sources of support from the community, and seek financial funding for lectures, courses, scholarships, and endowed professorships. It’s hard to axe a department that is bringing in money! Harder still to eliminate a department that demonstrates how essential it is to the university’s success.

**Schmidt:** In a quantitative, business-style environment, only numbers matter. We can compete neither with the sciences in external funding nor with more traditional departments as regards number of majors. Difficult economic times require departments to be willing to make some changes. These sacrifices include a smaller faculty for the immediate future and possibly shared resources. Better funding will occur through private giving, external faculty grants, and the sharing of internal resources across the college and the campus. Ultimately, though, over the coming decade religious studies departments need to do what we do best. Education, education about the significance and value of the field of religious studies, not only of students and colleagues, but of administrators at the highest level, needs to be a permanent goal.
American Academy of Religion Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K–12 Public Schools: Introduction and Parts One and Two

Diane L. Moore, Harvard University

In 2007, the AAR Executive Board approved a request by the Religion in the Schools Task Force (RSTF) to initiate a three-year project to construct guidelines for teaching about religion in K–12 public schools to complement similar guidelines for other school subjects. The following document is the first draft of this initiative and has gone through extensive review by members of the AAR and K–12 educators. This first draft is nearly final, but is being published here to solicit additional feedback and response from AAR members and the public. The AAR will announce the final guidelines directly to the Chair of the Religion in the Schools Task Force, Diane L. Moore at diane_moo re@harvard.edu. She can also be contacted for more information about the review process and timeline for this initiative.

The first draft of the second half of the Guidelines will be completed in September 2009 and will be the focus of a Special Topics Forum at the Annual Meeting. The first half of the Guidelines will also accompany the second half in print. The audience for these Guidelines comprises public school educators, administrators, members of local school boards, parents, and concerned citizens. The document must, therefore, be succinct, written in accessible language, and address issues of wide relevance to public education. In relationship to this last criterion, the Guidelines emphasize the civic value of learning about religion as a means to diminish ignorance that can fuel religious bigotry, discrimination, and misunderstandings regarding the role of religion in contemporary local, national, and world affairs. This is to say by means of the only reason that learning about religion is a valuable enterprise. It is a rich intellectual experience in its own right and that of those students of all ages find deeply engaging and relevant. However, in the face of an already overburdened curriculum and ever-changing demands of the curriculum, the most widely relevant and pressing reason for developing religious literacy is this civic dimension and its role in deepening an understanding of the religious dimensions of multiculturalism.

INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Education requires states to develop content standards and academic assessments for each discipline taught in public schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade (K–12). State departments of education are guided in this task by national educational associations that have crafted their own standards and guidelines representing the collective wisdom of scholars and educators in each relevant educational field. For example, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) comprises elementary, secondary, and college-level teachers, and other educational personnel who work in the broad areas that encompass the social studies: history, geography, economics, political science, psychology, anthropology, and law. Similarly, the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) is made up of teachers and supervisors of English programs in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, faculty in college and university English departments, teacher educators, local and state agency English specialists, and professionals in related fields. There are similar organizations formed for the sciences, arts, physical education, English as a second language, and technology, among others. The primary aims of these associations are to promote responsible education about their fields and to provide leadership, support, and service to their educators.

Though religious studies is not a required subject in public K–12 schools, religion is embedded in curriculum standards across disciplines and it is especially prominent in social studies and English at the state and national association levels. Given the rising interest in the study of religion due to national and global affairs, there is also a growing number of elective courses offered in schools that focuses on religious themes or topics explicitly, such as “The Bible as Literature” and “Introduction to World Religions.” Given that: 1) The study of religion is already present in public schools; 2) There are no content and skill guidelines for educators about religion itself that are constructed by religious studies scholars; and 3) Educators and school boards are often confused about how to teach about religion in constitutionally sound and intellectually responsible ways, there is a strong consensus among those involved in K–12 education that a set of guidelines for teaching about religion similar to those constructed for other subjects is needed. (There have been several “consensus documents” compiled by religious practitioners, legal scholars, and educators related to teaching about religion in public schools that have been created over the years by nonprofit organizations, such as the First Amendment Center and ad hoc groups, such as the one formed to construct the Toledo Guiding Principles. Though these and similar initiatives provide fair, respectful, and constitutionally sound ways to teach about religion, none of them provide substantive guidance on what to teach about religion, nor do they do so from the authoritative perspective of religious studies scholars themselves. These guidelines are intended to fill that significant void).

The American Academy of Religion

Given the fact that there is not a similar national educational association like the NCSS or NCTE that focuses on religious studies per se, the American Academy of Religion is the professional organization best positioned to construct national guidelines for teaching about religion in K–12 schools. It is the world’s largest association of scholars who research or teach topics related to religion. There are over 11,000 members comprised largely of faculty at colleges, universities, and theological schools in North America with a growing number of members from institutions of higher education in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The AAR has been involved in addressing issues related to teaching about religion in public schools since the 1970s. These efforts have included producing publications in the 1970s and early 1980s addressing the legal, curricular, moral, and pedagogical dimensions of teaching about religion in public K–12 schools; helping to establish a number of programs and resource centers at various universities throughout the United States (only two are currently functioning, the Program in Religious Studies and Education at Harvard University and the Religion and Public Education Resource Center at the University of California, Chico); and identifying opportunities for religious studies faculty at colleges to help educate K–12 teachers about religion. Given the absence of authoritative standards penned by religious studies scholars for teaching about religion in K–12 schools, in 2007 the AAR decided to develop a set of standards and guidelines as a resource for educators, parents, and school boards who are faced with an increasingly complex array of challenges regarding how to teach about religion responsibly in public school contexts. The AAR Religion and the Schools Task Force is guiding this initiative.

Overview of Guidelines

Part One addresses why it is important to teach about religion and Part Two outlines ways to teach about religion in constitutionally sound, intellectually responsible, and educationally innovative ways. Part Three is an overview of approaches to teaching about religion and includes grade-specific examples informed by both the Standards for Social Studies (produced by the National Council for the Social Studies) and Standards for the English Language Arts (produced by the National Council for Teachers of English). Given that religion is already present throughout both of these documents and these standards are highly influential in the creation of state and local curricula frameworks, it is appropriate to reference them in constructing guidelines for religious studies. Finally, Part Four makes recommendations for teacher educators regarding the training required for teachers to have sufficient content knowledge to teach about religion responsibly.

PART ONE

Why teach about religion?

Three fundamental premises inform this project. First, there exists a widespread illiteracy about religion in the United States. Second, there are several consequences that stem from this illiteracy, including the ways that it fuels prejudice and antagonism, thereby hindering efforts aimed at promoting respect for pluralism, peaceful coexistence, and cooperative endeavors in local, national, and global arenas. Third, it is possible to diminish religious illiteracy by teaching about religion from an academic, nondevotional perspective in primary and secondary schools.

Religious illiteracy is defined in this document as a lack of understanding about: The basic tenets of the world’s religious traditions and other religious expressions not categorized by tradition; The diversity of expressions and beliefs within traditions and representations; and (continued on next page)
students to the vast array of faith-based expressions that exist within and between traditions with the aim of deepening understanding about religious diversity and how that religion plays in a practical, economic, and cultural life across time. Both approaches are legitimate ways to think about religion that can serve complementary, not distinct, but diverse, religious leaders and believers of a given religious tradition or expression are assumed to be the best sources of information about that tradition or expression and are often looked to formally or informally as “experts.” (This is problematic for two reasons. First, religious leaders and believers are appropriately trained in and have allegiances to a particular set of beliefs about their tradition. Many are not trained in other representations, and those that are often learn about other interpretations as heretical or unorthodox in relationship to their own theological worldview. It is inappropriate to assume, for example, that a local Protestant clergyperson or member of a congregation could accurately and sympathetically represent the many expressions of Christianity as equally valid and worthy of study. Though some religious leaders and believers may also be trained in religious studies, their training as religious leaders or believers will usually not equip them to accurately depict the diversity within their traditions. Second, religious leaders and believers approach and practice religion from a devotional perspective that is appropriate for that lens to representreligion inthe public schools.)

Religious literacy is certainly not the sole or even primary cause of religious illiteracy, but it is certainly one of the heartbreaks of the American Assembly, 2000. about religion is intended to introduce religious studies approach to teaching religious values and adopt practices that view and to encourage practitioners to .

Premise Number One: There exists a widespread illiteracy about religion in the United States.

The following are examples of some of the ways that religious illiteracy manifests itself among a diverse array of United States citizens:

- Religious leaders and believers of a given religious tradition or expression are assumed to be the best sources of information about that tradition or expression and are often looked to formally or informally as “experts.”

- Religion in American Public Life to the teaching of religion that neither m eansa constitutionally defined approach frame of reference. In this context, secular embedded in human political, social, and cultural life. They also assume that religion shapes and is shaped by the social/historical contexts out of which particular religious expressions and influences emerge. Finally, these definitions assume that there is a difference between devotional beliefs and practices and the study of religion from an academic, secular frame of reference. In this context, secular means a constitutionally defined approach to the teaching of religion that neither publicly endorses nor prohibits particular religious tradition or expression.

One way to characterize this distinction is to recognize the difference between religious education that promotes a particular faith perspective (often, but not exclusively associated with religious communities and/or schools) and learning about religion through a religious studies framework that is nondevotional, inclusive, and compares across both forms and functions. Faith-based explorations are intended to promote a particular theological worldview and to encourage practitioners to articulate values and adopt practices that are consonant with that set of beliefs. A religious studies approach to teaching about religion is intended to introduce

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A Sampling of Consensus Documents on Teaching about Religion


* The profound role that religion plays in human social and political life historically and today.

Conversely, religious literacy is defined in the following way:

- The ability to discern and analyze the intersections of religion and social, political, and cultural life. A religiously literate person possesses a background understanding of the history, central texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices, and contemporary manifestations of several of the world’s major religions and religious expressions as they arose out of and continue to shape and be shaped by particular social, historical, and cultural contexts. In addition, a religiously literate person will have the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social, and cultural expressions across time and across cultures.


These definitions assume that religion is a social/cultural phenomenon that is embodied in human social, political, and cultural life. They also assume that religious expression and the social/historical contexts out of which particular religious expressions and influences emerge. Finally, these definitions assume that there is a difference between devotional beliefs and practices and the study of religion from an academic, secular frame of reference. In this context, secular means a constitutionally defined approach to the teaching of religion that neither publicly endorses nor prohibits particular religious tradition or expression.

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The academic work of the seminar proved to be provocative for the Fellows and the instructional team alike. By nearly any measure — the first gathering of Cohort One was a success.

John J. Thamatanil. Vanderbilt University

**AAR/Luce Summer Seminars Project Director and Assistant Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt Divinity School**

**The academic work of the seminar proved to be provocative for the Fellows and the instructional team alike. By nearly any measure — the first gathering of Cohort One was a success.**

The academic work of the seminar proved to be provocative for the Fellows and the instructional team alike. By nearly any measure — the intensity and vibrancy of conversation, the development of a new network of colleagues and friends, pages of notes generated, ideas for new courses and future research projects, and the opportunity to read drafts of forthcoming work from scholars at the leading edge of their respective fields — the first gathering of Cohort One was a success. Our conversation about religious diversity was invigorating because the exchange was itself deeply interreligious including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist voices. Even those with considerable experience in interreligious dialogue observed that theological reflection in the presence of such robust diversity is rare and poses special intellectual demands and complications. We noted, for example, that while some participants found it tolerable and even exciting to talk about hybridity and multiple religious belonging, some Jewish colleagues did not warm to these themes as they are currently struggling with questions about preserving Jewish community in an age of intermarriage. Multilateral conversations generated questions and issues that do not present themselves in the more customary bilateral or trilateral (Abrahamic) conversations.

Perhaps the most striking feature of our collective experience was the variety of new research questions generated by the Luce Summer Seminar Fellows. Although the seminar was never intended that stand-alone seminars but rather forums in which scholars might be introduced to theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, the gathering of Fellows with research expertise in a variety of areas outside of TRP and comparative theology generated a host of new questions.

**Key Theoretical Questions**

Clooney described comparative theology as a process in which the comparative theologian who is firmly rooted in a home tradition dips into a deep and detailed encounter with some specific strand of another tradition in all its rich particularity and then returns home to think and write theology anew after being transformed by such an encounter. Several Fellows raised vital questions about persons whose initial subject positions are vastly different. What about persons who might want to do comparative theology but are already in a situation of multiple religious belonging and so are not rooted in one primary home tradition? What about scholars who have been rejected by or held marginal status within their home tradition because of their feminist commitments or sexual orientation? What can comparative theology offer those who have a sense that they must engage with theologies of faith/unfaith seeking understanding? Or put differently, what does comparative theology look like for persons who have a far more ambivalent relationship to their own home traditions?

Several scholars, most especially Tat-Siong Benny Liew, articulated the hope that comparative theology might transcend the partisan debates of times past between religious studies and theology. He observed that a variety of scholars now work happily on both sides of this divide and no longer feel compelled to engage in old turf wars. He and other Fellows see comparative theology as a promising field for the integration of a wide variety of methods and disciplines. Indeed, Liew hopes for a comparative theology that is willing to contextualize itself in light of a much longer history of comparative ventures by non-Western traditions. How have other traditions, while grounded in their own commitments, vested projects that were either analogous or homologous to comparative theology? What might comparative theology learn from studying how other traditions outside the modern West have engaged in committed comparison? Can there be a comparison of comparative theologies?

Edward Phillip Antonio and others articulately the need for more work in developing a nuanced theory of comparativism, that is, what sort of activity is comparison? Also, what are the ethics of comparative theology? How does one learn from the “other” without consuming the other? Devarsh Schoenfeld brought to focus and crystallized a running theme in our conversations: there are a variety of “others” in interreligious encounter. Interfaith dialogue and theology are sure to take on a markedly different cast depending on whether one is the kind of “other” that one encounters. She noted that there are different challenges and opportunities that arise when one encounters persons from a tradition with which one has no genealogical relationship. The “distant other” — Buddhism for Judaism or Native American traditions for Protestants — poses special challenges, not least of all the absence of a shared language. How, for example, does one decide whether the category “religion” is even applicable for Native American communities? On the other hand, sheer difference can present special opportunities, as for example, when Jews find no special problem in participating in Buddhist meditative practices.

Schoenfeld notes that very different problems present themselves in the case of “the intimate other,” such as the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Here, too, there are special challenges and opportunities. In some cases, the very existence of another tradition is taken to be a critique of one’s own. But the existence of tensions surrounding separation from and critique of another tradition usually means that there is a long and rich history of conversation that can serve as a resource for interreligious reflection. There was a shared sense in the group that we need to think more carefully about the nature of TRP and comparative theology in light of these rich questions about the nature of the dialogical “other.”

Anant Ramabachan invited the Cohort as a whole to ponder the following question: what is the meaning of my neighbor’s faith for mine? Notably, Ramabachan went on to frame the question more strongly still. Can we articulate from within our own traditions a reason or set of reasons why we might stand in positive need of other traditions? In putting the question in these terms, Ramabachan invited the group to think differently now somewhat standard rhetoric about “the problem of religious diversity.” For Ramabachan, every tradition bears within it a history of its implied “others” — those “others” that the tradition wish to dispute or marginalize in order to assert its own claims. The question he now puts to traditions is whether they might engage in an inversion of their customary habits by celebrating the “other” rather than seeking to repress or to otherwise marginalize it.

Some seminar Fellows identified critical institutional barriers that prevent persons from non-Christian traditions from taking up comparative theology. In what institutional contexts can Hindu theologians feel safe in speaking in an explicitly theology idioms? Too often, even when Buddhists or Hindus are hired to teach their traditions, it is assumed that their teaching and research will be narrowly restricted to a religious studies paradigm that precludes from questions of theological truth. When such assumptions and constraints are in place, theology becomes more or less synonymous with Christian theology. They noted that under such circumstances, the obstacles on the way to comparative theology are considerable. Such considerations were part of larger conversations about whether academia in North America is, at present, a hospitable site for the work of comparative theology given suspicions about both comparison (Is it possible? Can it be done?) and the power dynamics at work in any comparative project (and theology). For the instructional team and Fellows alike, these questions and many others too numerous to list here were invigorating; they reminded the group as a whole that much new work remains to be done in comparative theology.

**Challenges and Areas for Improvement**

Naturally, no venture in which eight instructors gather with twenty-five faculty scholars can go off without a hitch! No self-respecting gathering of educators can be genuine without a little fear. Fellows with deep experience in the practice and theology of pedagogy pressed the instructional team to think harder about formulating collaborative pedagogies more appropriate to the nature of the materials at hand. They noted that the work of comparative theology and theologies of religious pluralism is intrinsically pedagogical but within these fields remain fairly traditional. Fellows also articulated a hope that there might there be more cross-fertilization across disciplines within theological studies. Some argued that comparative theologians and theologians of religious diversity will find their labs enriched when scholars in these fields — who are most often systematic or constructive theologians — incorporate work on religious diversity that is already taking place in practical theology.

Even these focused calls for changes to our format and agenda were felt to be promising because they articulated so well the need for new research and practice on questions of pedagogy for theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology. At the conclusion of the week, several Fellows voiced their sense that TRP and comparative theology will never be the same again because research inaugurated by the Fellows is sure to introduce radical and trans formative changes in these fields.

**Applications for Cohort Two**

are now being accepted.

The deadline for submission is January 15, 2010. Apply at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Summer_Seminars.
Summer Seminars on Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology: Cohort Two

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce the formation of Cohort Two of our Luce Summer Seminars

These weeklong seminars will provide training to theological education faculty who often prepare students for future religious leadership and ministry. The Theological Education Steering Committee invites applications from theological educators interested in pursuing questions about the meaning of religious diversity. The seminars will help address the question of religious diversity as a properly theological question: What is the meaning of my neighbor’s faith for mine? While we expect that the bulk of applicants will come from seminaries and divinity schools, we also welcome theological educators who teach in theology and religious studies departments.

The seminars, composed of twenty-five participants and eight instructors, are designed for those relatively new to the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, allowing them to learn from expert scholars and advance their understanding. The result of the summer seminars will be to increase the number of theological educators who can teach in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology in a variety of institutions in which theological education takes place. All accepted applicants will be awarded a cash stipend of $1,000, plus the grant will cover their expenses incurred during their participation in the seminars. Cohort Two will meet June 13–20, 2010, at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, then on October 29, 2010, at the Annual Meeting, Atlanta, and, finally May 29–June 5, 2011, at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago.

The application deadline for Cohort Two is January 15, 2010. All accepted applicants will be notified by late February or early March 2010.

Further information on the seminars can be found at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Summer_Seminars or by contacting the Project Director, John J. Thatamanil, Vanderbilt Divinity School, john.j.thatamanil@vanderbilt.edu.
The Problem That “Lies” Within: How “Collegiality” Undermines the Academy

Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Vanderbilt University

THROUGH our work as members of the Status of the Women in the Profession Committee, we have come to realize that the hiring of women and people of color within the religious studies departments and theological schools has elicited mixed reactions. On the one hand, these institutions publicly present and support the view that “race-ing” forwarding engagement diversity within the academy is a marked sign of progress away from what once appeared to be an exclusive group. On the other hand, however, the addition of women and the smattering of underrepresented racial-ethnic groups have not altered, transformed, or ended institutional hegemony built on white male normativity.

While those of liberal sensibilities ballyhoo diversification in the academy, their conservative counterparts bemoan its effects and merits. Yet, all signs indicate that diversification is by no means as widespread as has been touted within higher education in general, or within the realm of religious studies and theological education in particular. Only 29 percent of faculty and 23 percent of tenured faculty are women within departments of religion and theology at colleges and universities, while 29 percent of seminary faculty and 26 percent of its tenured faculty are women. The statistics are even more bleak in both contexts where races of racial minorities represent less than 16 percent of the total faculty. (This suggests that zero persons of color on a given faculty is the norm rather than the exception).

Women of color represent less than 5 percent of all faculties within the field. Consequently, the data runs contrary to the assumption of diversity’s supporters or its critics that the academy is anything but women dominated and colorless, with the categorization and exclusion of people of color as relics of the past. Given the rapid globalization of our society and economy, the religious pluralism of America, and the changing position of our student bodies and campuses, the pragmatic demands of diversification are obvious: Institutions must take seriously their roles to prepare the way for diversity on campuses and for communities that are increasingly of color, and also have more than 50 percent of women on faculty (faculty is currently on average 90–95 percent white, 80 percent male, and therefore disproportionately white and male).

Caught between a besieged past and an angristidden present, what was once delighted in as “the old boy’s club” has been supplanted with, as affirmative action scholar Faith A. Smith suggests, a hypocritical and encompasing fear of white men as “the new endangered species.” As countless scholars have attested, regardless of advanced degrees or scholarly expertise, the entry of women and people of color into the profession can never translate into membership status within that most rarified club, the collegium. Instead, those who embody the reality of diversity within the academy isomorphically become the supposed “problem of diversity” — a problem that elicits either liberal pity (“because they seem so out of place”) or conservative contempt (“because they’re different”). As peripheral outsiders, women and racial-ethnic faculty often must wonder: Exactly what is the role and meaning of collegiality? What are its presumed behaviors? Most importantly, is it possible to prevent collegiality from becoming a lack-safe mechanism for nepotism or a disguise for discrimination against women and people of color?

These questions are necessary for us to ask aloud and engage, if we truly seek to advance our pursuit of knowledge production. Not surprisingly, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has noted that collegiality is frequently employed incorrectly as an evaluative means designed to ensure homogeneity of faculty and thought, excluding diversity of person and practice on the basis of their difference from a perceived norm. In this respect, the invocation of ‘collegiality’ often threatens the basic academic freedom that is of fundamental importance to the academic enterprise. In the heat of important decision-making regarding promotion and tenure, as well as other traditional areas of faculty responsibility such as curriculum revision and academic hiring, “collegiality” can and is often misconstrued as the expectation that a faculty member should display an appropriate “enthusiasm” or “dedication,” should evince a constructive attitude that will “foster harmony” and not encourage “diversiveness,” or display an excessive deference to administrative or faculty decisions that are based upon “reasoned” discussion. Such expectations are flatly contrary to the very foundation of academic freedom, and thus protect a faculty member from subject to dissent from the judgments of colleagues and question the actions of administrators.

Cultural critics such as bell hooks, Patricia Williams, and Cornel West, along with religious scholars such as M. Shawn Copeland, Katie Cannon, and Miguel De La Torre, have shown how this skewed environment is one wherein “collegial” behavior is (mis)perceived as the ability of women and people of color as intellectuals and scholars to function symbolically. Indeed, feminine scholar Michelle Wallace has shown how women of color are “the least convincing in this role, the least trustworthy.”

Since no one can “outwhite” or “outsam” an accomplished white man, women and other underrepresented faculty simply become inferior. Herein is the reality inversion and implicit mendacity of the academy: collegiality, fit, and desirability are measured by how disembodied and duplicious women and people of color can become, by denouncing and denying their difference from their white male counterparts. Therefore, to be different, or to think or do differently, is to be subjected to routine scrutiny and constant challenges concerning one’s teaching, research, or service — regardless if the evaluation is for tenure, training, or advancement. Simply put, symmetry in merit does not necessarily translate to parity in regard to the professional respect of one’s peers.

This predicament of “collegiality” is especially daunting — if not dangerous — for pre-tenured faculty, for whom it is often as if two faculty manuals exist. One manual provides an explicit guide for underrepresented groups to follow in order to understand collegiality as a virtue (as opposed to an evaluative criterion), that one displays through her or his successful execution of teaching, research, and service. The other manual is nothing more than an implicit handbook for the “old guard,” in which collegiality is employed as an ambiguous, evaluative trump card used subversively and surreptitiously to maintain conformity, ensure deference, and silence dissenting opinions and “disobedient” personalities.

Embedded within hiring practices, peer evaluations, and promotion reviews, this ambiguous notion of collegiality not only represents a “safe harbor” that protects white male privilege, but also poses a very real danger to the academic freedom and professional success of women and other underrepresented groups. Non-exempt faculty powerbrokers often anticipate the arrival of those who do not embody the norm as if they are the veritable barbarians at the gate. Eventually, they come to sound the “collegial” alarm, in order to forestall in covert fashion the imminent discursive or demographic shift. That is, they will proclaim a deficiency in the underrepresented faculty member’s performance that they will graft in his or her perceived lack of “collegiality” — be it his lack of “fit” (read embodiment), her “disspect” (read dissenting opinion), or their “unwillingness to work for the best interest of the institution” (read criticism of discriminatory policies, procedures, and processes). No matter how competent, productive, or hard-working faculty of diversity may be, their presence, promotion, and possible permanence somehow suggest an undermining of the mission, identity, and traditions of the (old boy’s) institution. The result, while not overt, is to bemoan the crucible of diversity as the crisis of our time.

Therein lies the problem. Its resolution will be found not merely by dealing with the “flesh and blood” demographics that facilitate the diversification of faculty, but also attendent populations, but rather, and more importantly, by exercising the “powers and principalities” of the “old boy’s system” that wreaks and haunts our otherwise hallowed, would-be collegial halls. Echoing the words of the late political cartoonist Walt Kelly, “We have met the enemy and he is us,” the old guard must look inward and invest in some serious soul-searching of its own, rather than continuing in course of scaring collegial scrutiny of their sisters and darker brothers, if the academy is ever going to race forward and engender progress.

Endnotes

1 Taken from “American Academy of Religion Survey of Undergraduate Religion and Theology Programs in the United States and Canada Further Data Analysis Summary of Results” presented at the Numbers Count: Gathering, Managing, and Using Census Data in Program Review and Enhancement Special Topics Forum at the 2003 Annual Meeting (Atlanta, Georgia, November 24, 2003) and the Association of Theological Schools (2008–2009 Annual Data Tables (http://www.aats.edu/afpd/afpd1.asp).


5 Michelle Wallace, Invisibility Blues: From Pots to Theory (New York: Verso, 1990), 7, as found in Shawn Copeland, “Collegiality as a Moral and Ethical Practice,” 318.

6 Shawn Copeland, “Collegiality as a Moral and Ethical Practice,” 317.
Sharon Watson Fluker, The Fund for Theological Education

Today, these memories and our ongoing work with FTE Doctoral Fellows inspire continued passion for encouraging talented students from traditionally underrepresented groups (African-American, Asian-American, Native American, and Hispanic students) to consider teaching and scholarship in theological schools and seminars as their life’s work. This remains true despite recent challenges to affirmative action policies, race-based scholarships, and the reexamination of diversity programs across higher education and beyond. It remains true because excellence in the academy depends on gifted voices that represent diverse perspectives in research, teaching, and public engagement. And it remains true because of FTE’s history of investment in identifying, recruiting, and supporting emerging scholars from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups who are able to measureable and positive impact in the lives of students and on the quality of scholarship.

PhD studies are extremely demanding. Rising scholars, particularly those from underrepresented groups, need a community of support. That’s what the Fund offers.”

Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz
Professor of Ethics and Theology, Drew Theological School, FTE Fellow

Preparing the next generation of diverse scholars for the academy depends on increasing the number of racial/ethnic students pursuing the PhD. But while the proportion of college students from underrepresented groups has been increasing (from 22 percent in 1997 to 28 percent in 2006), far too few of them — lacking financial support, instruction on navigating the graduate school application process, and faculty role models — go on to seek graduate degrees. In many ways, the fundamental challenge remains a supply or “pipeline” issue.

The FTE’s formula for change — as a catalyst, convener, and advocate — seeks to keep this issue as a priority on the radar screen of graduate education. It requires a commensurate commitment on the part of national, regional, and local partners and the constellation of higher education institutions. Some of our dedicated partners include the American Academy of Religion, Society of Biblical Literature, Hispanic Theological Initiative, Institute for Leadership Development and the Study of Pacific and Asian North American Religion, and the Association of Theological Schools.

Over the past decade, we have learned which identification and retention strategies work for doctoral students, and also the value of collaboration and partnership in advancing the diversity cause. Sparked and sustained by visionary funding from Lilly Endowment Inc., FTE Doctoral Fellows have helped to change the landscape.

The challenge continues as our intervention seeks the scale and investment to match current and emerging needs.

FTE Doctoral Programs: A Decade of Success

To tackle concerns about the lack of diversity among faculty who teach religion and theology, the Fund unveiled in 1998 new competitive fellowships for outstanding racial/ethnic students. Between 1998 and 2008, FTE has awarded approximately $4 million in support to 214 doctoral

(continued on next page)
A student’s decision to pursue graduate work in the academic study of religion is often a complex one, based on considerations ranging from intellectual and personal to professional and practical. In all cases, the decision represents an important life choice. Yet students in the academic study of religion often lack access to the very information they need to make informed decisions. In a 2008 survey conducted by the AAR, over 80 percent of current graduate students in the field responded that they had little or no understanding of the job market for PhD graduates in their specific field of study when they started their studies, and 82 percent reported that they had little or no understanding of the job placement success for graduates in their field of study from the institution they were attending.

In light of the changing nature of the job market with regard to academic positions in the field and in order to afford students the opportunity to make informed decisions about whether and where to attend graduate school, the American Academy of Religion puts forth the following best practices for the posting of graduation and placement information by graduate programs in the academic study of religion.

Programs should post in a location accessible to prospective and current students (typically the program website) concrete data on progress towards the degree and graduation status for each year’s class of students. This data should be updated on at least an annual basis. For example:

Class of 2005:
20 students started, 13 still enrolled, 1 graduated (as of Fall 2009)

Class of 2004:
18 students started, 6 still enrolled, 5 graduated (as of Fall 2009)

Programs should post in a location accessible to prospective and current students (typically the program website) specific information — including year graduated, area of study, dissertation/thesis title, and current position, but not student name — regarding the placement status of each student who graduates from the program. This information should be updated on at least an annual basis. For example:

Average time from first enrollment to graduation for students who graduated 2002–2009: 6.5 years

The above information is crucial not merely to students who are deciding whether or not to attend graduate school, but also to students currently enrolled in programs who must make informed decisions about future career paths. In addition, this information should be an integral part of discussions by faculty members as they conduct informed assessment of program strengths, weaknesses, and future directions.

Statement of Best Practices for the Posting of Graduation and Placement Records by Graduate Programs in the Academic Study of Religion

The American Academy of Religion Board of Directors, at its April 2009 meeting, approved the following Statement of Best Practices for the Posting of Graduation and Placement Records by Graduate Programs in the Academic Study of Religion. The statement, composed and submitted by the Job Placement Task Force, provides some guidelines by which graduate programs in religion and theology should share their graduate and placement records to the larger community. The Statement of Best Practices is available on the AAR’s website at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Board_and_Governance/Resolutions/placement.asp. We encourage you to discuss these best practices with your institution’s administration.
Shaun Casey is professor of Christian ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the AAR’s Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion.

The 2008 election of Barack Obama generated a unique volume of commentary on the role of religion in American presidential politics. Across the political spectrum, bloggers, journalists, professors, politicians, clergy, and ordinary citizens examined and debated a host of rumors, events, and speeches dealing with some aspect of religion. From the defeat of every tribe to the cultured among the despisers of religion, everyone seemed to have an opinion on the junior senator from Illinois when it came to religion.

I had something of a front row seat to the spectacle. In July of last year, after serving as a senior adviser for religious affairs to the Obama campaign as a staffer for the religious affairs team ... I hit the road predisposed to compare what I saw and did on the campaign with the epic struggle of John Kennedy’s fight to become the first Roman Catholic president in American history. I noticed at least three major parallels.

The first parallel I saw was weakness. Both Kennedy and Obama faced very difficult problems regarding religion. Kennedy’s Catholicism was a huge obstacle as the conventional political wisdom said that, in light of Herbert Hoover’s big win over the Catholic Democrat Al Smith, America would never elect a Catholic. And if a Massachusetts Catholic, Kennedy had never faced the depths of anti-Catholic prejudice of the type he would encounter especially, but not exclusively, in the South.

Likewise, Obama’s problems were large. The fact that his middle name is Hussein fed fears in a significant minority of the electorate that he was in fact some sort of radical Muslim. In addition, his membership in the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, under the leadership of Reverend Jeremiah Wright, led many pundits to charge that Obama was under the sway of allegedly radical black ideology. And there was also the simple fact that as a Democrat, Obama was presumed by some to be a secularist and even anti-God simply by virtue of his party affiliation. Taken together, these weaknesses at the outset of the campaign presented Obama with many problems.

The second parallel between Kennedy and Obama is their response to these weaknesses. Despite his naïve regarding anti-Catholicism in the American electorate, Kennedy came to realize the depth of his problem very quickly and applied a type of technical rationality to the problem. He assembled a team of experts to constantly diagram the scope of the problem and design a course of action. He directly addressed the issues surrounding his Catholicism through a combination of a listening tour of prominent anti-Catholic Protestant leaders, several speeches throughout the campaign, and constant consultation with prominent Protestant and Catholic leaders for advice.

Obama, too, applied a form of technical rationality to the religion problem he faced. He assembled the largest campaign religion staff of any Democratic presidential candidate in history. Significant assets were deployed to reach Catholic, African-American, Evangelical, and mainline Protestant voters. While it would be a gross exaggeration to attribute his win to this effort, it certainly did not do him any harm in the final outcome. Like Kennedy, Obama also addressed his problems with speeches aimed directly at these problems. Obama’s famous Philadelphia speech, like Kennedy’s famous Houston speech, was given in direct response to a crisis precipitated by a public provocation. In Kennedy’s case, he reluctantly gave the Houston speech in response to a public challenge thrown down by Norman Vincent Peale, allies of Billy Graham, and the National Association of Evangelicals. Obama responded to the outcry over Reverend Jeremiah Wright’s appearance at the National Press Club. Both speeches were born out of fear and crisis. Both speeches were critical political successes in that they eloquently addressed voter angst and allayed the fears of many voters.

The third parallel between the two candidates relates to the media. Kennedy was quite frustrated in that he was consistently portrayed as the Catholic candidate for the presidency. His inability to settle what came to be called the “religious” question dogged his campaign throughout 1960. Yet, I argue in my book, this tension actually helped him in the closing days of the race. For Obama, the Reverend Wright saga in the media threatened to derail the campaign. While I cannot fully explore the complexities of the controversies generated by the Wright episode here, I do suggest that the media bears some responsibility for its poor handling of the story. In the spring of 2008, when I was advising the campaign and not yet a staffer, the night before one of the major television networks “broke” the Wright story on its national morning news magazine show, the campaign called me and asked me to go on the show to tape a response to the story. I reluctantly agreed and found myself in a downtown Washington remote network studio very early the next morning getting ready to respond to a question-and-answer segment with the anchor. Despite significant preparation with key campaign staffers, I was appalled at what I experienced. The anchor played the video of the story and then launched into a series of hostile questions.

I left the comfort of my usual academic summer routine and joined the Obama campaign as a staffer for the religious affairs team ... I hit the road predisposed to compare what I saw and did on the campaign with the epic struggle of John Kennedy’s fight to become the first Roman Catholic president in American history. I noticed at least three major parallels.

The video clip contained no original reporting from Trinity United Church of Christ. Instead, the investigative reporter featuring African-American women in traditional African dress dancing and clapping to music interspersed with the sermon clips. Having grown up in a small southern town, I knew the name of this genre. It is called “What White People Think Black People Do When They Think White People Are Not Watching.” I defended off the hostile questions from the pretty boy anchor who kept asking me about Obama, who spoke of uniting all Americans, could associate with such a divisive figure, but I was furious.

I did no harm to the campaign that morning, but as a scholar of religion I learned the hard way that the mainstream political media had no capacity and little interest in understanding either Jeremiah Wright or the theology of Trinity United Church of Christ. Instead, the major media outlet thought that it had the goods that were going to kill the Obama campaign and that was all they were interested in. In coming weeks, I worked my contacts in the media world and discovered a lack of interest or a lack of competency among political media in understanding black liberation theology. To be fair, there were a number of religion reporters and religious media outlets that did do a good job on this front, but they were not in the mainstream political media where their coverage went relatively unnoticed.

As an aside, I should note the Obama campaign’s modest success in reaching moderate and young Evangelicals forced Senator John McCain to expend valuable assets in shore up his base among conservative Protestants, which constitutes a huge part of the Republican base, despite the fact that he was clearly uncomfortable with that segment of his party. The selection of Sarah Palin as his running mate stopped the hemorrhaging of voters in the Religious Right, but it proved to be a disastrous choice among the balance of the electorate. McCain maintained a miniscule religious outreach staff in comparison to both President Bush in previous elections and the Obama campaign. Everywhere I traveled across the country, I discovered we had the religious field to ourselves. The formidable Bush religious outreach machine was apparently dead.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about the president and religious leaders. The curious speculate on the influence of such diverse figures as James Cone, Reinhold Niebuhr, Robert Purnam, John Rawls, Jeremiah Wright, Jim Wallis, and others on the president’s thinking about religion. In most cases, there is only the flimsiest of evidence of any such influence. Truth be told, the president is not a religious intellectual. The greatest religious influences on his thinking are not public intellectuals, but rather his own experience in his community organizing days in Chicago, which fed his belief that faith-based communities can work together to address social problems. From the staffers who manage faith-related issues in the White House to the members of his Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Council, one does not find a coterie of well-trained religion scholars.

Nevertheless, religion scholars will find much to examine in Obama’s growing record in coming years as religion will continue to cut across most of the crucial political questions of our day. Undoubtedly, one of the president’s reelection campaign in 2012 will consolidate the lessons learned from its successes and failures with religious outreach in 2008 and that, too, will draw scholarly scrutiny.
Medical Studies of Intercessory Prayer

Saying Your Prayers, Constructing Your Religions: Medical Studies of Intercessory Prayer
Wendy Cadge, Brandeis University

Wendy Cadge is an associate professor of sociology at Brandeis University. She received her PhD in sociology from Princeton University. Her first book, Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America (University of Chicago Press, 2005), examined immigrant and convert Buddhists in the United States. She is currently working on a book about religion and spirituality in hospitals to be titled Paging God: Religion in the Halls of Medicine. She writes and teaches about religion, medicine, immigration, and sexuality in the contemporary United States, including her recent article, “De Facto Congregationalism and the Religious Organizations of the 1965 Immigrants to the United States: A Revised Approach” (Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol. 76 no. 2, 2008, pp. 344-374). Cadge’s recent work has been supported by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, the Louisville Institute, the Metanexus Institute, the American Academy of Religion, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholars in Health Policy Program, and the Center for the Study of Religion and Textual Methods Project at Princeton University. She is a recipient of the Midwest Sociologists’ (MSA) Award for Excellence in Teaching from Brandeis University.

On March 31, 2006, the New York Times published a front-page article under the headline “Long-Awaited Medical Study Questions the Power of Prayer.” The article reported the results of a multiyear, multi-medical-center study designed to determine whether prayers offered by strangers influenced the recovery of people undergoing heart surgery — they did not. Published in the prominent American Heart Journal, this report was the latest in a line of medical research studies published over the past forty years that asked this question. Lead author Herbert Benson and his colleagues were surprised by these results in light of earlier studies that showed such prayers to have an effect. While briefly acknowledging that intercessory prayer may not be effective in reducing complications in cardiac patients, Benson and colleagues pointed to aspects of their study design that might explain these findings. In addition to concerns about the duration of the study, these factors included the ways that the intercessors, members of three Christian prayer groups, were instructed to offer prayers.

As scholars, we might think such double blind clinical trials of intercessory prayer have nothing to do with how we study religion. Taken as texts, however, these studies offer remarkable insights into how a group of physicians and medical scientists at Columbia University, Duke University, and other prominent medical schools have understood prayer, tried to study it, and written about it in the pages of medical journals. I trace the social history of these studies from 1965 to the present in my recent article, “Saying Your Prayers, Constructing Your Religions: Medical Studies of Intercessory Prayer,” published in the July issue of the Journal of Religion. From single Protestant studies in the 1960s to some recent attempts (not Benson’s) to combine Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and other practitioners in the 2000s, these studies reflect researchers’ shifting assumptions about prayer and the evolving requirements of clinical research trials in the years in which they were conducted.

Twentieth century medical researchers were among the first to investigate whether the prayers of one group of people might affect the health of others. Calling the efficacy of prayer a “perfectly appropriate and legitimate subject of scientific inquiry” that is universally ignored by the scientific world, nineteenth century English scientist Francis Galton focused on sovereignty, a group he assumed were prayed for more than others, to determine whether prayers were answered. He concluded that they were not, but that prayer might be a comfort for people regardless. Other English scientists, including John Tyndall, also called for studies into the effectiveness of prayer, suggesting an experiment in 1872 in which a hospital would be made the focus of national prayer for one day and mortality rates compared before and after the day of prayer. The experiment was never conducted, but the “prayer gauge” debate it provoked illustrated deep tensions around the boundaries of religion and science in Victorian England and served as a precursor to contemporary intercessory prayer studies.

Between 1965 and 2006, about seventy-five researchers working in small teams published eighteen research articles in the English language medical literature that report on intercessory prayer studies. The Cochrane Review, an organization that compiles medical studies about specific topics to offer clear recommendations, analyzed these studies first in the 1990s and several times since, initially suggesting further study and only recently calling for an end to such studies. These studies first became prominent in 1988 when Byrd published an article titled “Positive Therapeutic Effects of Intercessory Prayer in a Coronary Care Unit Population” in the Southern Medical Journal. The study included 393 people admitted to the cardiac care unit at San Francisco General Hospital, half of whom were prayed for by born-again Christians who were active in local churches. Each intercessor was given the assigned patients’ names, diagnoses, and general conditions and was asked to pray for “rapid recovery” and for “prevention of complications and death.” After analyzing the data gathered, Byrd concluded that “intercessory prayer to the Judeo-Christian God has a beneficial therapeutic effect in patients admitted to the CCU [cardiac care unit].” Patients who were prayed for by born-again Christians they had never met, he argued, had better health outcomes than those who were not the subjects of prayer. A later study, “A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Effects of Remote Intercessory Prayer on Coronary Care Unit Patients Admitted to a Coronary Care Unit,” led by William H. Harris and published in the Archives of Internal Medicine in 1999, claimed to confirm these positive findings.

Many other studies reported negative effects of intercessory prayer, finding like Benson and colleagues in 2006 that prayer did not improve the health of those prayed for. As time went on, researchers and patients who wrote letters to the editors of the medical journals in response to these studies also began to wrestle with methodological, theological, and epistemological questions. They asked how prayer should be offered in such studies, what the right “dosage” is, how intercessors should be trained, and how to handle non-Christian intercessors. They raised questions about whether the people not being prayed for in these studies were a true control group in the scientific sense, because they were likely prayed for by family and friends. Letter writers asked about methods of data analysis and whether these studies, if they were science, should be reviewed by institutional review panels that grant permission to do research with living beings. Some also asked about the conceptions of religion and of prayer that underlie these studies, raising questions about theology, theodicy, and deep existential questions about why people become ill, why some recover and others do not, and the differences between religious and scientific approaches to such questions.

Intercessory prayer studies illustrate a particular intersection of religion and modern medical science demonstrating shifting social assumptions about medicine, religion, and the requirements of clinical trials in the years in which they were published. In addition, intercessory prayer studies are valuable for scholars of religion for what they demonstrate about “epistemic authority” or the boundaries we place around the subjects we study. Through them as a group illustration, Jonathan Z. Smith’s imperative that the constructed nature of the category of religion and practices traditionally connected to it (e.g., prayer, be it religious, informal, or private) be recognized. By looking at a case in which religion, prayer specifically, is defined and measured so discretely and differently from how scholars of religion typically think about it, this study points to all of our need to carefully consider our epistemologies and to be as clear as possible about how our individual, institutional, and cultural contexts shape our assumptions, research questions, and writing.

For these reasons, I have found intercessory prayer studies to be particularly valuable as teaching tools in introductory and more advanced courses in religion and sociology. In religious studies courses, students tend to recall when they learn how these researchers defined and measured prayer, creating an opening for discussions of what prayer is, how it is constructed, how context shapes the answers to these questions, etc. Such questions can lead into broader discussion of how we define and study prayer, ritual, practice, and other common topics in religious studies courses.

One approach to teaching about intercessory prayer studies as connected to broader issues of epistemology and methodology is to begin by having students actually read one of the studies. I typically assign the article by Harris mentioned above. The article mentioned above also works well, as does an article by Leonard Leibovici titled “Effects of Remote, Retroactive Intercessory Prayer on Outcomes in Patients with Bloodstream Infection: Randomised Controlled Trial” (British Medical Journal, 2001). If you assign this article, read my article in the Journal of Religion first so you are aware of the twist in his approach. I typically assign one of the above-mentioned articles for a full class meeting and begin by asking the class:

• Were you surprised to read this article? Why or why not?
• What are these researchers trying to learn?
• What assumptions are they making in the process (about science, religion, prayer, etc.)?
• Are you convinced by their evidence? Why or why not?
• What do you think it would have been like to be an intercessor in this study?
• What are these researchers actually testing? Are they testing the existence of God?
• Should these studies be conducted?
• Should universities allow these studies to be conducted?

This generally generates vigorous empirical debate about what the researchers did and vigorous normative debate about whether such studies should be conducted.

In a second class meeting, I then assign my article to give students a social history of these studies as well as to raise broader theoretical and methodological questions about what prayer is and how, as scholars of religion, we study it. For fun and to generate more accessible conversation, I also sometimes assign William Salaman’s (continued on next page)
A new economy?

At the 2010 Trinity Institute Conference, or the U.K.
define the answer. Be a part of the
to attend in the U.S., have a role in shaping
Australia, Canada, France, Germany,
the promise that, in three to five months, an
admission letter on watermarked university
letterhead will arrive at your door and be
the gateway to your future. A solitary exercise in
self promotion, perhaps, the PhD admission
process can be a rite of passage.

This rosy optimism quickly fades when the
first rejection letter arrives, pushing you into
the realm of fear and anxiety with the recog-
nition that an acceptance letter may never
come. For me, it is small comfort when
departments report that they had over 200
applicants and only admitted three students,
or that they thought I was a great candidate
but not a “good fit” for the program. Even
the added reality of the United States reces-
sion and university cutbacks can hardly soften
the blow.

The advice given to me by professors is usually-
ly the same. Find someone in your field who
is doing what you do (no one is doing exactly
what I am doing — hooray for originality! —
but at least there are some in the ballpark),
then contact them to see if they are interested
in your work (I found several who said they
would be happy to be my advisor). Go to,
and present at, conferences (I have, both
regionally and nationally), publish if you can,
travel if possible. I know so many peers who
have followed every one of these rules and
more, and still have not been admitted any-
where.

I know enough about the admission process
to know that it is not as simple as “I like this
student, let’s take them!” There are financial
factors, of course. There are faculty considera-
tions — your potential advisor might already
have a maximum number of students, or
have no influence on the admissions commit-
tee. Some research topics might just be too
fringe for some departments’ intended focus.
Since my own work, for example, crosses into
the fields of anthropology and history, some
departments suggested that I would need to
have a (third) MA in one of those fields to be
competitive.

This is the scary reality of PhD admissions,
and if you are holding a MA thinking you
can get a teaching job with that alone, there is
something you need to know: our field is so
inundated with unemployed PhDs that even
community colleges and small liberal arts
schools advertise jobs that require “PhD in
hand” or at least “ABD” stats. Statistics from
the AAR state that over 80 percent of teach-
ing jobs are given to people with a PhD (and
most of the rest are given to those in the process of pursuing one). When it comes to
research grants for teachers and students,
there’s virtually nothing available for someone with just a MA. You at least have to be on the
PhD track, if not have one already.

Even if I’m whining a bit here, I know I’m in
good company. There are literally thousands
of us MA out there — bright, eager, full of
interesting ideas, focused on our goals —
who are waiting tables and answering phones.
The carrot on the stick, the hope of an
admission letter in the mail, motivates us to
keep reading and writing and going to con-
fferences and planning our futures. But take
away that “carrot” and what is the point of going on? Is there any caché (or cash!) in hav-
ing the dubious title of “independent schol-
ar?” Can one freelance in academia? Will a
book publisher, or even the JJE publish a
submission from John Doe, MA? Will a
school take pity on you when you apply for
the third time to their program?

Along with many others, I’ll continue to pon-
der this dilemma — as soon as I finish taking
this table’s order.

(continued from previous page)

April 2006 article in Slate titled “The
Deity in the Data: What the Latest Prayer
Study Tells Us about God.” I aim to gen-
erate discussion in a second class period
with questions such as:

• What is epistemic authority and how
is it evident in intercessory prayer
studies?

• How does Saletan answer the above
question in his article?

• Why are these researchers studying
prayer rather than another religious
practice?

• Why are there studies being conduct-
ed here and now (i.e., Weber’s classic
elective affinity” question)?

• How do changing religious and med-
ical contexts over time influence
how prayer is defined and measured
in these studies?

• What are other examples or cases in
which scientists study religion or reli-
gious topics in this way? What can we
learn from such comparisons?

My goal in this discussion is to get at
broader questions of methodology and
epistemology in the hopes that students
will recognize the constructed nature of all
categories and the different ways not just
scholars of religion but researchers, scien-
tists, journalists, and others conceive of
aspects of religion in ways that shape their
thinking and writing about it.
Regional Meetings and Calls for Papers

For information about our ten regions and more detailed Calls for Papers, go to www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Regions.

Eastern International

University of Ottawa/Université d’Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
May 7–8, 2010

The Regional Program Committee invites you to submit proposals for papers and panels to be presented at the 2010 Regional Meeting. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2010.

Each proposal should consist of the following:

• One-page abstract (300 words max.) describing the nature of the paper or panel
• Current CV for the participant(s)
• Cover letter that includes full name, title, institution, phone number, fax number, e-mail, and mailing address.

Please send this information as a single e-mail attachment in MS Word format to aar_eir@uwaterloo.ca.

Proposals are welcome in all areas of religious studies. The Program Committee is particularly interested in papers, panels, and thematic sessions in the following areas:

• Religion, Art, and Literature
• Indigenous Religious Traditions
• Religion and International Relations
• Religion and Diaspora Communities
• Teaching Religious Studies: Methods and Technologies

The Committee is also interested in panels combining activism or performative dimensions with scholarly inquiry. The Committee wants to encourage interdisciplinary panels that maintain religion as a central theme. Scholars from any region may apply to participate. Only those proposals received by the deadline will be considered for inclusion in the program. Presentations are limited to twenty minutes, with ten minutes allowed for questions. If you require technological support for your presentation (such as an Internet connection or AV equipment), you must request it with your proposal. As a general rule, the Committee discourages panels comprised of scholars from a single institution. Exceptions to this rule would include a presentation from a research team or a panel based on other types of collaborative research.

The Committee welcomes proposals, papers, and panels in both French and English.

Student Paper Competition

Graduate and undergraduate students residing in the region are invited to enter the student paper competition. Please note that to be eligible for submission, the student must

be a graduate or undergraduate student at a university in the Eastern International Region. The committee will give preference to work that is new at this conference.

Two $200 awards are reserved for winning papers. The awards will be formally presented at the business meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2010.

To enter the competition, please attach a letter of intent along with your initial proposal by the January 31, 2010, deadline. A final draft of the paper must be submitted by April 1, 2010. To be eligible for this award, the student must read the entire paper at the meeting, which means the paper and presentation must conform to the twenty-minute time limit (roughly 2,500 words). We ask that submissions to this contest be submitted by e-mail to Scott Kline at skline@uwatwaterloo.ca.

Undergraduates

The region welcomes submissions from undergraduates in the field of religious studies. The Committee requests that, in addition to the abstract, CV, and cover letter, the undergraduate student also submit a letter from a faculty member who has supervised the student’s work.

Note: All presenters at the Spring 2010 regional conference must have active membership in the AAR. All participants must preregister for the conference.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Awards

As has become our custom, MAR-AAR will award the Kate Connolly-Weinert Prize of $200 to the most innovative proposal for a group session (or panel) dealing with peace issues or women’s studies; the deadline for submission is November 15, 2009. Applicants should send their proposals to MAR-AAR President Deveroth Schoenfeld at dinsnobrestlel@smcm.edu.

To help foster graduate student participation, the Executive Committee of the MAR-AAR will again award the Robert E. Streetman Prize of $200 for the best student paper presented at the conference by an AAR regional member. Those interested in the Streetman prize should submit their entire paper by March 4, 2010, to Deveroth Schoenfeld at dinsnobrestlel@smcm.edu and clearly indicate they are submitting the paper for prize consideration.

Midwest

Augustana College
Rock Island, Illinois, USA
March 26–27, 2010

The Midwest Region invites research presentations related to the academic study of religion from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and encompassing a wide range of religious and cultural phenomena. This year, we especially invite proposals dealing with topics related to our conference theme, “Religion, Sex, and the Body.” Proposals might include research engaging topics such as ritual performance, gendered roles and identities, the embodiment of religion, theories of the body, and sexuality among religious peoples and groups.

We are very pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Wendy Doniger, University of Chicago Divinity School.

Proposals are due to Section Chairs by January 1, 2010. Please contact the relevant Section Chair listed below with your proposal, which should include the following:

A cover sheet that includes your name, address, e-mail address, title of paper, and 100-word abstract.

A second sheet that includes the title of your paper and a 200- to 250-word proposal, typed, double-spaced. Do not include your name on this sheet.

Proposal submissions will be accepted online. Please observe the following restrictions:

You may submit up to two different proposals to a single section.

You may submit up to two different proposals to two different sections.

You may not submit the same proposal to two different sections.

Submit your response to the call for papers at www.aarweb.org/AboutAAR/Regions/Midwest/call.asp.

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New England–Maritimes

NEMAA Regional Activities

NEMAA will continue supporting regional AAR activities through a variety of initiatives emphasizing the support of activities throughout the year and throughout the geographical area. This year, NEMAA will also cosponsor the annual regional conference of the AAR Mid-Atlantic Region in order to provide a more structured forum for those seeking opportunities to present papers, cochair sections, or gather with scholars in such a setting.

Cosponsorship of Mid-Atlantic AAR Regional Conference

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Maritimes cosponsored conference will be held March 11–12, 2010, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA. The theme of the conference will be “Perspectives in Social Change.” Mid-Atlantic leadership is seeking individuals from NEMAA interested in cochairing or chairing sections, particularly in the following areas: religion in America, pedagogy, womanist theology, Islam, and Judaism. Other sections which may need assistance are religion in the arts, religion and philosophy, Christian history, continental theology, and religion and ethics. Individuals interested in chairing or cochairing a section should contact Sebastian Simkins, Creighton University, rsmkns@creighton.edu, or Michael Hartwig, President of NEMAA, portamjh@comcast.net.

A New Initiative for 2009–2010

We would like to send out a regular e-mail to members (perhaps every two months) announcing workshops, conferences, speakers, and other activities of the Academy. This is an excellent way to make NEMAA members aware of opportunities to participate and support regional work and scholars. If you have an event you would like to have included in this regular list of activities, please send it to Michael Hartwig, portamjh@comcast.net.

Call for Events

If you have an idea for an event, we welcome additional proposals from regional members, and encourage funding and promotional support. Our goal is to sponsor events in different parts of the region, to benefit the greatest possible number of members. Such events will be organized by members and supported with regional financial and promotional assistance, provided that the event is open to any regional member. Faculty and graduate students with a faculty mentor are all eligible to apply. We have set a rolling deadline to make it possible to submit an application at any time. If you have an idea or inquiry and want feedback, please send it to Regionally Elected Director Rebecca Sachs Norris, Merrimack College, rlsecker@sacredagrees.org. Proposals should be sent directly to individuals listed in the calls at www.aarweb.org/about/aarregions/newengland-maritimescall.asp.

Cosponsoring Conferences

Instead of organizing a single annual regional meeting, which relatively few people attend, NEMAA will function as a cosponsor of conferences proposed by members around the region. NEMAA’s contribution will involve: 1) NEMAA grants of up to $800 to help support conference-related costs; 2) Assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best practice planning schedules; and 3) Access to regional e-mail notices to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Grove Harris, Harvard University, gwasharris@post.harvard.edu, and should include a conference title, an abstract, a list of projected speakers and/or facilitators, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAA grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Proposals have a rolling deadline.

Teaching Workshops

The topics of greatest interest to our members include course development and teaching skills. If you would like to organize a teaching workshop, NEMAA will provide: 1) NEMAA grants of up to $800 to help support conference-related costs; 2) Assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best practice planning schedules; and 3) Access to regional e-mail notices to locate presenters and/or to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Grove Harris, Harvard University, gwasharris@post.harvard.edu, and should include a workshop title, abstract, list of projected speakers and/or facilitators, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAA grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Proposals have a rolling deadline.

Salon Series

A lunch and/or dinner series, held in different parts of the region, focusing on the work of regional authors (these can be works in progress). NEMAA will provide: 1) Grants of up to $400 to help support related costs; and 2) Access to regional e-mail notices to publicize the series. Proposals should be sent to Michael Hartwig, Iltumie, portamjh@comcast.net, and should include a title, abstract, list of authors and/or facilitators, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAA grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Proposals have a rolling deadline.

If you have an idea that is not listed here but that you feel is consistent with the above mentioned goals, please send an inquiry! For a list of currently scheduled events, see the New England–Maritimes region’s page at www.aarweb.org/about/aarregions/newengland-maritimes.
Southeastern
Century City Marriott Hotel
Atlanta, GA
March 5–7, 2010
The following sections and program units invite members who wish to present a paper or coordinate a session to submit proposals (one to two pages) or completed manuscripts to the appropriate section chairs by the call deadline, October 1, 2009. Each member is limited to one proposal. Please use the proposal form available on the SEC-SOR website (www.secsor.appstate.edu). Proposals for joint sessions should be sent to all chairs.

For full information on the Call, themes, and submission guidelines, visit the region’s website at www.secsor.appstate.edu.

SBL/ASOR Archaeology and the Ancient World (4 sessions)
Ralph K. Hawkins, Kentucky Christian University, rhawkins@kctu.edu

(AAR) Bible and Modern Culture (5 sessions)
Brian Mooney, Johnson and Wales University, bmooney@jwu.edu, and Finbar S. Benjamin, Oakwood University, fbenjamin@oakwood.edu

(AAR) Constructive Theologies (4 sessions)
Mark Medley, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, mark.medley@btky.org, and Emily Askew, Lexington Theological Seminary, easkew@kctu.edu

(AAR) Ethics, Religion, and Society (5 sessions)
Darla Schamm, Hollins University, dschamm@hollius.edu, and Sally Holt, Belmont University, sally.holt@belmont.edu

(SBL) Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament (3–4 sessions)
Bryan Bibb, Furman University, bryan.bibb@furm.edu, and David Garber, Mercer University, garber_dg@mercer.edu

(AAR) History of Christianity

(AAR) History of Judaism (3 sessions)
Galya Schmidt, University of Tennessee, gschmidt@utk.edu

(AAR) Islam (5 sessions)
Rachel Scott, Virginia Tech, rmueller@vt.edu, and Dave Duml, University of South Carolina, Upstate, duml@utscup.edu

(AAR) Method and Theory of Religion (3 sessions)
Randy Reed, Appalachian State University, reedr@apstate.edu, and Laura Ammon, University of North Florida, laura.ammon@unf.edu

(SBL) New Testament (5 sessions)
Karin Rowe, Duke Divinity School, krowe@div.duke.edu

(AAR) Philosophy of Religion (2 sessions)
Mark Wells, Montreat College, mwells@montreat.edu

(AAR) Religion and Ecology Consultation (2 sessions)
Richard M. Carp, Appalachian State University, carp@apstate.edu

(AAR) Religion, Culture, and the Arts (4 sessions)
Adam M. Wertz, Florida State University, amw@fsu.edu

(AAR) Religion in America (4–5 sessions)
Lynn S. Neal, Wake Forest University, neall@wfu.edu

(AAR) Religions of Asia (4 sessions)
Steven Ramsey, University of Alabama, steven.tamby@uab.edu, and Pamela Wierfield, Elon University, pwielfiel@elon.edu

(AAR) Teaching Religions (4 sessions)
Margaret Aymer, Interdenominational Theological Seminary, reedr@interfaith.edu, and Undergraduate Research (2 sessions)
Anne Blue Wilks, Davidson College, awilks@davidson.edu

(AAR) Women and Religion (4 sessions)
Emily Holmes, Christian Brothers University, emily.holmes@cbu.edu, and Jill Utterback, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, jutterb@uncc.edu

Upper Midwest
Luther Seminary
Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA
April 9–10, 2010

Subm itting a Proposal
To submit a proposal to one of the AAR or SBL sessions, please send a proposal of 250 words or less along with a title for

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(continued on next page)
Did you know your AAR membership runs from January 1 through December 31? Renewing by December 31 will guarantee that you have a full year of benefits, will reduce operating costs, and will allow us to invest more in your member programs. Renew today — help us serve you better.

Renew for calendar year 2010 now at www.aarweb.org/Members/Dues.
Announcing the
Ph.D. in Religion

at CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Applications for admission are now being accepted for the Fall 2010 semester in four new fully accredited areas of religious and theological scholarship, in addition to Claremont’s long-standing Ph.D. in Practical Theology. The new program is among initial steps in the School’s transition from a denominational theological school into a multi-religious graduate university.

For more about the CLAREMONT UNIVERSITY PROJECT please visit: www.cst.edu/UniversityProject

Religion, Ethics, & Society

The Religion, Ethics, & Society concentration focuses on the intersection of the religious, the ethical, and the political. Viewing religion as both a source and subject for ethical reflection, students examine public spaces and the people who interact there as they engage pressing social, economic, and political questions. Students will acquire dialogic competencies, deeper knowledge of religious traditions other than their own, resources for philosophical and theological reflection, a facility with a variety of methods for moral deliberation, and the critical tools for analysis and argumentation required to contribute to thoughtful, publicly defensible ethical assessment.

Lead Faculty
• Richard Amesbury
• Grace Via-Hei Kao
• Helene Slessarev-Jamir

An additional faculty position in ethics is under search to begin in 2010. Go to www.cst.edu for a position description.

Process Studies

The new Process Studies concentration explores the range of methods, themes and applications of process thought with special attention to Alfred North Whitehead’s “philosophy of organism.” This program focuses on process thought as a major approach to the study of ecology, culture and religion today. Students will develop competencies in process philosophy, religion and science, constructive theology, comparative religious studies, postmodern/poststructuralist studies, and Western and non-Western theologies and philosophies. Graduates of the program will learn to formulate a pluralistic and differentiated worldview appropriate to our contemporary societies and be capable of contributing to transformation.

Lead Faculty
• Lincoln E. Galloway
• Dennis R. MacDonald
• Monica A. Coleman
• Roland Faber
• Susan L. Nelson


The New Testament & Christian Origins concentration provides advanced training in the critical interpretation of ancient Christian texts. In addition to specializing in the New Testament, the student will develop competence in related literatures in the context of post-biblical Judaism, classical Greek and Hellenistic literature, religion, and philosophy. The program is being led by Richard Amesbury, Grace Via-Hei Kao, and Helene Slessarev-Jamir.

Lead Faculty
• Carleen Mandolfo
• Tammi J. Schneider
• Marvin A. Sweeney

Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible concentration provides advanced training in the historical-critical, literary-critical, social-scientific, and critical theological methods necessary for biblical interpretation, as well as rigorous training in the ancient biblical languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The students concentrate in one of three areas: Literary-Critical and Theological Study of the Hebrew Bible; Ancient Near Eastern Studies; or Second Temple Studies. Training in the program presumes competence in the broader field of religious and theological study and, in part, prepares students to relate Hebrew Bible studies to the broader contexts of religious, theological, social-scientific, and humanistic studies.

Lead Faculty
• Richard Amesbury
• Grace Via-Hei Kao
• Helene Slessarev-Jamir

An additional faculty position in ethics is under search to begin in 2010. Go to www.cst.edu for a position description.

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The AAR would like to thank our members for their generous support to the Academy Fund. This list reflects contributions received between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009.

CONTRIBUTORS

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American Academy of Religion
825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30329

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Celebrate graduation, publishing, tenure, retirement, or any occasion with a gift to the American Academy of Religion in the name of a friend or colleague. An honor gift is a unique way to recognize those special people around you in a meaningful way. Charitable gifts of $25 or more will be personally acknowledged with a letter informing the recipient of your generosity and thoughtfulness.

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Celebrate the life and memory of friends or colleagues through a memorial gift. Recognize his or her lifetime contributions to the academic study of religion with a gift in his or her memory.

To make a gift in honor or in memory of someone, please contact the Development Office at 404-727-7928, make an online donation at www.aarweb.org/about_AAR/Support_AAR or mail a check to:

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