

NEW!

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FOCUS
ON THE
JOB MARKET IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
AND THEOLOGY
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RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

May 2006

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2006

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Subscriptions for individuals and institutions are available. See www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn for more information.

Deadlines for submissions:

January	October 15
March	December 15
May	February 15
October	July 15

Advertising

For information on advertising, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.

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2006 Member Calendar

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

May

Religious Studies News May issue.

Annual Meeting registration materials mailed with RSN.

May 1. Nominations (including self-nominations) for committee appointments requested. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/membership/volunteering.asp.

May 5–6. Eastern International regional meeting, Quebec City, QC, Canada.

May 5–7. Pacific Northwest regional meeting, Spokane, WA.

May 15. Annual Meeting registration & housing opens for 2006 Annual Meeting.

May 15. Registration for the Employment Information Services Center opens.

May 30. Annual Meeting Additional Meeting requests due for priority consideration.

(For more Annual Meeting information, see www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2006.)

June

Journal of the American Academy of Religion June 2006 issue.

June 15. Membership renewal deadline and meeting registration deadline for 2006 Annual Meeting participants.

July

July 1. New fiscal year begins.

July 15. Submission deadline for the October issue of *Religious Studies News*. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.

July 31. Deadline for participants to request audiovisual equipment at the Annual Meeting. Participants must also be registered for the Annual Meeting by this date.

August

Annual Meeting Program goes online.

August 1. Change of address due for priority receipt of the 2006 Annual Meeting Program Book.

August 1. Research Grant Applications due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/grants.

August 1. Regional development grant applications due to regional secretaries.

August 15. Membership renewal period for 2007 begins.

September

Journal of the American Academy of Religion September 2006 issue.

Annual Meeting Program Books mailed to members.

September 9. Executive Committee meeting, Cambridge, MA.

September 29–30. Regions Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

October

Religious Studies News October issue.

Spotlight on Teaching Fall 2006 issue.

October 1–31. AAR officer election period. Candidate profiles will be published in the October RSN.

October 15. January 2007 *Religious Studies News* submission deadline.

October 15. Excellence in Teaching award nominations due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/awards/teaching.asp.

October 21. EIS preregistration closes.

TBA. Finance Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.

November 16. Executive Committee meeting, Washington, D.C.

November 17. Fall Board of Directors meeting, Washington, D.C.

November 17. Chairs Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

November 18–21. Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C. Held concurrently with the Society of Biblical Literature, comprising some 9,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 100 hiring departments.

November 20. Annual Business Meeting, Washington, D.C. See the Annual Meeting Program Book for exact time.

December

Journal of the American Academy of Religion December 2006 issue.

December 1. New program unit proposals due.

December 8–9. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

December 15. Submissions for the March 2007 issue of *Religious Studies News* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn/default.asp.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2007 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/dues.


And keep in mind throughout the year...

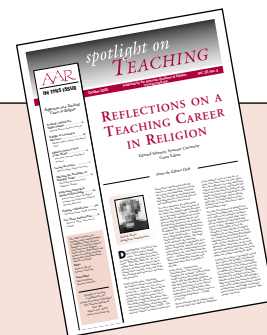
Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for their Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/regions/default.asp.

Information about AAR publications can be found at www.aarweb.org/publications/default.asp.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. *In the Field* is a members-only online publication that accepts brief

announcements, including calls for papers, grant news, conference announcements, and other opportunities appropriate for scholars of religion. Submit text online at www.aarweb.org/publications/inthefield/submit.asp.

Openings: Employment Opportunities for Scholars of Religion. *Openings* is a members-only online publication listing job announcements in areas of interest to members; issues are viewable online from the first through the last day of each month. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/openings/submit.asp. 



Spotlight returns in the next issue with a discussion of "Teaching Difficult Subjects."

AAR members interested in guest editing an issue of *Spotlight on Teaching* are invited to submit the title of a theme focusing on teaching and learning in the study of religion, along with a succinct description (500 words) of the theme's merit and significance, to *Spotlight's* general editor Tazim R. Kassam. In addition to issues devoted to specific themes, problems, and settings, *Spotlight on Teaching* will also occasionally feature a variety of independent articles and essays critically reflecting on pedagogy and theory in the field of religion. Please send both types of submissions to:

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E-mail: tkassam@sy.edu

RSN
RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

Religious Studies News is the newspaper of record for the field especially designed to serve the professional needs of persons involved in teaching and scholarship in religion (broadly construed to include religious studies, theology, and sacred texts). Published quarterly by the American Academy of Religion, RSN is received by some 10,000 scholars and by libraries at colleges and universities across North America and abroad. *Religious Studies News* communicates the important events of the field and related areas. It provides a forum for members and others to examine critical issues in education, pedagogy (especially through the biannual *Spotlight on Teaching*), research, publishing, and the public understanding of religion. It also publishes news about the services and programs of the AAR and other organizations, including employment services and registration information for the AAR Annual Meeting.

For writing and advertising guidelines, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.asp.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

This issue of *Religious Studies News* launches a new phase for the “newspaper of record for scholars of religion.” With the introduction of the *Focus* section, the AAR will begin in-depth examinations of issues with specific concern for religion/religious studies/theology scholars and the broader academy as a whole. In each issue, we will invite scholars — AAR members and nonmembers — to address issues from their own perspective. The goal is to stimulate a dialogue with readers about these issues; we invite letters in response to the articles and in response to the section. If you have suggestions for *Focus* topics, we appreciate any and all feedback.

In this issue, we’ve asked several authors to address the prospects of newly minted PhD’s finding positions in, and out of, academia. The fact is that more religion doctorates are earned each year than there are openings for full-time, tenure-track positions. From 2001 to 2004, there were 877 assistant professor jobs posted in *Openings*; during the same time period, there were 1,381 doctorates granted in religion/religious studies as reported in the *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2004* (NORC at the University of Chicago) — a 504 difference. Of course, this doesn’t count the positions in other disciplines available to recent graduates: area studies, philosophy, history, English, anthropology, arts, etc. Additionally, these numbers do not address employment as instructors and adjuncts — which many graduates prefer — or the rich opportunities for meaningful, and lucrative, employment outside academia. And it doesn’t include the many other position advertisements in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and other publications.

Jack Schuster, Professor of Education and Public Policy at Claremont Graduate University, opens *Focus* with an essay on the rapid transformation of higher education and what that means to the academic labor market, specifically when considering the trend of ever-increasing off-tenure-track positions.

Jaime Clark-Soles, Perkins School of Theology, gives insight into how to best secure an academic position. From preparation to application to interviewing and beyond, there are steps that can be taken to better your chances at landing the position you seek.


Shelly Roberts, the AAR’s director of the Employment Information Services, discusses details of the highly successful service and how to best navigate the EIS scene at the November meeting.

Dennis A. Norlin, Executive Director of American Theological Library Association, describes the diverse and rich opportunities available outside academia. Through self-reflection, recent (and not-so-recent) graduates can find excellent avenues to use the skills honed while earning a graduate education.

J. Eugene Clay, Director of Graduate Studies at Arizona State University, describes his new PhD program, and how ASU’s unique program will monitor success of its graduates.

Sometimes, the best-laid plans for finding a tenure-track position are thrown awry by something you’d never imagine. “My Credentials Gap” is a reprint from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in which the author laments his difficulty in finding a desired academic position. He comes to the conclusion that what is holding him back is his doctorate from a less-than-prominent program.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Religious Studies News*, and find the new *Focus* section stimulating and thought provoking. We invite you to submit any thoughts, letters to the editor, comments, and criticisms to me at kcole@aarweb.org. We will publish feedback from readers in subsequent issues.

Our next *Focus* topic will be Academic Freedom for Theology/Religion Scholars and Teachers. 

Kyle Cole
Executive Editor, *Religious Studies News*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Stung by an outside review challenging its mission and mandate, the North American Religions unit of the AAR is revamping its governance and implementing change in the sessions it sponsors.

This year, for the first time in its history, the section will elect members to the unit’s steering committee. In the past, steering committees selected new members in a closed-door process that considered regional diversity, academic interests, and commitment to the unit.

Last year, however, the AAR review of the unit questioned who NAR’s constituency was and whether it was being served. As a result, the AAR board took away one of the unit’s six allotted sessions.

Reporting on the year’s events at the business meeting in November, the current steering committee (Phillip Goff, Edward Curtis, Tracy Fessenden, and co-chairs John Corrigan and Diane Winston) suggested moving to a democratically elected leadership to foster participation among AAR members who may have a stake in NAR but who have felt alienated from it.

After spirited discussion, the group voted to begin replacing members by closed-ballot, on-site elections. Nominations would be solicited before and at the annual NAR business meeting and a vote would be taken then.

In November 2006, participants at the NAR business meeting will vote for three new steering committee members. Kathleen Flake has joined the board, but Corrigan and Winston are rotating off.

The NAR also plans to phase out most readings of papers in favor of interactive and discussion-oriented presentations.

Diane Winston
John Corrigan
Co-chairs, North American Religions


Editor’s Note:

In its periodic reviews of program units, the Program Committee takes into account a range of information, including the external reviews. In this instance, the Program Committee (not the Board) followed its current practice for sections under review, reducing the sessions allotted from five to four (thereby allowing a total of six sessions, with the extras for co-sponsorship and Tuesday scheduling).

Call for AAR Series Editor


THE AAR SEEKS an editor for the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series, which is published in cooperation with Oxford University Press.

The Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series is broadly concerned with theories of religion, the history and nature of religious studies, religious thought, theological investigation, and the philosophy of religion. Approaches to the study of religion or religious studies that tend to defy traditional disciplinary boundaries are welcome, as are more traditional studies of major thinkers and intellectual movements. The common thread among texts in this

series is that they all engage in a critical reflection on either a religious way of thinking or a way of thinking about religion. A list of volumes published in the series can be found at www.aarweb.org/publications/books/reflectionandtheory.asp.

AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing projects through to publication. The required finalist interviews for the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series editorship will take place on November 18 at the 2006 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. The new editor assumes office on January 1, 2007, for a three-year, renewable

term, and is expected to attend both the Saturday morning Publications Committee meeting at the Annual Meeting, and the AAR–OUP Publications Committee meeting in New York City, usually in mid-March.

Please e-mail inquiries, nominations (self-nominations also encouraged), and applications (a letter describing interests and qualifications, plus a current curriculum vitae) by a Word or PDF attachment to Francis X. Clooney, S. J., Publications Committee Chair, at fclooney@hds.harvard.edu. Application deadline is September 1, 2006. 

Annual Meeting 2006



Capitol Building. Photo courtesy of the Washington, D.C. Convention & Tourism Corporation.

THE CAPITAL of the United States hosts the 2006 AAR Annual Meeting. History, government, museums, monuments, cultural attractions, and vibrant neighborhoods make Washington, D.C., a great destination. Annual Meeting sessions will be held in the Washington Convention Center, the Renaissance Washington Hotel, and the Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel, all located in downtown Washington within easy walking distance of one another.

Mark your calendars now for the opening of fax, mail, and online housing and registration on Monday, May 15, 2006!

Membership

Don't forget to renew your membership dues before you register or else you won't be able to get the lower member registration rates. If you are not certain about your current 2006 membership status, please see www.aarweb.org/membership or call 404-727-3049.

Getting Around

Most of the Annual Meeting hotels are within walking distance of the Annual Meeting session locations. Shuttle service will be provided along several routes to outlying hotels. Washington has excellent public transportation, including a bus and subway system.

Getting to Washington

We've teamed up with United Airlines to give you the best price and flexibility on airfare. Attendees traveling to Washington will receive a discount airfare using the airline's online or telephone reservation system. Please reference the special file number when you or your travel agent make the reservations. Amtrak is also offering discount travel by rail for Annual Meeting attendees from November 16–20 (please note that November 21 is a holiday blackout date).

Carrier	File Number	Contact
United	563HC	800-521-4041 or www.united.com
Amtrak	X805-958	800-USA-RAIL or www.usarail.com

Additional Meetings

Conferon, our meeting planning partner, is now accepting requests for Additional Meeting space. All requests are handled on a space and time-slot available basis. The Additional Meetings program, held in conjunction with the AAR Annual Meeting, is an important service to AAR members. All Additional Meeting participants are expected to register for the Annual Meeting. Be sure to read the instructions carefully before completing and submitting your space request. The deadline for priority scheduling is May 30, 2006. For more information about the Additional Meetings or to obtain a request form, please see www.aarweb.org/annualmeet. Questions should be directed to:

Kim Becker
Conferon, Inc.
TEL: 314-997-1500
E-MAIL: aarsbl@conferon.com

ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 15, 2006

FAX: 330-963-0319

WEB: www.aarweb.org/annualmeet

MAIL: Annual Meetings of AAR and SBL
Registration & Housing
c/o Conferon Registration and Housing Bureau
2451 Edison BLVD
Twinsburg, OH 44087
USA


QUESTIONS:

TEL: 800-575-7185 (U.S. & Canada)
+1-330-425-9330 (outside U.S. & Canada)

E-MAIL: aarsblreg@conferon.com

AAR Annual Meeting Online Services

At www.aarweb.org/annualmeet you can:

- Register for the Annual Meeting
- Reserve your hotel room
- Find a roommate
- Retrieve your Additional Meeting requests/forms
- Register for EIS
- Download EIS Center Forms
- Search the Online Program Book 



Smithsonian Castle. Photo courtesy of the Washington, D.C. Convention & Tourism Corporation.

Annual Meeting 2006 Important Dates

May 15

Registration and Housing opens for the 2006 Annual Meeting. You must be registered to secure housing!

EIS Center registration opens. Register for the meeting and then register for EIS!

June 15

All AAR Annual Meeting participants must be current members and registered for the Annual Meeting or else their names will be dropped from the *Program Book*.

August 1

Membership dues for 2006 must be paid and address changes must be noted with AAR Member Services in order to receive an advance copy of the Annual Meeting *Program Book*.

Early September

Annual Meeting *Program Book* mailed to all current AAR members. Please allow 3–4 weeks for delivery.

September 16

Second-tier premeeting registration rates go into effect.

Mid-September

Preregistration packets mailed for those who registered from May through September 15.

October 16

Third- and final-tier registration rates go into effect.

October 23

EIS Center preregistration deadlines.

EIS candidate CVs due for inclusion in binders. After October 23, CVs may be filed onsite by candidate's last name.

October 25

Special housing rates end. (Continue to contact Conferon for housing throughout the meeting.)

November 5

Preregistration refund request deadline. Contact Conferon for refunds. (See premeeting registration form for details.)

November 12

Online premeeting registration ends at 5 PM EST. All registrations received after this date will be processed and the materials will be available in Washington at the Washington Convention Center.

November 18–21


Annual Meetings of AAR and SBL, Washington, D.C. 

Employment Information Services Center

AT EVERY ANNUAL MEETING, the AAR and the SBL jointly host the Employment Information Services Center (EIS). The EIS Center is designed to help ease the communication process between candidates looking for jobs in the field of religion and employers who have jobs to offer. To accomplish this, we offer services such as job postings, candidate credentials both online and at the EIS Center, an interview facility, and a message center through which employers and candidates communicate.

This year, the EIS Center will be held in the Independence Ballroom of the Grand Hyatt Hotel, a headquarters hotel of the

Annual Meeting. We will open on Friday night at 7:00 PM with a short orientation session. Come and receive your Annual Meetings special edition of *Openings*, and learn how you can best utilize EIS. Immediately after the orientation, the message center will be open for use. We will be fully operational all day Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and a half-day on Tuesday.

EIS preregistration opens on May 15, 2006, and closes on October 23, 2006. Candidate CVs are also due on October 23. Please see www.aarweb.org/eis for other important information. 

African Contributions to the Study of Religion

International Focus for 2006


THE AAR is committed to increasing its international membership and participation, as well as to deepening awareness of global contributions to the study of religion. In keeping with this charge, the International Connections Committee (ICC) has sponsored a focus on one region or theme at each AAR Annual Meeting since 2002. Previous years have highlighted Canadian, Japanese, Latin American, and Eastern and Central European contributions to the field. At this year's meeting in Washington, D.C., the focus shifts to Africa. Looking ahead, the Annual Meeting will concentrate on China in 2007 and on South Asia in 2008.

Along with a series of special topics sessions and panels centered on a particular region, the ICC has encouraged the incorporation of that region's scholars of religion into panels across the full spectrum of Annual Meeting program units. Lending further dimension to the international focus, the committee has helped arrange films, audio, plenary lectures, and multimedia presentations associated with each year's regional theme. In order to promote the participation of international members at the Annual Meeting, the ICC has been working closely with the AAR executive office to raise scholarship funds for those who require financial assistance.

The success of our international focus depends on the active engagement of AAR members in every program unit. Over the last several years, it has become increasingly difficult and time-


consuming to obtain visas, find travel assistance for those in need, and, whenever possible, arrange cosponsorship of these speakers with U.S. institutions. For this reason, it is crucial that program unit committees make every effort to identify deserving papers, panels, and speakers connected with the international focus and alert the Program Committee about their choices as soon as is feasible.

Planning for the Africa focus at the upcoming Annual Meeting has been coordinated by former ICC chair Mary McGee, current ICC member Elias Bongmba, and the African Religions Group Steering Committee — Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton (chair), Kip Elolia, Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, and Jacob Olupona. Their goal has been not only to call attention to research by African scholars, but to provide an avenue for exploring central themes and issues for scholars in African religion, to strengthen existing ties, and to enhance possibilities for future collaboration between African scholars and members of the AAR. Furthermore, this initiative provides an opportunity for African scholars to advocate for the study of Africa and its religions in the American academy.

With its richness of multicultural connections and offerings, Washington, D.C., is a particularly exciting venue for this year's international focus. We look forward to interacting with our African colleagues at this stimulating event. 

Tell Congress: The Academic Study of Religion Matters

UNLESS SUFFICIENT numbers of scholars show their support for increased federal funding of the academic study of religion, the U.S. Congress is unlikely — through agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities — to provide sufficient funding. On Monday morning, November 20, 2006, interested AAR and SBL members who are U.S. citizens will have the opportunity to go in small delegations to Capitol Hill and meet briefly with staff of their members of Congress to encourage federal support for our work. Only minimal preparation is required, and a brief training will be provided at the Annual Meeting. Scholars who have participated in meetings with congressional staff in the past

invariably find that they enjoy the meetings, which provide insight into the nature of the democratic process, as well as the opportunity to influence their federal representatives about a cause they believe in. Moreover, AAR/SBL staff will schedule your meetings for you, and the entire process — including a short, convenient Metro subway ride to and from Capitol Hill — will be over no later than noon. Registration for this activity will open in August, once the Annual Meeting program is available for viewing online. The registration deadline is September 30. To receive more information as it becomes available, or if you have questions in the meantime, please e-mail ssnider@aarweb.org. 

Sponsor an African Scholar

This year's Annual Meeting international focus is African contributions to the study of religion. The International Connections Committee is soliciting partnerships with departments and institutions for co-sponsoring specific scholars of religion from Africa, to lecture at the co-sponsoring institution as well as participate in the Annual Meeting.

Co-sponsorship will allow your department to hear from these fine scholars while they are already in the United States.

To co-sponsor or for more information, please contact Aislinn Jones at ajones@aarweb.org.

Annual Chairs Workshop Addresses Challenging Topic

Personnel Issues: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

THE ACADEMIC Relations Committee is pleased to offer its chairs workshop during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in Washington, D.C., from 9 AM to 4:30 PM on Friday, November 17, 2006.

The daylong workshop, "Personnel Issues: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," will deal with a multitude of personnel issues that come up within departments, and will address individual, departmental, and higher administration concerns. In addition, it will address life-cycle, legal, and conflict issues that arise at each level.

Betty DeBerg, head of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Northern Iowa University, and Chester Gillis, chair of the Department of Theology at Georgetown University, will lead the workshop. Daniel Aleshire, executive director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), will join DeBerg and Gillis as a panelist. Additionally, a higher education personnel attorney will participate as a guest speaker.

To strengthen the interactive nature of the workshops and to develop effective conversation among participants, members of the Academic Relations Committee will facilitate small group discussions following each panel presentation. In addition to Q&A sessions at the end of the panels, these sessions allow for an exchange of ideas from the department members in attendance.


"One of the valuable resources we have is each other," Fred Glennon, chair of the committee, said. "By creating avenues to allow dialogue to flourish, we feel this workshop will enable chairs, and other department members, the opportunity to exchange ideas and help solve unique situations."

This year's topic was developed in response to questions solicited at last year's event. "We had many participants who cited that a workshop addressing difficult personnel issues was absolutely necessary," Kyle Cole, AAR director of college programs, said. "One of the key issues was to be mindful not to overlook the outstanding faculty within a department while dealing with a time-consuming negative personnel situation. This workshop, as the title says, will do just that."

Colleagues 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 \$75, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a complimentary book on the subject of personnel issues.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C.!

The Academic Relations Committee: Fred Glennon, chair, Richard M. Carp, Chester Gillis, DeAne Lagerquist, and Chun-Fang Yu. 

THE TOPICS FOR PAST CHAIRS WORKSHOPS HAVE BEEN:

2005 Annual Meeting – *Enlarging the Pie: Strategies for Managing and Growing Departmental Resources*

2004 Annual Meeting – *Being a Chair in Today's Consumer Culture: Navigating in the Knowledge Factory*

2003 Annual Meeting – *Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair*

Summer 2003 – *The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building and Sustaining Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands*

2002 Annual Meeting – *Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department*

2001 Annual Meeting – *Evaluating and Advancing Teaching in the Religious Studies Department*

2000 Annual Meeting – *Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department*



Personnel Issues: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

AN ANNUAL MEETING CHAIRS WORKSHOP

Friday, November 17, 2006, Washington, D.C.

Co-Leaders: Betty DeBerg, Northern Iowa University
Chester Gillis, Georgetown University

Panelist: Daniel Aleshire, Association of Theological Schools

Breakout

Session Leaders: Joining DeBerg, Gillis, and Aleshire are:

Fred Glennon, Le Moyne College
Richard Carp, Appalachian State University
L. DeAne Lagerquist, St. Olaf College
Chun-Fang Yu, Columbia University

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Legal issues, conflicts, and life cycles will be addressed for individual, department, and administration concerns.

9:00–9:15	Introduction: Stories of War and Peace	10:15–11:30	Personnel vis-à-vis Individual Concerns (panel w/breakout session)	2:15–2:30	Break (drinks and snacks)
9:15–9:45	Ice Breaker: Group Sharing	11:30–12:30	Lunch	2:30–3:45	Personnel vis-à-vis Administration Concerns (panel w/breakout session)
9:45–10:15	Legal Issues	12:30–2:15	Personnel vis-à-vis Department Concerns (panel w/breakout session)	3:45–4:30	Plenary: Things That Work

TO REGISTER

Complete the information below, arrange payment, and send via fax or surface mail. You can also register online as a part of the Annual Meeting registration process: www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2006.

Name _____
 Department _____
 Institution _____ Serving as Chair since _____ Number of faculty in department _____

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. Send your registration form and payment of \$75.00 *** before October 31, 2006 (\$100.00 after and onsite).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Check:** (payable to "AAR Annual Meeting," memo "Chairs Workshop")
- Credit Card** (Check one):
- Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____
 CID* _____
 Cardholder Signature _____
 Name on Card (Please Print) _____

* Card Identification Number (required for Discover cards): 4 digits on front of American Express; 3 digits on back of other cards

For more information, contact Kyle Cole, Director of College Programs, at kcole@aarweb.org, or by phone at 404-727-1489.

The Chairs Workshop is developed and sponsored by the Academic Relations Committee of the American Academy of Religion, chaired by Fred Glennon.

Registrants for the workshop will receive a book on higher education personnel issues, which will be sent prior to the workshop.

 **Register by Fax:** 330-963-0319

 **Register by surface mail:**
 AAR Chairs Workshop
 c/o Conferon
 2451 Enterprise PKWY
 Twinsburg, OH 44087
 USA

 **Register online** (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2006

Tours in Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON is rich in museums, including the famous Smithsonian Institution. Most of the museums are easily accessible by the Washington Metro system; participants in the walking tours are responsible for paying the \$1.35 Metro fee to get from the Annual Meeting to the museum. Bus tours have a nominal fee. Registration is required for all tours and space is limited, so register using the form found in the Annual Meeting brochure or online, beginning May 15!

African Voices Exhibit at the National Museum of Natural History

Saturday, November 18, 9:30 AM

Sponsored by the Arts, Literature, and Religion Section, African Religions Group, and the Anthropology of Religion Group

The African Voices exhibit "examines the diversity, dynamism, and global influence of Africa's peoples and cultures over time in the realms of family, work, community, and the natural environment" (www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices/). The exhibit includes indigenous art, textiles, pottery, and examples of oral literature, songs, and prayers.

Anthropologist and curator Michael Mason will give an introduction to the exhibit, highlighting its religious features. Tour is limited to 25 participants. For further information, contact Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton at chh3a@virginia.edu.

National Museum of the American Indian

Saturday, November 18, 9:30 AM

Sponsored by the Native Traditions in the Americas Group

Opened to great fanfare in fall 2004, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian is the most recent addition to the Washington Mall, and as such will provide a novel experience for many AAR attendees. The handsomely designed museum displays objects, works of fine art, and performance pieces that tell of the histories, cultures, arts, and religions of more than 500 Native nations, but what is remarkable is how Native communities have asserted cultural sovereignty and artistic control over the NMAI's representation. In this latter regard, the museum is a milestone in the history of representation, and as such, of particular intellectual interest to scholars generally. Gabrielle Tayac, a Native sociologist who has served as a NMAI curator, is tentatively scheduled to act as the tour guide. Tour is limited to 25 participants.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Sunday, November 19, 10:30 AM

Sponsored by the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Group and the Center for Holocaust Studies

The museum's permanent exhibition, "The Holocaust," includes over 900 artifacts, 70 video monitors, and 4 theaters with historic film footage and eyewitness testimonies. The museum also features temporary exhibitions highlighting the history of the Holocaust. Tour attendees will receive timed tickets for the 11:00 AM entry to the permanent exhibition. Victoria Barnett, Director of Church Relations for the Center of Holocaust Studies, will offer a brief introduction to the museum and then attendees will be allowed to visit the permanent exhibition at their

own pace. Please allow at least two hours for the visit.

Visitors may also use the library and archives. The library is open to the public daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. No appointment is necessary. The archives are open weekdays from 10 AM to 5 PM. Arrangements can be made in advance for archival materials to be set aside for weekend use. Contact archives@ushmm.org or 202-488-6113.

National Museum of African Art

Monday, November 20, 9:30 AM

Sponsored by the Arts, Literature, and Religion Section and the African Religions Group

The collection of the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) embraces the diverse artistic expressions found throughout Africa from ancient to contemporary times.

Collection objects range from ceramics, textiles, furniture, and tools to masks, figures, and musical instruments. The arts of painting, printmaking, sculpture, and other media are well-represented by living artists whose works highlight individual creativity, address global and local art trends, and innovatively transform artistic traditions into modern idioms. The tour is limited to 25 participants. Questions can be directed to Brent Plate at b.plate@rcu.edu.

Restoration Ecology of the Anacostia River and Environmental Justice Issues Boat Tour

Monday, November 20, 9:30 AM


Sponsored by the Religion and Ecology Group

Doug Siglin, head of the Religious Partnership for the Anacostia River, affiliated with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, will direct a boat tour of the river and discuss the work of the partnership and the issues connected to the river. The main stem of the Anacostia River, one of the most polluted in the country, has become the object of intense efforts to restore the quality of the water, the number of wildlife species, and the beauty of the shoreline. These efforts have brought together environmental groups, industry, governments, local citizens, and the faith community. Redevelopment is certain to lead to physical improvements in these areas, as well the displacement of people who have made them their home. Opinions on whether redevelopment of the Anacostia would be good for the city and its people are as varied as they are tightly held. Contact Laurel Kearns at lkearns@drew.edu for information. The fee for participating in the boat tour is \$65.

Sacred and Religious Sites of Washington Bus Tour

Monday, November 20, 1:00 PM

Sponsored by the North American Religions Section

Join us on a bus tour emphasizing houses of worship associated with the American presidency. The tour will be guided by Jeanne Halgren Kilde, University of Minnesota; Dewey D. Wallace, George Washington University; and Peter W. Williams, Miami University (Ohio). Tour is limited to 150 people. The fee for participation is \$15. 

Future AAR Annual Meeting Dates and Sites

2006

November 18–21
Washington, D.C.

2009

November 7–10
Montreal, QC

2007

November 17–20
San Diego, CA

2010

October 30–November 2
Atlanta, GA

2008

October 25–28
Chicago, IL

2011

November 18–21
San Francisco, CA

Please renew your membership now, and consider making an additional contribution to the AAR's Academy Fund. Membership dues cover less than 30 percent of programs and services.

Renew online at www.aarweb.org/renewal.

Or contact us at
TEL: 404-727-3049

E-MAIL: membership@aarweb.org.

Please see the membership page, www.aarweb.org/membership.

Where to Stay in Washington

THE WASHINGTON Convention Center opened its doors in 2003 in an area of town booming with luxurious and convenient hotels. After a long day attending sessions at the Annual Meeting, it is good to have a haven to relax and recharge for the next day. AAR has negotiated special conference rates at a number of hotels for the convenience of meeting attendees.

Hotel room rates do not include the 14.5 percent hotel room tax. Please note that the single/double/triple room designation denotes the number of room occupants, not the number of beds. A triple room means three people are sharing two double beds unless a rollaway bed is requested at an extra charge.

Capital Hilton 1001 16th ST NW

The Capital Hilton is located in the center of downtown Washington, D.C., just two blocks away from the White House and within walking distance of monuments, museums, shopping, the National Mall, local attractions, restaurants, and many other major points of interest in the city. Three different Metro subway stations are located only two blocks away from the hotel. Amenities: business center, free continental breakfast, free newspaper, laundry/valet service, coffee maker, hairdryer, iron/ironing board. \$138 single/\$168 double/ \$168 triple/\$168 quadruple.

Comfort Inn Downtown 1201 13th ST NW

The Comfort Inn Downtown is conveniently located at the corner of 13th and M Streets,

within walking distance of the Washington Convention Center. The McPherson Square Metro station and Mt. Vernon Square Metro station are within three blocks, making it easy to visit all that the area has to offer. Amenities: wireless Internet, fitness center, iron/ironing board, coffee maker. \$139 single/\$149 double/ \$159 triple/\$169 quadruple.

Four Points Downtown by Sheraton Hotel 1201 K ST NW

The Four Points Sheraton was renovated in 2000 and is only three blocks away from the Washington Convention Center. The hotel caters to business and leisure travelers alike. Amenities: business center, free newspaper, high speed Internet, fitness center, indoor pool, free bottled water, in-room safe, kitchenette, and coffee maker. \$139 single/\$139 double/\$159 triple/\$159 quadruple.

Headquarters Hotel

Grand Hyatt Washington 1000 H ST NW

The Grand Hyatt Washington is located in the heart of D.C.'s business and federal districts. It is steps away from the Washington Convention Center. The hotel provides direct underground access to the Metro subway. The hotel features a dramatic 12-story atrium with a lagoon. Rooms are newly renovated in a luxurious contemporary style. Amenities: data ports, business center, fitness center, indoor pool, hairdryer, coffee maker, free newspaper, iron/ironing board. \$138 single/\$171 double/\$171 triple/\$171 quadruple.

Hamilton Crowne Plaza 14th and K STS NW

Restoration of this 1920s, boutique-style hotel reminds one of the tradition of Washington while taking the hotel into the future with high speed Internet access, CD clock radio, and its specially designed women's floor; it is classical Washington with a twist. The new decor embraces a residential style with focus on elegance and comfort. Amenities: high speed Internet, fitness center, pet friendly, coffee maker, hair-dryer, and iron/ironing board. \$128 single/\$148 double/ \$148 triple/ \$148 quadruple.

Hampton Inn Washington, D.C. Convention Center 901 6th ST NW

The Hampton Inn Washington, D.C. Convention Center provides quality rooms at value prices. Each guestroom is finely appointed in rich walnut and cherry finishes with brushed nickel accents complemented by a contemporary color and fabric scheme. Value-minded guests will appreciate the "On the House Hot Breakfast Buffet," free local calls, and complimentary high speed Internet access throughout the hotel. The hotel is two blocks from the Washington Convention Center. Amenities: fitness center, indoor pool, business center, high speed Internet, microwave, free breakfast, iron/ironing board. \$149 single/\$149 double/ \$169 triple/\$189 quadruple.

Holiday Inn Washington-Central 1501 Rhode Island AVE NW

The Holiday Inn Washington-Central/White House is conveniently located on the corner of 15th Street and Rhode Island Avenue, within walking distance of 2 Metro stations. Amenities: high-speed Internet, fitness center, laundry facilities, iron/ironing board, coffee maker. \$124 single/\$124 double/ \$139 triple/\$139 quadruple.

Hotel Washington 515 15th ST NW

Built in 1888, Hotel Washington is a beautiful historic hotel located on Pennsylvania Avenue. Hotel Washington offers classic Victorian-style elegance in its rooms and furnishings. The hotel features an unrivaled view of the White House from the terrace roof. Amenities: fitness center, high speed Internet, laundry/valet service, iron/ironing board, and refrigerators available. \$138 single/\$138 double/\$148 triple/\$158 quadruple.

JW Marriott Hotel 1331 Pennsylvania AVE NW

Ideally located on Pennsylvania Avenue's Federal corridor, just blocks from the White House, this contemporary hotel offers a celebrated address near the Washington Convention Center, Capitol Hill, the city's best monuments and museums, renowned restaurants, and cultural venues. Amenities: business center, fitness center, indoor pool, data ports, coffee maker, iron/ironing board. \$157 single/\$167 double/ \$177 triple/\$177 quadruple.

Madison Hotel 15th and M STS NW

Host to every president and first lady since the Kennedys — as well as untold numbers of foreign and domestic leaders — this time-honored hotel embodies the graciousness of James and Dolley Madison, with all the modern conveniences and sophistication of today. Amenities: high-speed wireless Internet, business center, complimentary newspaper, fitness center. \$133 single/ \$148 double/\$163 triple/ \$178 quadruple.

Marriott at Metro Center 775 12th ST NW

Step outside of this charming and inviting downtown hotel and discover all the wonders and sites available from a central location. Situated adjacent to a main transfer point of the city's Metro subway system, the landmark locations of D.C. are easily accessible. Amenities: business center, indoor pool, fitness center, data ports, wireless Internet, coffee maker, and hairdryer. \$145 single/\$155 double/\$155 triple/ \$155 quadruple.

Morrison Clark Inn 1015 L ST NW

A Victorian mansion located in the heart of Washington, D.C., Morrison Clark is the only inn in the nation's capital to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1864 as two separate town homes, this elegant boutique hotel offers modern comforts amidst historic charm. Each of the 54 guest rooms is individually decorated with authentic period furnishings, some with Italian Carrera marble fireplaces. Only one block away from the Washington Convention Center! Amenities: fitness center, free newspaper, bathrobes, and data ports. \$155 single/\$165 double/\$165 triple/ \$165 quadruple.

Renaissance M Street Hotel 1143 New Hampshire AVE NW

An \$18.5 million renovation will completely update this hotel by August 2006. It is conveniently located at the crossroads of M Street and New Hampshire Avenue, in the Georgetown and Dupont Circle areas. The M Street Hotel is one of the closest hotels to George Washington University. Amenities: coffee maker, hairdryer, iron/ironing board, free wireless Internet, free newspaper. \$122 single/\$132 double/ \$142 triple/\$152 quadruple.


Renaissance Mayflower 1127 Connecticut AVE NW

Since opening its doors in 1925, this hotel has hosted Calvin Coolidge's inaugural ball and Charles Lindbergh's celebration of his historic flight across the Atlantic. The Renaissance Mayflower Hotel is listed with the National Register of Historic Places and delivers classic luxurious style. Located blocks away from the White House, it is often referred to as the "Washington White House Hotel." Amenities: wireless Internet, fitness center, business center, free newspaper, iron/ironing board, hairdryer, refrigerators available. \$154 single/\$164 double/ \$174 triple/\$174 quadruple.

Washington Plaza 10 Thomas CIR NW

The Washington Plaza has a relaxed atmosphere and is recently renovated in contemporary style. The hotel features beautiful landscaping and is pet friendly. Located five blocks away from the Washington Convention Center, it is centrally located for all D.C. attractions. Amenities: fitness center, heated pool, complimentary newspaper, iron/ironing board, data ports, laundry/valet service. \$139 single/\$149 double/ \$159 triple/\$169 quadruple.

Wyndham Washington, D.C. 1400 M ST NW

Enclosed in a 14-story modern glass atrium, the hotel offers guest rooms and suites for working and relaxation. It is within walking distance of the White House and Smithsonian museums. Amenities: fitness center, business center, data ports, hairdryer, coffee maker, and laundry/valet service. \$128 single/\$148 double. 

Annual Meeting Eating, Drinking, and Entertainment

EATING

701 Restaurant & Bar 701 Pennsylvania AVE NW

Appealing appetizers and fine chocolate desserts are just steps away from the downtown theaters. The space and luxury — at a moderate price — make it a safe choice. \$\$-\$\$\$

Andale Restaurant 401 7th ST NW

Andale is Spanish slang for “let’s go!” There are plenty of reasons for a diner at this restaurant to take that advice. From the antojitos (“little whims”) and aperitivos (appetizers) to the postres (desserts), Andale cooks up contemporary Mexican cuisine with flair. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bistro d’Oc 518 10th ST NW

Bistro d’Oc is a fine choice for French fare. The restaurant gives hints of an authentic French bistro. The prix fixe menu includes a soup or salad, an entree, dessert, and a glass of California wine for \$21.95. \$\$\$

Capital Grille 601 Pennsylvania AVE NW

Delicious dry-aged steaks served in huge portions are complemented by the rich, club-like atmosphere that the *Miami Herald* to referred to as a “culinary theme park full of dark wood, stuffed game heads, cigars, high-end drinks, wines, and dry-aged steaks.” \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Chef Geoff’s Downtown 1301 Pennsylvania AVE NW

Chef Geoff’s Downtown serves everything from seared duck, steaks, and yellowfin tuna to grilled pizza and great burgers. Desserts like the chocolate truffle cake are simply decadent. \$\$

District Chophouse 509 7th ST NW

A warm, cozy, turn-of-the-century bank transformed into an intimate classic American gathering place. Succulent steaks, mouthwatering chops, tasty seafood, oversized salads, and brick-oven pizzas are enough to fill anyone’s order. \$\$

Eat First 609 H ST NW

An active fish tank and a flock of roast ducks hanging near the kitchen window should be your cue to sample Eat First’s fresh shrimp, fried whole flounder, and crisp-skinned duck. Eat First’s epic menu is bigger still for the numerous specials printed in Chinese on colored strips of paper that hang from the mirrored walls. With luck, your server will decipher the possibilities and let you know about other items awaiting your consideration. \$\$

Ella’s Wood Fired Pizza 901 F ST NW

Features traditional Neapolitan-style thin crust pizza baked in blistering-hot, wood-fired pizza ovens. The result is a lightly crisp, nicely chewy crust with a hint of smoke which allows the full flavor of the quality toppings to emerge! \$

Finemondo 1319 F ST NW

Finemondo gets back to the basics with Italian flavors and a refined touch; dishes such as roast-

ed guinea hen with caramelized cauliflower and whole roasted fish and beef — a dinnertime feature — are among the results. \$\$-\$\$\$

Haad Thai Restaurant 1100 New York AVE NW

Carefully prepared standard Thai is served amid imaginative decor. Simple food, solicitous service. \$\$

Jaleo 480 7th ST NW

Tapas and several main dishes fit all appetites and price ranges. Seventy-plus choices at Jaleo are available hot or cold, with or without meat, mild or wild in flavor, light or hearty — there’s something for every mood. \$\$

Kanlaya 740 6th ST NW

If you’re in a hurry, Kanlaya is a good place to find a meal. But you’re bound to enjoy it if you asked for larb gai, that zesty salad of crumbled chicken tossed with a dressing of lime and fresh mint, or a coconut milk soup packed with chicken and mushrooms, every spoonful of broth seesawing between sweet and tangy. \$\$

Marrakesh 617 New York AVE NW

Marrakesh is an authentic Moroccan restaurant. Experience the magic of exotic and delicately seasoned cuisine while you relax amid Oriental splendor. \$\$\$

Matchbox 713 H ST NW

Matchbox — which starts as a narrow bar with tall tables hugging a brick wall and eventually climbs to a booth-lined dining room upstairs — is more than just a pizza joint. Salads are better than you expect. Other dishes evoke American home cooking. \$\$-\$\$\$

Oceanaire Seafood Room 1201 F ST NW

Diners step back in time at this dashing ode to fish, where meals begin with a complimentary relish tray, and big-band music plays in the background. The menu is epic and changes daily, but there are a few constants: lovely crab cakes, fine grilled squid, and shrimp de jonghe, an old-fashioned recipe featuring butterflied shrimp, lightly breaded and spiked with mustard. \$\$\$

Tony Cheng’s Seafood Restaurant & Mongolian Barbecue 621 H ST NW

Two restaurants in one in Chinatown: downstairs is a Mongolian barbecue (you pick the ingredients, a chef cooks them in front of you); upstairs is a Chinese seafood restaurant. Downstairs \$\$; upstairs \$\$\$.

Vegetate 1414 9th ST NW

The menu consists of modern vegetarian cuisine with international influences, using the freshest produce from a range of local farms and purveyors. \$\$

Zaytinya 701 9th ST NW

Zaytinya manages to successfully turn out dozens of the appetizers known as mezze, often in creative ways. Its extensive menu of hot and cold mezze reflects the rich regional diversity of classical and contemporary Greek, Turkish, and Lebanese cuisine. \$\$

DRINKING

Capitol City Brewing Company 1100 New York AVE NW

Capitol City Brewing Co. opened its doors in 1992 as the first brew pub in our nation’s capital since prohibition. The brewmasters use only the finest hops and malt to create trademark ales, lagers, and pilsners.

Fadó Irish Pub 808 7th ST NW

At Fadó, a pint means 20 ounces poured from the most sophisticated draft system in the United States. Fadó also has a discerning selection of premium import draft beers, wines, and spirits, including a full array of Irish whiskeys and cordials.

Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant 900 F ST NW

Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurants’ commitment to making the finest hand-crafted beer has resulted in award-winning beers recognized at the Great American Beer Festival and the World Beer Cup Competition.

The Post Pub 1422 L ST NW

The Post Pub, right around the corner from the *Washington Post*, is a relic from the days when newsmen were fond of liquid lunches. The new media elites have moved on to Perrier on the rocks at noon, but the pub remains, catering now to the average workingman and workingwoman.

THINKING

Jewish Historical Society 600 I ST NW

The oldest synagogue building in Washington, D.C., dedicated in 1876, it now houses the Lillian and Albert Small Jewish Museum. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and features a restored sanctuary. Open Sun–Thurs by appointment. Suggested donation: \$3.

Library of Congress 10 1st ST SE

Visit the Thomas Jefferson Building, known for its magnificent nineteenth-century architecture and decoration and its changing historical exhibitions. Guided tours at half-past each hour (except noon) Mon–Fri 10:30 AM–3:30 PM, Sat 10:30 AM–2:30 PM. The library is open Mon–Sat 10 AM–5 PM.

National Air and Space Museum 6th ST & Independence AVE SW

The world’s most visited museum houses the Wright Brothers’ 1903 Flyer, Lindbergh’s *Spirit of St. Louis*, Apollo 11 lunar command module, and an incredible collection of aviation and space technology treasures. Open daily 10 AM–5:30 PM.

National Museum of American History 14th ST & Constitution AVE

Among the wealth of Americana: the flag that inspired *The Star-Spangled Banner* (now being restored) and selected first ladies’ inaugural gowns and quilts. Popular

exhibitions include “The Price of Freedom: Americans at War,” “Field to Factory,” “American Presidency: A Glorious Burden,” and “America on the Move.” Open 10 AM–5:30 PM daily.

National Museum of Natural History 10th ST & Constitution AVE NW

Houses the 45.5-carat Hope Diamond, dinosaur fossils, an insect zoo, the new mammals hall, and the world’s largest African bush elephant. Open daily 10 AM–5:30 PM.

National Shrine of Immaculate Conception 400 Michigan AVE NE

Roman Catholic shrine containing the largest collection of contemporary Christian art in the United States in over 60 chapels and oratories, reflecting the religious heritage of America’s many cultures. Open daily 7 AM–6 PM.

National Zoological Park 3001 Connecticut AVE NW

Thousands of exotic animals, including two giant pandas. The “Amazonia” exhibit is a recreated microcosm of the world’s largest rain forest. Open daily. Free admission.

Smithsonian American Art Museum 8th & G STS NW

The world’s most important American art collection of paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings, photographs, and folk art from the eighteenth century to the present.

SHOPPING


Shops at Georgetown Park 3222 M ST NW, #140

Built in the 1800s, this historic site once housed horse-drawn omnibuses. Later it was used for servicing electric street cars and trolleys. In the 1960s, the site was selected by the White House as the location of the Situation Room and housed equipment for the first hotline to Moscow. Currently this historic site is a Victorian-style, multiple-level shopping center housing over 100 shops and boutiques. Open daily.

Shops at National Place & National Press 1331 Pennsylvania AVE NW

The Shops at National Place is a festive retail complex featuring 60 uncommon shops, boutiques, and eating establishments, located in the heart of downtown. Open Mon–Sat 10 AM–7 PM; Sun 12–5 PM.

Union Station 40 Massachusetts AVE NE

For nearly 100 years, Union Station has been the gateway to the nation’s capital. Every year, 29 million visitors enjoy shopping, entertainment, and an international variety of food in this Beaux Arts transportation hub. 

PRICE GUIDE:

\$ = up to \$10

\$\$ = \$11–20

\$\$\$ = \$21–30

\$\$\$\$ = \$31 and over

An Interview with Barbara DeConcini



As AAR Executive Director Barbara DeConcini completes her third and final five-year term of office this year, she reflects back upon her time with the AAR, the changes she has seen, and her sense of what the future may hold for the AAR and the field of religion.

RSN: When you became executive director, how developed was the AAR as an organization — what was its budget, level of staffing, and so forth?

DeConcini: Under the direction of my immediate predecessor, Jim Wiggins, the AAR had grown steadily in every way. After some years of fiscal precariousness in, I believe, the late 1970s, Jim built up the financial resources, successfully launched our first-ever capital campaign, and brought the staffing up to four people. In the 1980s, the field was growing and so was our membership, which stood at about 4,500 in 1991. When I took over at the end of that year and set up our offices at Emory University, we started with a staff of four and an annual budget of \$500,000. Our current membership is over 10,000, the staff numbers 16, and our annual operating budget is \$2.3 million. Some of this remarkable growth is due to our increases in membership and programs, of course, but the major spurt came with the closing of Scholars Press in 2000, when we took our membership, accounting, and technology services in-house.

RSN: What led you to become so involved in the field of religion in the first place?

DeConcini: Well, I guess in a real sense I have never not been involved in religion, since I was educated in Catholic schools and spent 13 years as a nun. My engagement with religion as a field of study per se began with my entering the convent at age 18 and steeping myself in Catholic theology. I completed my first two degrees in English literature, becoming increasingly interested in the remarkable family resemblances between aesthetic and religious language while pursuing my doctoral work in literature and religion here at Emory. But before becoming AAR executive director, my teaching and writing was pretty much devoted to literary and film criticism.

RSN: How was it that you ended up applying for the position of AAR executive director?

DeConcini: I didn't quite! I was serving on the AAR Board as a regionally elected director when John Dillenberger (who led the search) asked me to meet with the search committee. I was the dean of a fine arts college at the time, and I knew that the executive director was always a professor in a religion department at a major university who had some released time from teaching (and was invariably a man!), so I didn't quite think of the conversation as a job interview. I was as surprised as I was delighted when John called me the following morning to say that I was the search committee's choice and that they intended to work with Emory on a joint appointment. Thanks largely to three of my colleagues and friends at Emory — Paul Courtright, Bob Detweiler, and Jim Waits — I was offered the position of professor of religion at Emory. Emory generously provided half of my salary and significant financial support for the AAR executive offices at the start of my tenure.

RSN: During your time as executive director, what have been the most significant developments in the AAR?

DeConcini: Like any scholarly society, the Academy's fortunes develop in tandem with the contexts we live in — the field we serve, higher education, the society and culture. I've been fortunate to head the AAR at a time of significant growth in the field and in the remarkable public interest in religion. So, it is not surprising that we've grown in every way as well. I like to think that we've done it with intention and attention, through a consistent commitment to thinking and acting strategically in our service to the field and to our members. Our major new initiatives over the past 15 years have been in programs to improve the broad public understanding of religion; to meet the professional needs of our members, their departments, and their colleges and universities; to develop our international connections; to enhance the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the field; to build our scholarly publishing program through our association with Oxford University Press; and to make the case for religion as a major player within the national higher education and humanities contexts.

RSN: What accomplishments have pleased you most?

DeConcini: What has pleased me the most is the process itself! In my life and career, Socrates' call to live an examined life has meant for me the shared commitment to a common good and the communal search for optimal ways of contributing to that vision. That happens in the rough and tumble of discussion and debate, being ready to make the case and to listen to everyone around the table, and then to have the courage to act. It's a conversational model — I like to think of it in orchestral terms. It has been my privilege and joy to serve for a little while as the conductor: Here the conductor needs to bring out the winds; there, get the strings to round their tones; all the while keeping the tempo, the balance, and the sound symphonious.

RSN: What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the field of religion today?

DeConcini: Our society and our nation need public voices for religion and theology. We need to model *how to think* about the profound moral questions that confront us in our individual and communal lives. We need to redress the erosion of belief in the inherent value of a liberal education in a democracy, the commodification of higher education and the scholarly profession, and the disappearing opportunities to live one's scholarly vocation at full throttle.

RSN: What would you hope for the AAR's future?

DeConcini: That we continue to hew to our mission, while always being attentive to fresh ways of achieving it in changing contexts; that we continue to embrace democratic structures through which the winds of change can safely blow; and that we find better and better ways to bring our members' knowledge and wisdom to bear in the critical public debates involving religious beliefs, questions, and values that shape our nation and our world today.

RSN: Do you have any special plans for your time once you're no longer the AAR's executive director?

DeConcini: Not yet. Walt [Barbara's spouse, Walter Lowe] is retiring at the end of this academic year, completing 35 years on the faculty of Emory's Candler School of Theology. He will have time to write and will likely continue to do some teaching.

My colleagues who lead the other large ACLS societies often joke — somewhat ruefully — that executive director positions are not on any career path! For now, I'm practicing a sort of "sitting meditation," trying to sit with this passage in my life, to be open to new possibilities. I tend to think more in terms of vocation than career, so I am trying to listen with my heart. RSN

Career Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minorities Now Online

Miguel A. De La Torre, *Illiff School of Theology*



Miguel A. De La Torre is the director of Illiff's Justice and Peace Institute and serves as the associate professor for social ethics at Illiff School of Theology. The focus of his academic pursuit is liberative ethics within contemporary U.S. thought, specifically how religion affects race, class, and gender oppression. Presently he is the co-chair for the Ethics Section of the American Academy of Religion. He has published ten books over the past five years, including the award-winning texts Reading the Bible from the Margins (2001); Santeria: The Beliefs and Rituals of a Growing Religion in America (2004); and Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins (2004).

"OH, YOU'LL HAVE no problem getting a position once you graduate," is what I constantly heard from Euro-Americans during my graduate studies. Yet, scholars of color can expect, due to institutional racism that can manifest itself in strange ways, even more hurdles to jump than their Euro-American colleagues. One well-published light-skinned Latino was denied employment because he was told that he was not "Latino enough." The school's administration thought his skin lacked sufficient brown pigmentation.

These forms of politically correct bigotry contribute to a hostile work environment. The mythology perpetuated is that non-

white skin is an opportunity for employment because, as the argument goes, a prevailing politically correct environment that is hostile to whites permeates academia. What appears as a compliment is really a voicing of resentment that scholars of color will get a job over "better" qualified white candidates.

However, the truth of the matter is that racism and ethnic discrimination are as rampant on U.S. campuses of higher education as in any other sphere of American life. As in the rest of society, not possessing white skin is detrimental during the hiring

See **DE LA TORRE** p.26

Journalists Name Top Ten Religion Stories of 2005


RELIGIOUS DISAGREEMENTS over the end of life, intelligent design, and fights over ordaining gay clergy were among the top religion stories of the year, according to a poll of religion writers released December 13, 2005.

But the overwhelming first and second choices for top stories were Pope John Paul II's death and the election of his successor, Pope Benedict XVI.

Members of the Religion Newswriters Association (RNA), who are journalists writing about faith and values in the mainstream press, ranked the top stories in an online survey December 7–12. The 28 religious events in the poll were ranked by 100 RNA members, or just over one-third of the membership.

In addition to ranking the top stories, 68 percent of the survey respondents voted the former pope as the top religion newsmaker of the year. The new pope was named top newsmaker by 21 percent of those voting.

The top stories in order are:

1. The world mourns the death of Pope John Paul II after his eventful reign of 26 1/2 years. His attitude toward death inspires many. The movement begins for his canonization, and major biographies reach TV screens.
2. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, top aide to John Paul II, is elected by the cardinals to succeed him as Benedict XVI as the world looks on. Vatican watchers see conflicting signs as to what his papacy will bring.
3. Terri Schiavo dies in a Florida nursing home after her feeding tube is finally removed. Many demonstrators stage high-visibility protests for weeks before her death, as Congress and the Florida Legislature join faith-based groups in the debate over the right to die.
4. Churches and faith-based agencies respond to Hurricane Katrina disaster in Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as damage from lesser hurricanes. Earlier they had responded to the tsunami in Southeast Asia, and later to the earthquake in Pakistan. The hurricanes also spur discussions about the roles of God and of environmental shortcomings in such disasters.
5. Debate over homosexuality continues to roil mainline denominations. Episcopal Church and Canadian Anglicans officially absent themselves from Anglican Consultative Council, as exodus of some Episcopal churches continues. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America defeats recommendation for ordination of gays. United Methodist Supreme Court reaffirms the defrocking of a lesbian pastor and reinstates a pastor removed for barring a gay from membership. Pacific Southwest churches take first steps toward leaving American Baptist Churches.
6. Debate on evolution vs. intelligent design heats up, especially in Kansas and Dover, Pennsylvania. Decision is awaited in Dover case, but the school board that favored inclusion of intelligent design is voted out. In Kansas, the board of education approves standards that cast doubt on evolution.
7. U.S. Supreme Court approves posting of Ten Commandments outside state capitol in Texas and disapproves their posting inside courthouses in Kentucky, both by 5–4. The high court also upholds the rights of prisoners to practice their religion and of municipalities to take private property for public benefit. The court hears arguments on two abortion cases and Oregon euthanasia law. Meanwhile, a federal judge reinstates ban on "under God" in Pledge of Allegiance in three California school districts; case is expected to return to the Supreme Court.
8. Faith-based groups speak out on Bush's three nominees to the Supreme Court; evangelicals help to derail Harriet Miers. Earlier they weighed in on both sides of the question of filibustering judicial appointments; a compromise was eventually reached.
9. Vatican releases long-awaited statement on homosexuality, the first major instruction issued by Benedict XVI. It bars from seminaries those who are actively homosexual, have deeply rooted tendencies toward it, or support gay subculture. Reaction is predictably mixed.
10. Billy Graham holds his farewell evangelistic campaign in New York City. 

Survey Gives Insight into Religion Taught at Community Colleges

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY of Religion developed a survey instrument on the teaching of religion and philosophy in U.S. community colleges to map the "whether, where, and what" of such teaching. AAR partnered with the Community College Humanities Association in administering the survey.

In the fall of 2005, the CCHA sent 956 surveys to presidents of American Association of Community Colleges members. These presidents were instructed to give the survey to the appropriate academic unit where religion and philosophy were being taught. CCHA sent the 458 responses (a 47.9% response rate) to the AAR for analysis.

"We are delighted to begin this new AAR initiative," Barbara DeConcini, AAR executive director, said. "Thanks to the survey results, we are getting a first concrete sense about the teaching of religion in American two-year colleges — the courses that are being offered, the academic preparation of faculty teaching them, and enrollments. We will use these data in developing programs for this increasingly important constituency within our field."

Of the colleges reporting, about 40% indicate they teach religion courses. The courses most frequently taught, in descending order, are:

- Introduction to Religion/World Religion/Comparative Religion
- Bible (Old/New Testament; Survey of the Bible)
- Christianity (Life of Jesus, History of Christianity)
- Eastern Religions (Asian Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism)
- Other (Life, Death, and Dying; Women and Religion; Latter-Day Saints; Black Church in America; Anthropology of Religion; Religion in the United States)
- Judaism
- Islam

The philosophy courses were primarily Introduction to Philosophy/Ethics/Logic or area studies (Western philosophies, Eastern philosophies).

Enrollment trends for religion courses are reported to be steady (53%) or rising (38%). In philosophy, the trends are roughly similar: steady (51%) or rising (42%).

Respondents report that religion is taught primarily in humanities or social science departments. Only 3 colleges reported a free-standing department of religion/religious studies, and 14 reported combined religion and philosophy departments. Religion courses are part of an honors program in 14% of respondent colleges, and 3% offer a degree program in religion. In these latter colleges, the average number of majors for the 2003–2004 academic year was 7.8.


AAR also collected information on faculty appointments and degrees. Of the 964 reported as religion faculty members, 266 (28%) are full-time, while 698 (72%) are on adjunct or part-time appointments. For philosophy faculty (1,741), 29% are full-time, and 71% are on adjunct or part-time appointments. The highest earned degrees reported for full-time religion faculty are: PhD (42%), MA (38%) and MDiv (13%). For part-time and adjunct religion faculty, the highest earned degrees reported are: PhD (18%), MA (43%), and MDiv (31%).

The degree fields for full-time religion faculty were from a broad range:

- Philosophy (35%)
- Religion (20%)
- English (12%)
- Social Sciences (8%)
- Humanities (7%)
- Theology (6%)
- History (6%)
- Other (5%)

For adjunct and part-time religion faculty, religion was the top degree field:

- Religion (34%)
- Philosophy (26%)
- Theology (19%)
- Humanities (5%)
- Social Sciences (4%)
- English (4%)
- History (3%)
- Other (6%)

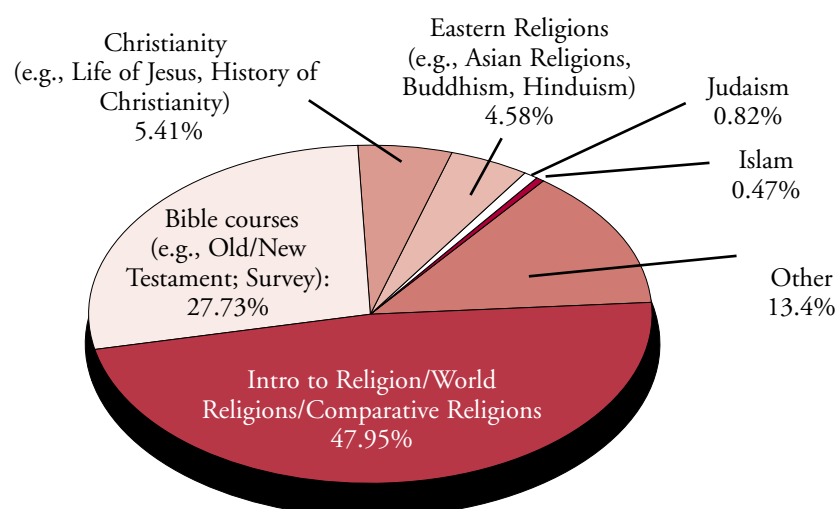
"The discrepancy in degree fields between full-time and part-time faculty is not surprising given that the highest degrees earned for part-time and adjunct faculty were MAs and MDiv's," Kyle Cole, AAR director of college programs, said. "This study gives us wonderful insight into these colleges and their faculty, and will help us find ways to serve this community. The AAR will be using the data to work with the Wabash Center on possible programs." 

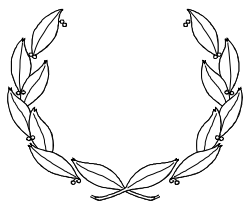
The Committee on Teaching and Learning seeks nominations for the AAR Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Nominations of winners of campus awards, or any other awards, are encouraged.

Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR Web site at www.aarweb.org/awards/teaching.asp.

RELIGION COURSE BREAKDOWN BY SUBJECT





In Memoriam

Vine Deloria, 1933–2005

Jace Weaver, University of Georgia

Jace Weaver is Director of the Institute of Native American Studies and Professor of Religion at the University of Georgia.

IT WAS A PARTICULARLY hot summer day. It was dry, and dust rose up and choked the Sun Dancers as they danced. During a break, Sitting Bull stepped out into the circle and prayed. It began to rain. It didn't rain very long or very hard — just enough to cool things off and keep the dust down. Sitting Bull went back to his place. The spot where he had been standing was still dry.

I often think of this story when I think of Vine Deloria. Not because I think Vine walked between raindrops, but because it was exactly the kind of story he loved, a story of the power of Native religious traditions. I shared it once over dinner with him and his wife Barbara in Denver before the AAR meeting where we were going to honor him. Vine chuckled knowingly. He spent much of his last year working on a book on the miraculous acts and abilities of Native religious practitioners.

Hemingway said that the problem with old friends is that there are so few of them left. Vine made the journey this past November. He was 72 years old. For those of us who knew him, he left us much too soon. It is still hard to believe that someone as protean and prolific is gone. He was a friend and mentor to many of us, a role model and a benchmark for more of us, and a conscience to all of us.

The son of an Episcopal priest, Vine Deloria attended Augustana Seminary (later renamed Lutheran School of Theology). While in divinity school, he honed his critique of Christianity. What was lacking from theological systems, he felt, was any connection to life's problems and day-to-day living. He first came to prominence in the mid-1960s as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians. Frustrated with the conference approach to Indian politics, he left to go to law school at the University of Colorado. He did so because, in his

own words, "It was apparent to me that the Indian revolution was well under way and that someone had better get a legal education so that we could have our own legal program for defense of Indian treaty rights."

Vine was a professor of law, politics, and Native American studies, first at the University of Arizona and later at the University of Colorado. He was both a scholar and an activist. He was that all-too-rare bird, a scholar-activist.

He once contacted me to ask if I would sign on to an amicus brief in the so-called Devil's Tower case. He asked if I wanted to stay in the ivory tower or do something that mattered. It was a typical Vine ploy, playing upon the guilt of those of us in the academy about the efficacy of what we do. A year or so later, when I contacted the Native American Religion listserv with a similar request for a matter I was working on for the Quechan Nation, Vine was my first response. He replied simply, "Give me the details, and tell me what you need." That was Vine Deloria. He was always there when Native peoples needed him, and he always knew what was at stake.

His first book, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, was a watershed event in Native political thinking and visibility of Indians to the dominant culture. With his trademark irony and humor tinged with biting satire, Deloria took on the church, the U.S. government, stereotyped images of Indians, and American culture in general. He followed that debut with almost 20 other books and countless articles and occasional pieces. Through books such as *God Is Red, Red Earth, White Lies, and Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths*, he expanded minds and opened up the seams of the dialogue. *The Nations Within* and *American Indians, American Justice* (both co-authored with Clifford Lytle) were insightful legal histories that remain adoption staples. Edited volumes such as *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy* and *The Indian Reorganization Act: Congresses and Bills* put crucial primary documents at our fingertips. In all his



Vine Deloria. Photo courtesy of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

writings, he was an uncompromising advocate for the humanity and sovereignty of Native peoples and nations. More than any other single person, he was responsible for the foundation of contemporary Native American studies.


Vine gave tirelessly and seemingly limitlessly of himself. He mentored many scholars, including Robert Williams, Kurt Kicking Bird, George Tinker, and myself. He wrote forewords to innumerable works of others. He wrote books with up-and-coming scholars like David Wilkins and Dan Wildcat.

In the fall of 2001, he was asked to debate forensic archaeologist James Chatters about Kennewick Man before a conference of scientists at the New School in New York City. When Chatters heard that his opponent was to be Deloria, he refused. Organizers were going to forget the entire thing, but Vine, feeling tricksterish, recommended me as his replacement. He then sent me what he considered the relevant documents and spent hours on the phone prepping me for the encounter. He was sorry to miss the com-

bat personally, but was amused that Chatters couldn't escape him entirely. That, too, was Vine Deloria.

In 1972, at the height of the Red Power movement, he wrote:

If vocation is to exist in today's world it must certainly involve a heady willingness to struggle for both long and short term goals and at times simply for the joy of getting one's nose bloodied while blackening the other guy's eye. I would conclude that vocation has nothing to do with jobs, divine callings, political platforms, or wisdom and knowledge of the world. It is the solitary acknowledgement that the question of man's life and identity is to let the bastards know you've been there and that it is always a good day to die. We are therefore able to live.

Vine, you left us too soon. But through your work and the lives you have touched, you will live for generations. We'll see you again on the other side. Hoka hey! 

Equinox Publishes New Interdisciplinary Journal on Texts

A NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY journal, *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds*, is being published by Equinox Publishers. Its editor, Elizabeth Castelli, said the journal focuses on the ongoing reception and mobilization of sacred texts in contemporary politics, culture, and social life.

Postscripts critically engages with questions of textuality and issues of media and mediation, Castelli said. It emphasizes the "after-lives" of sacred texts, their mediation with and through other cultural and social forms. The journal focuses on how "scrip-


ture" haunts and inhabits contemporary worlds, on the ways in which the logics of sacred texts operate as the scaffolding on which individual and collective identities come to be suspended and organized.

Postscripts defines "scripture" and "sacred text" in the broadest of terms, including both canonical writings of recognized religious traditions and other kinds of texts (e.g., the U.S. Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) that have come to function canonically in the modern period.

Volume 1.1 of *Postscripts* includes the following essays:

- Erin Runions, "Refusal to Mourn: U.S. National Melancholia and Its Prophetic Precursors"
- Gerald O. West and Tahir Fuzile Sitoto, "Other Ways of Reading the Qur'an and the Bible in Africa: Isaiah Shembe and Shayke Ahmadu Bamba"
- Alice Bach, "Trading in Souls: Terrorism and Tourism in the Middle East"
- Zayn Kassam, "The Hermeneutics of Problematic Gender Verses in the Qur'an"
- Andrew S. Jacobs, "Gospel Thrillers."

The journal will appear three times a year and is published by Equinox Publishers in the United Kingdom (www.equinoxpub.com). Individual subscriptions will be available at a discount of 20 percent for AAR and SBL members. E-mail jjoyce@equinoxpub.com with your AAR or SBL membership ID to receive the discount.

Postscripts is a peer-reviewed, refereed journal. Guidelines for submission of materials can be found on the Equinox Web site. Authors may also query its editor Castelli by e-mailing her at ecastell@barnard.edu. 

Steering Committee Discusses Theological Programs Strategy

Carey J. Gifford, *American Academy of Religion*

THE WORK of the Theological Programs Initiative has taken its next major step with the first meeting of the Theological Education Steering Committee, February 17–18, 2006, in Atlanta. The committee spent the afternoon of its first day clarifying its vision. We took a close look at the Academy's Centennial Strategic Plan and its objectives, particularly those that provided the context for the creation of the Theological Programs Initiative. We also discussed the results of the seven consultations that we have held since June 2005 whose purpose was to understand the theological scholar and professor in their contexts. We sought to determine ways AAR could earnestly address those needs. The committee agreed that the core constituency for our efforts should be AAR members in theological education.

We also discussed several demographic analyses of faculty in ATS institutions and in the AAR, and identified 1,038 AAR members who teach at ATS institutions (out of 3,607 ATS faculty). We also have approximately 2,500 other members who teach theology in undergraduate and graduate programs. Hence, of the AAR's 10,400 members, 3,500 of them teach theology.

We then analyzed ATS faculty by their subfields and their relation to AAR members who teach in comparable subfields.

At the end of our first day we developed five rubrics, which helped us categorize what types of initiatives we would focus on and prioritize:

- AAR's Ethos
- Scholarship
- Collegueship
- Teaching
- Social contexts.


On the second day we put together an inaugural plan of initiatives, which include both Annual Meeting and non-Annual Meeting programs. We discussed several Special Topics Forums and plenary addresses that might occur at the Annual Meeting. The ideas beyond the Annual Meeting included:

- A yearly supplement to *Religious Studies News* entitled *Spotlight on Theological Education*. Larry Golemon will be the editor. The topic for the March 2007 issue is "Forming the Theological Imagination: Practices of Integration in Theological Education."

- A possible expansion of our publishing program
- Summer workshops on the social contexts of theological education and vocational preparation for theological educators
- Long-range initiatives that would address public theology's contributions to the public good.

At the end of our meeting we crafted a charge for the committee: The Theological Education Steering Committee meets the scholarly and professional needs of theological educators by creating programs and services that bring theological studies into the wider conversation of the Academy and enriches the work of theological educators.

Over the summer we intend to further develop many of these initiatives, seeking external funding for the major initiatives, and to report on them in the October issue of *RSN* and at the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

If you have any ideas for the Theological Programs Initiative, we would love to hear them. Please contact me at cgifford@aarweb.org. 

Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture Society Established

Bron Taylor, *University of Florida*



Bron Taylor is the Interim President of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, and teaches in the graduate program in religion and nature at the University of Florida. He can be reached at the Department of Religion, 107 Anderson Hall, P.O. Box 17410, Gainesville FL 32611-7410; 352-392-1625 x237; www.religionandnature.com.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture was established at its April 2005 conference at the University of Florida. The conference, "Exploring Religion, Nature, and Culture," drew more than 150 scholars, including about three dozen from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Its featured speakers included Stephen Kellert, Carolyn Merchant, Kocku von Stuckrad, Roger Gottlieb, and many others.

The society's stated mission is "to promote critical, interdisciplinary inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse cultures, environments, and

religious beliefs and practices." By creating habitat for scholars from diverse disciplines and regions, society planners expect to foster new insights and collaborative projects exploring evolving connections and transformations among environments and the religious dimensions of human cultures.

An affiliated *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* will begin publishing in 2007 and is intended as a forum for this interdisciplinary conversation. Journal editors are now considering special issue proposals and articles for possible publication. Information about the society and journal are available online at www.religionandnature.com.

Scholarly inquiry into the religion/nature nexus is not new, of course, and has managed to unfold quite well up until now without such a society. For generations, humanities scholars and social scientists have examined nature symbols in religious texts and rites, or analyzed the "worship of nature" they found in some usually small-scale societies that have not been overwhelmed by civilizations spreading the world religions. But as more scholars assumed a scientific approach to the study of religion, new approaches and fields of inquiry were undertaken.

One of the approaches considers how natural habitats gave rise to consciousness in general, and religious beliefs and practices in particular — the case of nature shaping religion.

The emerging fields of evolutionary psychology and cognitive science, for example, explore how our evolutionary genome, or the ingestion of certain plants or gasses, can influence and precipitate

religious perceptions. This area of inquiry can draw on a diverse number of fields, such as the teaming-up of a classicist and two natural scientists who researched the Delphic Oracle and argued, after finding hallucinogenic ethers in the caves at Delphi, for a partially naturalistic explanation for that famous prophetic cult.


Another recent approach draws heavily on disciplines recently labeled "historical ecology" and "ecological anthropology," as well as on ecology-informed religious studies and other disciplines. This approach explores the role that religions have played or might play in transforming ecosystems — the case of religion shaping nature.

To many, as environmental degradation has intensified and caused ever-greater suffering, this sort of question has assumed increasing urgency. This is in no small measure because over the last few decades, religion (both in general and in its particular forms) has been accused of fostering beliefs and behaviors that damage ecosystems and harm their inhabitants. Alternatively, religion has been proffered as an essential partner in the global quest for environmental sustainability. Because evidence is available to support both hypotheses, it may well be an emerging field that will have much to do with the flourishing of life on this planet. If so, it is ultimately an academic field that has both practical and ethical importance.

Whatever aspect of the nature/human/culture nexus is under examination, it is clear that these relationships are far too complex to be explored adequately within the confines of any single, or even many, disciplines. It is this conviction that has given rise to the society idea.

Happily, much scholarship produced in recent decades can be easily dropped into this interdisciplinary stew. The American Academy of Religion spawned its religion and ecology group in 1990, and since then has provided habitat for this discussion, as has the Forum on Religion and Ecology, producing an important multi-volume series. Philosophers and ethicists, environmental historians, ecological and environmental anthropologists, literary or "eco" critics, cultural studies theorists, and sociologists and political scientists, as well as conservation biologists and other natural scientists, have all focused attention on the religious dimensions of the natures they study.

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature represented an effort to assemble and introduce the fascinating range of this interdisciplinary ferment. But as work on it unfolded, and the richness and complexity of the already available research was revealed, it became apparent that new venues would be needed to continue the discussion. Thus, the society and its journal were launched at the University of Florida, which had the vision a number of years ago to start a graduate program with an emphasis on religion and nature. The enthusiastic and generous response of scholars from diverse disciplines around the world suggested that the time was ripe to create a scholarly habitat for those who wish to work in an interdisciplinary way toward the understanding of the religion variable in nature-human relations.

All of those involved in the work of the society welcome scholars' interest and participation. Further information and online membership registration are available on the society link at www.religionandnature.com. 

Student Liaison Group Celebrates Decennial

Myesha D. Jenkins, American Academy of Religion

THIS YEAR marks the ten-year anniversary of the creation of the Student Liaison Group (SLG) in 1996. The SLG is comprised of graduate students representing PhD-granting institutions in the field within the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Students can be appointed by the dean of their department or elected by the institution's student governing body. Student Liaisons (SLs) serve a term of two years that is renewable once. This group has played an increasingly important role in the life of the Academy because of its enhancement of programs and resources to graduate students. Under the direction of the student director and the Graduate Student Task Force, the SLG serves a variety of important functions. They are a resource for fellow graduate students, introducing


them to the AAR, its mission, programs, services, and resources; participants in ongoing AAR program planning aimed at student members; advisors to the student director of special student concerns; and the conduit for information between the AAR and student members.

The Board developed the SLG as a result of its initiative to enhance services to students in the early 1990s. Former student directors John Thatamanil (1994–1995) and Deanna Thompson (1996–1997), and former AAR associate director Warren Frisina, played an important role in the creation of SLG. “Working to attract students to this new group, hearing their concerns, questions, and hopes about how they might work within the academy, offered me a much broader vision of what the AAR did

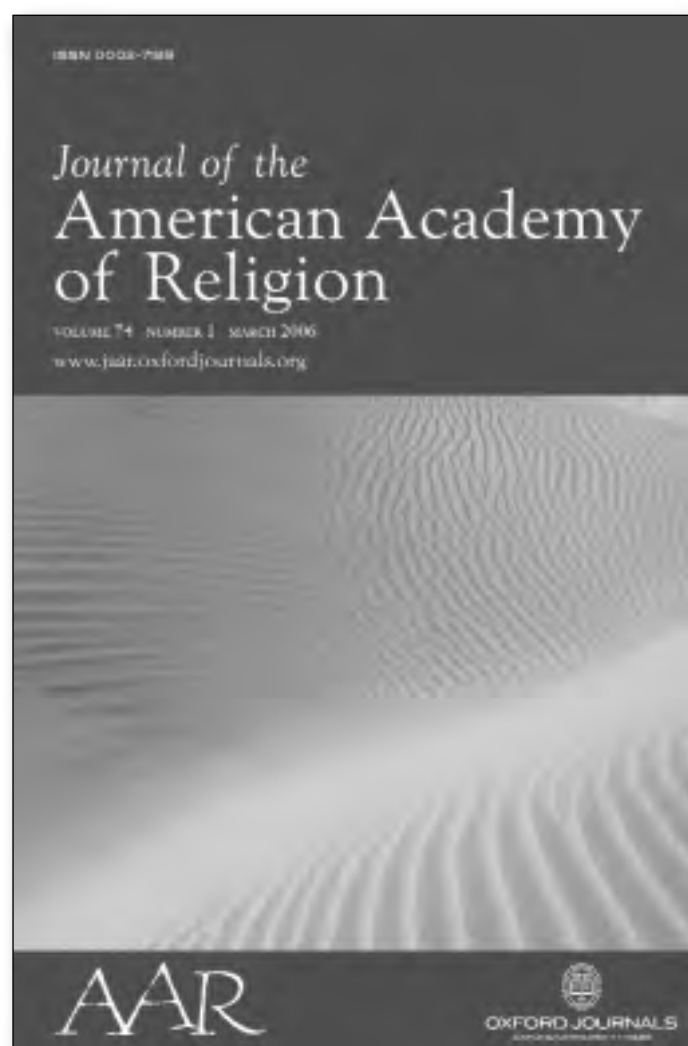
and what it could do to further assist graduate students. It was a wonderful experience in many ways,” says Deanna Thompson, current AAR Board Member.


Since 1996 student services have flourished. “I am very impressed with the general visibility that students now have in the AAR, no doubt due to the work of the SLG,” says John Thatamanil, current member of the AAR Theological Education Steering Committee. There are eight student-oriented sessions and a student lounge at the Annual Meeting. *Religious Studies News* includes a recurring “From the Student Desk” column. The Graduate Student Task Force was created by the Board in 2004 to address the needs and concerns of graduate students and promote their professional development. The students and the

Academy will continue to benefit from these reciprocal contributions to each other and to the advancement of the field of religion. “Without its students, the AAR has no future. Their well-being is directly connected to AAR’s well-being. If we can welcome students into the AAR and make them feel at home, they will feel called to do more than just burrow away in their particular research niche and attend to the larger needs and challenges of the field as a whole,” further remarked Thatamanil.

If you want more information about getting involved in the SLG or other AAR student programs, please contact Student Director Davina Lopez at dl313@columbia.edu. For a current list of student liaisons, please visit the AAR Web site, www.aarweb.org/students/slglist.asp. 

AAR Unveils New JAAR Cover



WITH THE MARCH ISSUE of JAAR, under the new Editor Charles Mathewes (University of Virginia), the journal also has a new look. The handsome cover is now printed on glossy stock accompanied by a photo. In addition, the back cover will have a table of contents, and several seminal quotes from the articles are featured in the front of the issue. 

Georgetown Offers PhD in Religious Pluralism

Chester Gillis, Georgetown University

THIS FALL Georgetown University will initiate a PhD program in Theological and Religious Studies. The program, focused on religious pluralism, will explore intercultural and interreligious understanding. Religious pluralism refers to the heightened consciousness, widespread since modernity, of the necessarily relational and historically embedded character of all exclusive and absolute claims, including those made by various religions. Indeed, this consciousness challenges the very nature of religion itself, with its attendant notions of truth, normativity, revelation, sacred scripture, divinity, salvation, worship, dogmas, moral norms, ethical practices, cultural traditions, etc.


Perhaps more than any other religion, Christianity is affected by religious pluralism, given its claim of Christ as the unique savior, and its understanding of itself as the only community of salvation. Islam, too, is challenged by religious pluralism with its claim that the Word of God has been revealed in the Arabic Qur'an and that Muhammed is the final prophet. Other religions such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Chinese religions, which may not make exclusive claims for themselves, are also affected in diverse ways by religious pluralism insofar as whatever claims they make for themselves are shown to be historically conditioned and context-dependent.

Accordingly the program invites a scholarly and critical investigation into how various religions have dealt with diversity in their theological reflection, ethical discourse, and relationship with surrounding cultures. It invites students to explore inter alia the philosophical and religious grounding of pluralism; the nature of religious knowledge; and the methods of interpretation. The program encourages as well a constructive reformulation of doctrines and practices of a particular religion in light of recent epistemological and hermeneutical theories and by

taking into account the data from other religious traditions. It also explores how religion and culture are related to each other, especially the various practical strategies in which believers deal with religious diversity (e.g., lived religion), as distinct from official doctrines and practice.

Since the study of religious pluralism requires comparative analysis, Georgetown's program requires detailed knowledge of at least two religious traditions and methodological resources to consider their interaction. The program will employ the methodology of both religious studies and theology. Traditionally, religious studies and theology have been kept apart, even within the same university. While their distinctive characters and their relationship are still being debated, this program offers students an intellectual space in which to investigate the history and the methodology of these two disciplines, as well as the possibility of cross-fertilization between them.

The program examines religion in three areas: theological reflection, ethical discourse, and religion and culture. These are not three distinct tracks or concentrations in which the students major, even though the courses and the dissertation will, of course, focus on one area rather than another. Rather, they constitute three leading questions that students should keep in mind in their courses and that seminars on religious pluralism will explicitly address. While graduates can designate their specialization as theology, ethics, or culture and religion, they will attend to all three areas in their study of religious pluralism.

Peter Phan, an internationally recognized expert on world Christianity, has been appointed the director of doctoral studies. For further information, he can be reached at pcp5@georgetown.edu or 202-687-1254. 

ON THE *Job Market in Religious Studies and Theology*

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Change of (Academic) Life: A Note

Jack H. Schuster, Claremont Graduate University

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Indisputably, the transformation holds significant implications for the academic labor market. Unknowns abound. How difficult will it be to obtain employment — and/or promotion and job security? And under what kinds of terms and conditions? Further, what will be the distribution in work activities as among the basic trio of responsibilities — teaching, scholarship/research, and service (internal and external) — that have shaped academic employment in the modern era?

Still further, it is likely that these rapidly changing conditions, in important respects, will affect faculty in the humanities at least as much, and very possibly more, than teacher-scholars in academic areas that are more accustomed to profound changes in subject matter and methodologies. Thus humanists, be they, say, philosophers or philologists, arguably have undergone less wrenching changes in recent decades than have their colleagues in other fields. And surely the teacher-scholars of religion, situated largely within the humanistic tradition, share — indeed, typify — much of that venerable academic environment. So, given the uber view of flux and the vulnerability of traditional academic work and its practitioners to new-age threats, what can be discerned about what the future may hold?

My effort to forecast the fundamentally unpredictable future is informed by an extensive study of the academic profession recently completed by Martin Finkelstein and me, and published in April 2006 by the Johns Hopkins University Press as *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*. This work has been years in the making and follows our earlier study published in 1998, also by Hopkins, as *The New Academic Generation: A Profession in Transformation*. Our more recent book is centered on a detailed analysis of the major national faculty surveys conducted over the past several decades, beginning with the landmark 1969 Carnegie Commission National Survey of Faculty and Student Opinion. Our examination explores changes over this time in faculty demographics, work, values, types of academic appointments, compensation, attractiveness of the profession, and so on. The point here is that our study reflects the experiences of sizable samples of faculty over these decades. Although these data points are cross-sectional rather than the result of longitudinal tracking, taken together this series of snapshots depicts a many-hued picture of the faculty experience as it has evolved during this time. (Several of the books' appendices provide detailed descriptions of each of these national surveys and the associated publications.)

There are numerous plots and subplots interwoven through our narrative, several of which illuminate the condition and prospects of those faculty members who teach and write about religion. Given a 600+ page study, it

HIGHER EDUCATION, it is said often and with a sense of urgency, is in a period of rapid transition. As a consequence, the very nature of the academic enterprise is undergoing a far-reaching metamorphosis that will leave the domain utterly changed. Most often, it seems, this description of unfolding events is accompanied by a lament that more wholesome, stable times are being displaced by a meaner, leaner era. Such obvious megaforges as successive waves of technology, sweeping globalization, rampant commercialization/marketization, and the profusion of unconventional types of institutions for the delivery of higher education are repeatedly cited as propellants accelerating the transformation.

See **SCHUSTER** p.16

SCHUSTER, from p.15

becomes necessary to become highly selective about what to highlight; broad generalizations are unavoidable. With those qualifications in mind, here are several “lessons” we derive from the sea of data.

Perhaps the most dramatic measure of consequential change in the profession is the extent to which the traditional full-time “do-it-all” appointments are giving way to different kinds of relationships between a faculty member and his/her institution. The steady expansion of part-time faculty since 1970 — a more than 400 percent increase compared to a much more modest 71 percent among full-time faculty — is old news; these contrasting growth rates reflect in the profusion of such appointments both the academy’s intensifying cost-consciousness (they work cheap!) and need for flexibility in staffing (here today, gone . . .). To be sure, substantial numbers of part-time faculty *prefer* part-time faculty work (and a large subset could not teach full-time); accordingly, a healthy mutual benefit for teacher and institution is thereby often achieved. That aside, the humanities, like the other broad areas, employ many whose connection to their academic employer is much more contingent or casual (in work force terms) than is that of the traditional full-time academic.

But the most striking related development is the wholesale expansion of full-time appointments off the tenure track, sweeping across fields and institutional types. Put starkly, in the most recent year for which data are available (2003), the substantial majority — 58.6 percent — of all new full-time faculty appointments were made off the tenure track. In fact, for *all* full-time faculty, a majority of new appointments since 1993 have been made *off* track each year, building slowly but inexorably from a bare majority (51.3 percent) in that year. The cumulative effect has been that about one-third of all full-time faculty now reside off track, holding nontenurable term appointments. And, given the steady rate of increase, which likely will be accelerated still further by a horde of impending retirements, the time is not distant — shockingly, I submit — when most full-time faculty members will *not* hold traditional appoint-

ments with the prospect of a permanent/tenured relationship with their employing college or university. The implications of these developments have not yet come close to being fully understood, not even, I believe, by quite knowledgeable observers.

Thus, one gross conclusion that follows is that the availability of “traditional” academic positions to be filled is now constrained, and likely will be yet further restricted, by the growing willingness among humanities academic units to indulge in the “new look” in appointments. This increasingly precious academic “prize” then must be considered within a context that pushes and pulls at the core number of “regular” appointments likely to become available in the proximate future. Consider a few such vectors that will influence the supply-to-demand ratio:


- 1. Demand.** The potential is palpable for interest to increase among undergraduates to understand better the world’s religions, given the undeniable powerful impact of religious beliefs on current world events and the facile talk about “clashing civilizations.” These new realities could heighten student demand for courses. And demand for academic appointments will be bolstered by the inevitable need to fill vacancies that will be created by the wave of imminent and near-imminent retirements among the ranks of a graying professoriate. (Few trend lines are as dramatic as the steadily increasing average age of faculty members in the dozen years since “uncapping” — via the Age Discrimination in Employment Act provision that began to protect faculty in 1994. The humanities now lead the way into senior citizenhood! But the protection individuals are afforded by uncapping notwithstanding, large numbers of older faculty are poised to retire their mortarboards.) This much, accordingly, is inevitable: significant upside demand pressures are building.
- 2. Supply.** Whatever the number of forthcoming full-time vacancies that the academy is actually willing to fill, one reality is that there seem to be expanding numbers of doctorally qualified candidates available (now or soon) for those positions in religion. Various indicators might be used to project a growth in

such supply. Among the most probative is that the number of PhD’s in religion conferred by U.S. universities is on the rise. In the three-year period from 2002 to 2004, the number of such degree recipients increased by a robust 27.1 percent compared to the corresponding number awarded in 1994–1996. The raw numbers and percentages vary, of course, depending on the time frame employed, but the jump in religion (from 817 to 1,039 doctorates between those two three-year periods) is notable. For some perspective, note that the increase is substantially larger both in numbers and percentage than, say, in philosophy (only 14.8 percent). And, although history confers many more doctorates (almost triple the number in religion), the percentage increase between the same three-year period is only 15.6 percent. Interestingly, the comparable rates of growth amount to a mere 8.7 percent in sociology but 29.4 percent in anthropology. So, for now, supply is not wanting (leaving aside whatever views one may hold about the *quality* of those recently completing or still in pursuit of their doctorates).

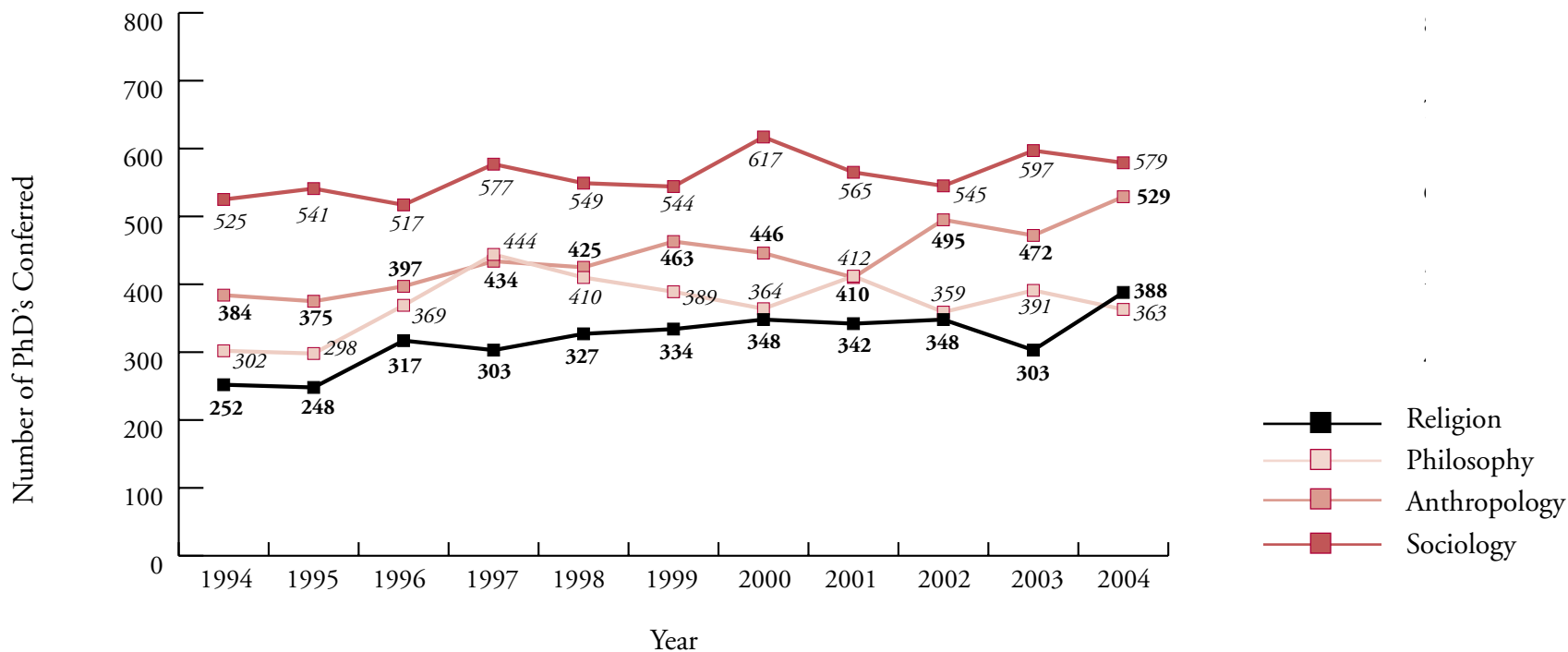
- 3. Supply: The Global Dimension.** The aforementioned globalization surely feeds into the pipelines that feed religion, adding variety to the richness of those trained to assume academic duties. For now, however, it is clear that some of those pathways are obstructed by national security concerns that impede work permits and immigration.
- 4. The Preference Factor.** These developments affecting demand and supply could well be overinterpreted to emphasize only the more problematic dimensions of the academic marketplace in religion. Yet, there are indicators that the off-track full-time appointments that are increasingly available suit well at least some proportion of faculty job seekers. Such appointments would seem to be, for a perhaps significant proportion of academic job holders, not just a “consolation prize” but rather a preferable set of job responsibilities, terms, and conditions. I am aware of no data directly on this point pertaining to faculty in religion, but the evidence, as it applies to

faculty in general and to humanists more particularly, is that significant levels of satisfaction are associated with such appointments. We have interpreted these phenomena to mean that some considerable proportion of academic job seekers are glad to make a basic trade-off: to opt for a more teaching-oriented position, one in which the expectation of original scholarship and publication is softened in favor of shouldering primary responsibility for effective classroom performance. This type of term-limited appointment thereby circumvents the threat of the up-or-out tenure decision and associated crazy-making pressures in favor of a more student-oriented focus. Indeed, buried deep among the hundreds of tables in our study is the evidence that full-time off-track faculty, across all types of institutions, report working somewhat fewer hours per week than their on-track counterparts. In the mix, the prospect of a more “balanced” — say, family-oriented — existence is tangible!

Having spent these past several decades scrutinizing our collective image, I conclude with a more personal comment, shifting now from the descriptive to the prescriptive. The foregoing observations have depicted an “industry” (pardon the allusion!) that, like nearly everything else in society, is now changing faster than we can measure it and certainly more swiftly than we can grasp the implications. It is perhaps more natural for those of us inside the academy than for those viewing our peculiar ways and inefficiencies from the outside to appreciate the unique responsibility that higher education bears.

Ours is an institution that has persisted and adapted (albeit not always with honor) despite the extraordinary challenges of the environment, clinging in the main to basic values of discovering and communicating truth. We are needed now arguably more than ever. When, as now, our colleges and universities are being reconfigured in perhaps fundamental ways, we must be alert to safeguard those core capabilities. If we cannot find the will and the means to do so, we surely compromise our capacity to attract capable and dedicated successors. The stakes are very, very high. 

Ten-Year Trend for PhD’s Earned



Landing That Perfect Job: It Takes a Village

Jaime Clark-Soles, Southern Methodist University



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RECENTLY TOOK a colleague to lunch and asked her how she liked it here. She exclaimed, “I’ve died and gone to academic heaven!” Back when I was on the market, a mentor warned me, “No institution is the kingdom of heaven.” I’ve learned, though, that some come reasonably close. How might you improve your chances of entering academic heaven on earth? Or at least a job that allows you to engage in meaningful work without too many obstacles? In what follows I’ll suggest some tips to get you started.

Prepare Ye

Preparing well in advance will eliminate some stress for you and for those responsible for supporting your application (e.g., your recommenders, the dossier service); it will also keep you from making silly but costly errors.

1. Know Thyself

Okay, so it’s not an *original* thought, but it’s still a good one. Are you desperate for any job that you can get? Are you *most* suited to seminary teaching but would be happy in an undergraduate setting? Do they appeal equally? Do you want to teach doctoral students? Do you have geographical considerations? How does your family situation factor into the equation? Are you looking for a short-term job or for perpetuity?

2. Get Organized

Have a binder that outlines all of the application deadlines; multiple copies of necessary documents; lists of interview questions; and a page that lists your references (with their formal names, their accurate titles, and contact information).

3. Your Dossier

- Make sure your dossier is in order well ahead of the application deadlines. See if your institution has a dossier service.

- Review your transcript to make sure that all of the grades are there (remember that professor who NEVER returned your 25-page paper? Be sure he or she actually posted a grade and try not to worry about how the grade was determined, given that you never received that paper back).
- Request more letters than you may actually need so that you can choose which ones to send to which school. Along with the personal essay, the recommendation letters are a crucial link in the process, so they need to be good. The more specific they can be the better. In addition to your dissertation adviser, you’ll want someone who can address your teaching ability and perhaps someone outside of your main field. For instance, though I’m a New Testament scholar, one of my references was a sociologist of religion who served as a secondary dissertation adviser. Provide your recommenders with a packet that includes the appropriate forms and a correctly stamped envelope; a list of all of the schools, their deadlines, and where the recommendation letter should go; a copy of your personal essay; and teaching evaluations (provided they are positive on the whole). Make the process as painless as possible for them — they are very busy people and their work on your behalf will play no small part in your success. Unless the application specifically indicates a limit, in some cases you might find it useful to send four letters instead of the usual three. *Keep your letters current.*

4. Your Curriculum Vitae

This can be tricky since, as a graduate student, you probably don’t have many, if any, publications. Many of our colleagues have their CVs posted on the Web. Refer to them. Consult those posted on the Web site of the institution to which you are applying to see how it is done there. Focus primarily on those only recently hired, since reviewing the CVs of senior scholars will only promote feelings of inadequacy!

5. Your Teaching Portfolio

Some schools want evidence that (a) you’ve thought about pedagogy and (b) you’ve taught well in the past. Provide a record of your teaching experience. How much have you taught and in what capacity? Include any syllabi you’ve developed; include teaching evaluations; provide quotations from the evaluations when addressing your ability.

Apply

- To begin, check job postings** in *Openings*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, society journals, and religious publications (such as *Christian Century*). Register with EIS. If you’re unsure, request help in decoding the job ads; know the meaning of “PhD is expected,” “PhD or equivalent,” and “should have completed all requirements.”
- Your cover letter** should be composed with exquisite care.
 - Respect the genre. Don’t be cute or too familiar because the search committee

will get the impression that you don’t know how to read a context correctly or that you believe yourself to be above the laws of application.

- If you’re going to name drop, do so carefully and in an uncontrived manner.
 - Include your scholarship competencies as well as trajectories.
 - Many programs have a particular method for which they are known. Demonstrate that you are *more* than your training and cannot be summarized without remainder by the name of your institution alone.
 - Provided that it’s true, convey your **EXCITEMENT** about teaching.
 - Tailor your cover letter to the particular school; this means you must know things about the school. Is it a public institution and you went to a public institution yourself? Does it take an unusual approach to something? Does its traditional approach particularly appeal to you?
 - VET, VET, VET.** Have your letter vetted by people whom you know will tell you the truth.
- Order your dossier** promptly and check to make sure it arrived at its destination before the deadline.

Preparing for the Interview

- Secure a list of possible questions** from multiple sources (such as professors or friends who have recently interviewed). Write out the answers and memorize them. (See sidebar for sample questions.)
- Know how you fit into the mission of the school** in a very specific way. Do you have a lot of overseas experience and they offer immersion trips? Do they have a seminary extension in Russia and you speak Russian?
- Participate in a mock interview** on your own campus. Your career services center may offer to conduct and videotape such an interview for you.

During the Interview

- Give enough information** to be warm and personable but not too much.
- Avoid food poisoning and other illnesses.** Bring medications. Bring two pairs of shoes.

I went out to dinner with two people as part of an interview. During the meal, we (well, they) shared “worst interview experiences” and one person entertained us with a story of how she became very ill and had to leave the dinner table, only to find the women’s room locked. Into the men’s bathroom she went. She ended up having to wash her shoes in the sink in the men’s room and return to the dinner table for further interviewing. I quipped, “Well, that can’t happen to me because I only brought one pair of shoes.” Eight hours later, at 4

Interview Questions: A Starter List

- Why and how did you decide to pursue teaching and research?
- What makes you think a seminary [or an undergraduate or graduate setting] would be a good fit?
- What interests you about the mission of this institution and how do you envision yourself helping us carry out this mission?
- What makes you think this particular school would be a good fit?
- What courses would you like to teach and why?
- What are your plans for future research?
- How is the dissertation progressing and when will it be finished?
- Describe your philosophy and experiences as a teacher.
- What have been the greatest challenges you have faced in the classroom?
- Tell us about a great experience you’ve had with a student and then about a bad experience.
- What do you do for fun?
- What’s the most interesting book you have read recently?
- Do you have any questions for us?

AM, I awoke violently ill by myself in a hotel room in a city not my own. At 7 AM, I descended in the elevator to have breakfast with graduate students in the hotel restaurant, where I sipped 7-Up, ingressed and egressed iteratively, and inquired about their interests, hopes, and fears.

This was followed by a full day of meeting with small groups (nursing Gatorade all the while, thanks to a very kind person on the staff) and delivering a job talk. Immediately after the lecture but before the questions, I retreated to the restroom where one of my current colleagues mopped my face with wet paper towels. I returned to field questions and we managed to keep the situation a secret from most parties. I got back to the hotel room and immediately the full effects of the day hit. This was complicated by the fact that I was 12 weeks pregnant, a detail I was reluctant to reveal. I called my doctor back home and she insisted that I go to the emergency room immediately. I called the staff person of Gatorade fame and she took me to the hospital, sat through my rehydration IV treatments, and then took me to her home for the night. I flew home the next day. I got the job and I am proud to call the above characters my colleagues now.

Stick with pasta at dinner.

- Dress appropriately.**
- Be yourself.** Don’t let nerves or job desperation make you act weird.

See **CLARK-SOLES** p.18

Navigating EIS

Shelly C. Roberts, American Academy of Religion

Editor's Note:

For EIS registration information, see page 4.

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IF YOU ARE in the market for a position in religious studies or Bible, do not underestimate the importance of the AAR's Employment Information Services (EIS). According to a survey conducted last year, 78 percent of the employers who came to the 2004 EIS Center filled the position with a candidate they had interviewed there.

"The availability of the EIS has been central to most of the searches we have conducted in the past five years," Charles Carter, Seton Hall University, said. Familiarizing yourself with EIS services and getting an early start is integral to the job search process.

EIS consists primarily of two interrelated efforts, *Openings Online* and the Employment Information Services Center at the Annual Meeting. Published each month, *Openings Online* is the most comprehensive public record of job listings for credentialed scholars in religion. The EIS Center, held each year at the Annual Meeting, provides both an interview center and a system for candidates and employers to communicate about job opportunities and credentials.

Candidates should begin preparing for EIS the summer before they expect to graduate. The first step is to preregister for the Annual Meeting and for the EIS Center. Preregistration opens in mid-May of each year, and closes in mid-October. Once registered, you are able to submit your curriculum vitae (CV) to the EIS Web site. Registered employers and *Openings* advertisers are able to view the online CVs beginning August 15 and ending March 31 of the following year. At any time, you may log in and modify your CV, so it is best to have it posted by late August, to receive maximum exposure. When you submit your CV, you will choose from a provided list three areas of specialization under which it will be filed. Employers can browse the CVs by

candidate name or by area of specialization. If an employer sees your CV and wants to interview you, he/she might contact you (using the information you provide) to schedule an interview at the EIS Center.

interview at the EIS Center. Employers who prearrange their interviews usually arrive at EIS with a fairly full schedule and are not looking for many new candidates, so the best way to get an interview is to apply early.

of the onsite edition of *Openings* will contain a listing of all of the employers interviewing, as well as an indication of their interview plans. Many will arrive with a full schedule, others will be looking to add new candidates. The best way to be scheduled onsite for an interview is, again, to contact the employer yourself, rather than wait for them to contact you.

The CV that you submitted to the EIS Web page will be available to employers at the meeting, placed in binders according to the three specialties you chose. Your goal is to prompt employers to look at your CV. Read through the job postings in *Openings Onsite* and on the "new postings" board, and make note of any new jobs that interest you. Using an EIS message card, leave a message for those employers, indicating your interest in the position and asking them to view your CV. Hopefully they will respond with a request for an interview.

When making your Annual Meeting arrangements, plan to attend the EIS Center's Friday night orientation program. The program begins at 7 PM with a brief presentation, then the center is open for use, with the exception of interview space. Most employers looking for new candidates will come to the Friday night program and begin reviewing the onsite CVs and requesting interviews. This is a good time for you to leave messages for them, because as the meeting progresses, their interview slots fill up and they stop looking for new candidates. Also while planning your Annual Meeting agenda, keep in mind that you will want to leave time to call EIS periodically to find out whether you have any messages, and, of course, time to come retrieve those messages at the center.

Using the above tips will help you receive the maximum benefits that EIS has to offer.

"EIS center is great, we always use it for searches and have had very good experiences," Katharina von Kellenbach, St. Mary's College of Maryland, said. [RSN](#)

"WE FIND THE EIS CENTER VERY HELPFUL, A MAJOR RESOURCE ON WHICH WE RELY IN DOING SEARCHES."

PATRICIA KILLEN, PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

"THE SERVICE WAS EXCELLENT AND VERY COMFORTABLE FOR BOTH CANDIDATES AND SEARCHERS."

JACQUELYN KEGLEY, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY BAKERSFIELD

"BEING ABLE TO DO THE INTERVIEWS AT THE EIS PROVED INVALUABLE TO OUR SEARCH EFFORT."

JOHN LONG, WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

The next step is to review *Openings Online* and begin actively applying for jobs. A common misconception among candidates is that once they have registered for EIS and submitted their CV, they need only sit back and wait to be contacted by potential employers. In fact, most interviews are the result of the candidate initiating contact with the institution, not the other way around. All employers who plan to use the EIS Center will advertise in *Openings* in August, September, October, or November. Begin reviewing the ads in August, and go ahead and apply for positions that interest you. The majority of employers collect applications in the early fall and, in October or November, contact those they want to

Once you are onsite at the EIS Center, you will spend your time communicating with employers through our message center, and hopefully attending some interviews. If you applied early for jobs, you might arrive at EIS with a few interviews already in place. All interviews occur at the EIS Center or in surrounding rooms, and employers should have already sent you instructions regarding the location. Be sure to arrive ten minutes early for an interview to give yourself time to find the right place and to catch your breath.

Regardless of whether you arrive with prescheduled interviews, you will want to look at all of the jobs posted at EIS and possibly contact a few new employers. Your copy

CLARK-SOLES, from p.17

5. The Job Talk:

- Understand the purpose and audience of the job talk(s). In some cases you'll be asked to teach a class to a typical group of students. In others you'll be asked to deliver a lecture to a mixture of faculty and students both within and outside of your area of specialization. In still others, you'll be asked to teach a class *and* to deliver a lecture to the faculty.
- If possible, weave some of the school's own history or character into your talk.
- Consider using multimedia. Do a dry run to make sure it works. Have a tech person there in case a problem arises.
- Engage people in your lecture. Allow some room for dialogue. Perhaps begin with an exercise that allows them to float opinions in a nonthreatening fashion.
- Do a dry run of the lecture with a mixed audience on your home campus. Have your peers and professors ask

questions. Have someone else record the questions. Expect those same questions to be asked during the interview. If possible, have this dry run videotaped.

- Try to avoid being a pawn in a faculty debate. Get advance information, if possible. Know people's "stance." Have integrity, but do your homework so that you can make yourself understood in that particular context.
 - Gear your talk to accomplish what they've asked you to, to engage specialists and, especially, nonspecialists.
- Have specific plans** for what you will do after the dissertation: Be able to speak intelligently about your next book project and two or three specific articles that you plan to write.
 - Have concrete, specific, and interesting questions for them** — about their work and how your specialty would fit in, about the teaching environment, etc. When they ask, "Do you have any questions for us?," don't offer easy, quantitative queries, the answers to which are right on the home page of their Web site. Instead,

ask them what they find most stimulating about their work in that place; what they think is most important in the study of the humanities (if that is your area); and how their department tries to address itself to that.

After the Interview

- After the campus visit, **follow up with thank-you notes.** If you promised people you'd send articles or book titles you mentioned, be sure to follow through.
- Once you've been extended an offer:**
 - Ask questions. Do they have maternity or paternity leave? Have they ever heard of it? (One university VP who had a banner that read "A Woman's Place is Everywhere" explained to me, "Most of our women try to have their babies in the summer." I did not take a job there.) What is the rate of tenure?
 - Read *Academe's* salary edition before negotiating a salary.
 - If possible, don't be rushed into burning bridges due to time lines. The dean who hired me here was kind enough to allow

me to complete the process with one other school that I was seriously considering. He opined, wisely I believe, "I want faculty to work here because they want to work here, not because they can't get a job elsewhere." It's best not to have to second-guess for the rest of your life.

- Do they cover moving expenses? (Yes, even particle board and sixth-generation grad school couches cost money to move, and more than you'd think!)
- Be gracious; if you decline, say so and be polite. If they ask you why you declined, you have to decide how much you want to share and what gain is to be had by it for either party. For instance, one school that I really loved had no women of childbearing age in the religion department. They had no maternity leave policy (apart from a course-load reduction during the semester in which one gives birth). I decided not to mention that factor.

REMEMBER: Folks, in part, want to know whether or not they would enjoy having coffee with you. They are not just hiring a scholar, but a colleague. [RSN](#)

Career Alternatives for Religion Scholars

Dennis A. Norlin, American Theological Library Association



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WHEN I BEGAN my doctoral studies at the University of Iowa School of Religion in 1968, there were forecasts that within the next ten years there would be a need for 5,000 more PhD's in theology and religious studies. This forecast was based upon the assumption that more and more state universities and colleges were going to be adding religion majors in the coming years.

During my four years of graduate study, the situation and forecast changed dramatically (remember Kent State?). By 1972 my fellow graduates and I were told that there were very, very few positions available, and almost all of those were for one-year terminal positions. We were thrown upon our own wits to determine our future. Our dream of sorting through multiple teaching offers was shattered as we looked everywhere and anywhere for any kind of teaching position.

I had very brilliant friends who accumulated thousands of dollars of debt moving cross-country for one-year positions, only to have to move again the next year. The situation made me realize that the assumption that we had made — (PhD = lifetime teaching position) — was naïve in the extreme. It also made me think about other ways in which I could use my hard-earned degree. I did eventually find a teaching position where I stayed for 12 years, but I also did stints as a hospital chaplain (3 years), parish pastor (2 years), librarian and library director (5 years), and association executive (11 years and counting).

Opportunities for permanent teaching positions are still scarce four decades later, and many who entered graduate school with the goal of teaching will find themselves adjusting to a different vocation and lifestyle than they had envisioned. The good news is that opportunities for nonteaching positions have never been more diverse than they are today. How does one decide what to pursue? What to try? How does one find interesting and challenging positions outside of academic teaching?

I would like to suggest that, in contemplating your professional future, you should begin by taking inventory of your own skills, values, and goals. Here are the questions I would ask myself and possible answers to those questions:

1. Why did I decide to pursue a PhD in religion?
 - a. To secure the credentials needed to teach
 - b. To pursue research in a specific field of great interest to me
 - c. To continue my graduate study since I really love graduate study
 - d. Other

2. Why did I choose the specific field I'm in?
 - a. Because I have a strong interest in this field
 - b. Because I think a degree in this field would be more marketable than a degree in another field
 - c. Because it was suggested to me that this is the field where I am strong
 - d. Other
3. What appeals to me most about life as a faculty member?
 - a. Interaction with students
 - b. The academic life — relationships with other faculty, a set schedule, etc.
 - c. The opportunity to continue to pursue my research areas of interest
 - d. Job security, recognition, and stature
 - e. Other


If you were to wrestle seriously with these kinds of questions, you would be intellectually equipped to pursue other vocations that would provide challenges, opportunities, and rewards that match one's talents, goals, and aspirations. If your primary interest is scholarly research, for example, you would probably be frustrated in a parish or serving as a hospital chaplain. You might find that a position as an indexer or as part of a publishing enterprise fits you better.

If your primary interest is interaction with students then, with a little adjustment, you might find parish ministry or hospital chaplaincy or even reference librarianship as a suitable alternative for you. If you like a mix of things (as I do), then you might find that working in a nonprofit association in the field of religion would be the right thing for you.

What's of most importance, however, is that you objectively and clearly assess your own

talents, strengths, desires, and goals, and that before you seek a nonteaching position you have a clear idea of what motivates, challenges, and satisfies you. With that self-knowledge in hand, you are ready to look for alternatives. Here are several resources to support your explorations of alternative careers in religion.

1. AAR has offered a special student luncheon on alternative careers for the last several years. Here is a list of contacts from the 2004 luncheon: www.aarweb.org/students/annualmeet/profdev/2004/A20-22.pdf
2. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* regularly publishes special careers sections that frequently discuss alternative careers: www.chronicle.com/jobs/archive/firstjob.htm
3. Some college and university placement services offer information about careers in religion. The McGill University Placement Service has an especially comprehensive outline, "What Can I Do with My Degree in Religious Studies?": www.caps.mcgill.ca/handouts/whattodo/religious_studies.pdf
4. Finally, there are people who have gone into technology with their religion background. One has developed the Selling Out Web site: www.ironstring.com/sellout/sellout_faqs/sellout_faqs.shtml

Your theological librarian can help you find additional resources, and remember, if you decide you wish to explore a career in theological librarianship, please contact the American Theological Library Association; we would be happy to provide information and support. 

Arizona State Creates New Doctoral Program; Commits to Monitoring Graduates' Success

J. Eugene Clay, Arizona State University

J. Eugene Clay received his PhD from the Department of History at the University of Chicago in 1989. He is an Associate Professor at Arizona State University, specializing in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Russian religious history, and he serves as the director of graduate studies.



IN FALL 2004, a long period of reflection and planning finally bore fruit as the Religious Studies Department at Arizona State University admitted its first class of ten students into our brand-new PhD program. Even before 1993, when I first arrived at ASU, my colleagues had debated the advisability of creating a doctorate. As the only religious studies department in the state university system, we had built up a small, but well-respected, undergraduate major in one of the largest universities in the country.

Our faculty rightly prided itself on its excellent reputation for undergraduate teaching; two of three Rhodes scholars from ASU had been religious studies majors, and a number of our professors had won prestigious teaching awards.

Our graduate program, which offered only the MA, had also attained international respect. After earning the MA in our department, several of our alumni had gone on to win major fellowships and complete doctorates at other universities.

As we discussed this matter in endless faculty meetings throughout the 1990s, we each realized that starting a PhD program would require an important shift of our resources away from other successful programs, which no one wanted to jeopardize. But at the same time we gradually came to a consensus that our department could provide doctoral training that was unavailable elsewhere.

First, ASU had unique resources for the study of Native American religions not only in the United States, but also in Latin America. Tod Swanson had established an annual summer field school that brought students to Ecuador for intensive immersion in the language and culture of the Quichua Indians. Ken Morrison's careful efforts to recover indigenous epistemologies of North American tribes, and his innovative workshop on

native cosmogonies, offered a unique perspective in Native American studies. In 2004, Miguel Aguilera, an anthropologist specializing in the Maya of southern Mexico, joined our faculty and introduced students to this important culture. Within the university, cognate faculty in the law school, the American Indian Studies Program, and the college of music, as well as in the extensive Labriola National American Indian Data Center, complemented the department's strengths.

Beyond Native American studies, we envisioned transforming the way religion is studied and understood in America. The traditional survey of religion in America begins with the Pilgrims and followers the European settlers who moved from east to west. But in Arizona, we are constantly reminded of the enormous influence of the Spanish empire and its successor states on the North American continent. From the sixteenth century, Spanish explorers and missionaries, such as Francisco Coronado, Marcos da Niza, and Eusebio Kino, participated in another equally important wave of migration from south to north. This migratory wave continues today, as millions of immigrants from Latin America enter the United States, bringing with them their myths, rituals, and symbols. From our vantage

See **CLAY** p.20

My Credentials Gap

Personal Experiences on the Job Market

Dewey James

Dewey James is the pseudonym of a visiting assistant professor in history at a state university in the Midwest.

SO, AM I PREPARED to prosper on the tenure-track market for historians this year? Let's go over the CV:

- Doctorate in hand? Check.
- Excellent teaching evaluations? Check.
- University teaching award? Check.
- Other awards, including a national fellowship? Check.
- Publications in reputable, peer-reviewed journals? Check.
- Book contract with a well-regarded scholarly press? Check.
- Currently holding a visiting position at a good university? Check.
- And let's not forget one important factor that the CV does not reveal: Generally nice guy who gets along well with people and interviews well? Check.

I should be golden on the job market, right? Can search committees honestly expect a whole lot more from a 2004 PhD?

Oh yes.

The problem is that my CV has one gaping, glaring, career-hampering hole, one that can't easily be patched over.

My PhD, you see, is from, well, let's call it AMU: Average Midwestern University. You know, a big state university from the agricultural heartland, the sort of place that Ivy Leaguers might teach at, but would never actually earn a PhD from.

When it comes to attracting job offers, Ivy League credentials beat AMU credentials most every time, despite whatever else might be on the CV. A recent study from the American Historical Association demonstrates that the "top" programs admit graduate students from a very narrow range of mostly private institutions, and hire from a similarly narrow pool. All of which is bad news for those of us from AMUs.

I was almost among the haves.

My adviser, a hotshot in my specialty — and the reason I attended AMU in the first place — recently turned down an offer to become a professor at an Ivy League university. At first I was relieved. I quite liked AMU and found my colleagues there to be mostly excellent, but without my "famous" (among humanities academics, anyway) adviser, it didn't hold any special significance for me.

"Well, I'm glad you didn't take the job at Ivy U," I said to him, happily. "It's sure better for me this way."

"I would have taken you with me, Dewey," my adviser replied. "We probably could have gotten you some dissertation fellowship money."

In other words, I came close to having both decent research support and an Ivy League stamp on my CV. (Besides prestige,

"In some ways this whole hiring process is irrational. At its worst, it reminds me of what I hated about high school: It's the cool kids reproducing their privileged social status. It's not that I don't recognize that Ivy Leaguers are nearly always very good; it's just that many of us from other institutions are very good as well."

money is something that AMU has had precious little to offer.) Suddenly I was wishing he had taken the job.

I know that I am as good a scholar and teacher as I would be if my degree was from the Ivy League; I have strengths and weaknesses just like everybody else. I also know that big-name universities are not particularly strong in my specialty; the other departments that boast the top programs are at, you guessed it, AMUs.

See **JAMES** p.21

CLAY, from p.19

point in the Southwest, we can observe and chart this extraordinary demographic and religious change — and help train a new generation of scholars who will more readily see the many religious connections between North and South America.

Animated by this vision, we created a doctoral program of 84 hours taken in three phases, each of which is designed to be completed in two years. The first phase, consisting of 30 hours of course work, trains students in both classical and contemporary theories of religion.

All students must also take a special three-hour seminar on teaching world religions, which confronts both practical and theoretical questions raised by the standard freshman survey. For at least three semesters, students must register for the one-hour "Religious Studies Workshop," a weekly colloquium where faculty and advanced graduate students can present research, discuss the work of invited speakers, and learn about practical matters such as creating a teaching portfolio, applying for jobs, and writing a dissertation prospectus. The relaxed and varied program of the workshop builds an intellectual community within the department.

To develop disciplinary expertise, students must also take 9 to 12 hours in a methodological minor, such as ethnography, anthropology, history, or philosophy.

By the end of the second 30-hour phase, each doctoral student must have taken 12 hours of seminars in one of four tracks: 1) Religions in the Americas, 2) Islam in Global Contexts, 3) Asian Religions, or 4) Religion and Conflict.

Once a student has completed the 60 hours of courses, she must pass written and oral comprehensive exams in a major field, a minor field, and in theories of religion. Only then

can she defend her dissertation prospectus, a detailed plan for an original work that makes a significant contribution to the field of religious studies. After a successful defense, the student becomes a PhD candidate and enters the third and final phase of 24 thesis hours, during which she researches and writes her dissertation.

Like our track in American religions, the three other doctoral tracks have distinctive emphases. In the Islamic field, ASU has special strength in the study of Africa and Indonesia. Sani Umar specializes in Islam in postcolonial Nigeria, and colleagues in history, English, and the African Diaspora Studies Program complement his expertise. The department also has developed strong ties with several universities in Indonesia, and is currently training five Fulbright grantees from that nation, the largest Muslim country in the world. With two specialists in Indonesia in our department (Mark Woodward and Chris Duncan) and a strong Southeast Asian program that offers courses in Indonesian language and history, ASU can provide graduate students with important perspectives missing in other universities.


In Asian religions, too, ASU enjoys unique resources. Anne Feldhaus and Alexander Henn have conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork in South Asia and published their results in several highly praised monographs. Our specialists in Buddhism (James Foard, Julian Schober, and Pori Park) investigate the impact of modernity in Japan, Burma, and Korea. In each case, they explore the everyday practice of Buddhism and the dynamics of cosmology, embodiment, and ritual. By emphasizing the ethnographic and anthropological study of lived religion, ASU's program in Buddhism differs significantly from the philological and textual approach of traditional Buddhology.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, spurred us to develop a research program that would include the study of the relationship between religion and conflict. The university responded to the attacks by developing a new interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict a few months later, with Linell Cady (author of *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life*) as the director. The corresponding track in the doctoral program trains students to think theoretically about this relationship by studying both theological reflections on religion and violence and examining specific cases where religion causes or is involved in violence.

Beyond the four tracks, the department also participates in an excellent interdisciplinary Jewish Studies Program, and boasts specialists in Eastern-Rite Christianity and the Counter-Reformation. Norbert Samuelson, who holds the Grossman Chair in Jewish Studies, trains students in philosophy and critical thinking, and has organized a series of conferences exploring the relationship between science and religion. As our doctoral program matures, we anticipate adding new tracks to meet the needs of our dynamic field.

Currently, we have 18 students in our doctoral program and 30 more in the MA. Altogether, we can provide teaching assistantships to only 14 graduate students, although we are constantly seeking additional funds. To keep the program manageable, we expect to admit only 3 more students into the doctoral program this year. Because we have a strong moral commitment to help students complete their degrees and find academic jobs, we never admit an applicant unless a member of the graduate faculty expresses a firm commitment to that person. In our very new program, the student's relationship to his or her mentor is especially crucial.

Through the "Religious Studies Workshop," the departmental weekly colloquium, we also provide practical hints and help for navigating the rocky waters of graduate school. Through the workshop, several graduate students have taken the initiative to compile and share information about external grants. To help our students launch their careers, we encourage them to join the American Academy of Religion and to present papers at regional conferences; the department can even provide some small support for travel. Several doctoral students have taken advantage of such opportunities to present their work before a wider scholarly audience (such as the Western Commission for the Study of Religion) and are in the process of revising their manuscripts for publication.

As the director of graduate studies, I have had the great joy of working closely with the remarkable first cohort of our new PhD program. Jeffrey Halverson's outstanding study of official fatwas on suicide bombers and Abdoulaye Sounaye's path-breaking ethnographic analysis of Muslim reactions to secular education in Niger are both models of scholarship that policy-makers would do well to read. In American religion, Doe Daughtrey's examination of the nearly forgotten Heavenly Mother in Mormonism, Brett Hendrickson's study of saints venerated by Mexican immigrants, and Charles Barfoot's soon-to-be-published biography of Aimee Semple McPherson will make major contributions to the field. As our program continues to evolve, I look forward to enjoying the fruits of the fascinating intellectual community in the Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University. 

JAMES, from p.20

But in the name game — the “glance quickly at the conference badge to see whether this person is worth talking to” academic culture — I’m at a decided disadvantage, even against those candidates who can’t match my teaching and research credentials. People in the humanities may like to pretend that it’s the quality of scholarship that matters, but the open secret is that the prestige accorded to one’s doctoral institution counts for a great deal.

In some ways this whole hiring process is irrational. At its worst, it reminds me of what I hated about high school: It’s the cool kids reproducing their privileged social status. It’s not that I don’t recognize that Ivy Leaguers are nearly always very good; it’s just that many of us from other institutions are very good as well.

The job market isn’t easy on anybody, but the dearth of tenure-track positions means hiring committees rely even more heavily these days on status credentialing. With so few positions available, hiring committees are under great pressure not to make a bad hire; after all, the dean might very well give the next space to a different department if the process doesn’t go well. And search committees can imagine themselves explaining,

“Hey, he was from Harvard — who knew it wouldn’t work out?” But they cringe at trying to rationalize to administrators why they would take someone from AMU in the first place.

Despite my credentials gap, I’m somewhat optimistic but not delusional as I begin my third year on the job market. I know that having my PhD from AMU means that some departments will never see me as a good fit for their program. And no matter how strong my CV is otherwise, AMU is right there at the top of it, giving search committees a ready excuse to place me in the reject pile.

I probably shouldn’t even bother applying to the big-name institutions, but I might be able to secure a position from a university at the same level as AMU. And I can only hope that a few jobs that fit my qualifications open from the sort of departments where research is part of professional life, where teaching and service are emphasized as well, and where job candidates aren’t automatically cut from the pool purely on the basis of institutional name recognition.

I’m going to give it my best shot: AMU was great to me while I was there, and I can only hope it won’t keep me from landing the type of job I want. RSN

Religion Indicators

Employment Status among Undergraduate Professors of Religion and Theology in the U.S. and Canada, 1999–2000.

MALE

	INSTITUTIONAL TYPE						Total
	Public	Private, nonsectarian	Catholic	Jewish	Protestant	Other	
Tenured	664	406	578	3	699	41	2391
Tenure track	154	140	170	1	304	12	781
Long-term Contract	64	72	65	8	369	3	581
Terminal Contract	72	44	37	5	119	2	279
Joint Appointment	51	49	33	1	70	14	218
Part-time	521	316	629	4	931	42	2443
Total	1526	1027	1512	22	2492	114	6693

FEMALE

	INSTITUTIONAL TYPE						Total
	Public	Private, nonsectarian	Catholic	Jewish	Protestant	Other	
Tenured	155	131	184	2	78	7	557
Tenure track	99	77	97	2	85	1	361
Long-term Contract	27	45	33	8	68	0	181
Terminal Contract	19	34	28	2	31	0	114
Joint Appointment	27	15	8	0	5	1	56
Part-time	240	140	371	1	287	12	1051
Total	567	442	721	15	554	21	2320

Note: 897 institutions responded to the survey.

Source: AAR Survey of Undergraduate Religion and Theology Programs in the U.S. and Canada. Initial Data Run Packet Methodology. Response 5.01 and 5.02 (pages 12–15). The full survey results are available at: www.aarweb.org/department/acadreldocs/surveydata-20040309.pdf. RSN

Further Resources

Anthony, Rebecca, and Gerald Roe. *Curriculum Vitae Handbook: How to Present and Promote Your Academic Career*. San Francisco: Rudi Publishing, 1998.

Heiberger, Mary Morris, and Julie Miller Vick. *The Academic Job Search Handbook*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Guide to the Perplexing: A Survival Manual for Women in Religious Studies by Members of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession of the American Academy of Religion. American Academy of Religion, 1992.

Hunt, Mary, ed. *A Guide for Women in Religion: Making Your Way from A to Z*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.

Career Links on the Internet

The AAR’s Employment Information Services program: www.aarweb.org/eis

The AAR’s Career Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession: www.aarweb.org/about/board/rem/careerguide

The *Chronicle of Higher Education*’s career guide: chronicle.com/jobs

A listing of faculty and administrative positions at colleges and universities: www.higheredjobs.com

A collection of positions in religious studies at universities in Canada: www.ccsr.ca/openings.htm

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities’ career resources page: www.cccu.org/career/contentID.5/career.asp

Preparing Future Faculty: www.preparing-faculty.org

Interview tips: <http://interview.monster.com>

Phone interview tips: <http://smu.edu/career/interviewphone.htm>

Questions to ask during the interview: www.apsanet.org/content_6843.cfm RSN

In the Public Interest

Islam in a Different Context: Teaching, Learning, and Dialogue in Indonesia

Gisela Webb, Seton Hall University



Gisela Webb is Professor of Religious Studies, Director of the Honors Humanities Program, and Faculty Fellow in the Whitehead School of Diplomacy at Seton Hall University. She has published in the areas of Islamic mysticism, Muslim women's scholar-activism, and Alzheimer's care. Her doctoral dissertation (Temple, 1989) under S. H. Nasr was "The Human-Angelic Relation in the Philosophies of Subrawardi and Ibn Arabi."

LET'S FACE IT. If you are a teacher of Islamic studies, you are constantly faced with having to explain Islamic religion in relation to the image of crisis and conflict (real or imagined) that your audiences bring to the table. What I wish to do here — "in the public interest" — is to give a snapshot of my sabbatical in Indonesia in 2004, which I experienced as both a vacation from the one-sided perceptions of Islam and a call to pay attention to a very hopeful youth population that wants to live at peace with "the West" as well as in the abode of Islam.

I received a Fulbright grant to teach in the new Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the oldest university in Indonesia, where students from the various islands and religions of Indonesia study religions critically, empathetically, and . . . together. I was delighted to be assigned to teach a master's level course on "Interreligious Dialogue" — as it harkened back to my graduate training at Temple University, one of the early hubs of global dialogue among religions and civilizations. My personal research goal was to learn about current interreligious relations and Islamic education, and I traveled to six of Indonesia's 13,000+ islands to do this: Java, Sumatra, Bali, Lombok, Papua, and Kalimantan (Borneo). My work in both medieval spiritualities and contemporary developments in Islam in the United States, combined with the terrible relationship between the U.S. and the Islamic world, led to many invitations to lecture at universities and pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools). My artist husband, Michael, joined me on this adventure. He took photos of peoples, landscapes, murals, cities, students, mosques, temples, churches, volcanoes,

frogs, lizards, and the Vespa he bought to get around on. We invited our two grown daughters to join us for a time, as it was too difficult to explain through e-mail the graciousness of the people and the complex matrix of historical, political, religious, ethnic, educational, and cultural dynamics we faced and learned from every day!

Learning from my students

I could not have had a better group of students to teach me about Indonesia's history of cultural and religious diversity. Of the 35 students in my class, 28 were Muslim, 5 were Christian, and 2 were Hindu. One-quarter of the students were women (mostly Muslim, two Christians). We had the major islands represented in the class — Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, Lombok, Bali, Kalimantan (Borneo), Timor, Maluku — so we could get first-hand reports from students (or by cell phone from families) on remembered history and current problems. From the islands where there has been a history of religious or ethnic conflict, we had in class representatives from "both sides." From our Muslim and Christian students from Ambon/Maluku (where the clashes are always reported as Christian-Muslim conflict), we got first-hand, consistent reports from students' families and from open public discussions organized by students on the topic of the conflict in Ambon. We learned that 1) the situation was much more complicated than typically reported, with various outside parties invested in provoking apparent "religious" conflict, and that 2) there were very strong interfaith Muslim-Christian organizations actively working on peace and conflict resolution issues, as well as on preventing divisive rumors from escalating. From Timor we had Muslim and Christian students report their experiences of the history of conflict in Timor — again, reframing the historical issues with a much more complex reading of colonial and post-colonial legacy than is normally reported in the media or partisan literature. We had a "Muslim Dyak" from Kalimantan who helped us understand the Muslim Mudari vs. Christian Dyak clashes, as well as the work being done to prevent and heal wounds of past conflict. We had both Hindu and Muslim students from Bali who spoke of both interreligious problems and cooperation, especially since the Bali bombings (the latter of which have had a devastating effect on the economy).

As we studied the history of interreligious dialogue, we looked at the early efforts of theologians and philosophers (in the first part of the twentieth century through the 1970s) as they sought a common ontological — "spiritual" — core that all religions share. Students were eager to look at more current discussants on "truth and dialogue" such as Farid Esack and Paul Knitter, who emphasize that in our post-modern era, we may not find a common core, but we can — indeed, must — find



Gisela and student, Amay, in Bali on the 2004 student trip to the Bali Bombing Memorial. Photo courtesy of Gisela Webb.

common ground, a common ethic, in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. This is where the students' hearts and hopes lie, and where their current engagement and enthusiasm for interfaith dialogue come from.

In advising second-year students on their master's theses, I learned still more of the history of interfaith cooperation (which we never hear about in the U.S. press in reference to Indonesia!). For example, as one of our students presented his master's thesis proposal — "A Study of the Reforms in Pesantren Schools after the 1965 Slaughter" — I asked him why he chose this topic. He said his father's generation had participated in this killing field which pit mostly Muslims against "supposed" communists in a "kill or be killed" melee. He added that this experience had left a "psychic shock" on the community — the shock that they *could* participate in this event — and that this "realization" led to the introduction of learning about other religions in the pesantrens, in order to prevent this from happening again. I realized that my students were the first generation to have grown up in this school system, and I believe we are seeing the fruits of the generation that established an approach to building interreligious tolerance and knowledge. A number of the students were/are involved in

NGOs that work across religious lines in such areas as interfaith dialogue, sex education (including HIV/AIDS prevention for sex workers), and women's health issues and advocacy.

Our interreligious dialogue class also raised issues of *intra*-religious conflict (like Protestant-Catholic, or liberal vs. fundamentalist Islam), so I added "special topics" dialogue classes. For example, we had an Intra-Christian Dialogue Group (which was attended by Muslims as well) that discussed the problem of taking back to their religious communities "pluralistic" thinking cultivated at the university when their congregations and leaders at home would probably oppose it. The Christians who participated were Indonesians who were Protestant (from Timor and Ambon), Roman Catholic, Charismatic Christian Chinese, and Greek Orthodox. And everyone wanted to have a "special topics" dialogue to look at recent theological and juridical scholarship on "women and religion," "homosexuality," and "transgendered sexuality." Students wanted to search out how they might approach these issues in ways that integrate new knowledge (medical, philosophical, social science), compassion, and tradition.

Beyond the Annual Meeting

Publications Committee

Francis X. Clooney, Harvard Divinity School



Francis X. Clooney, S.J., is the Parkman Professor of Divinity and Professor of Comparative Theology at Harvard Divinity School. He has written widely on Hindu religious traditions and their implications for Christian theology. He taught in the Theology Department at Boston College for over 20 years, and from 2002 to 2004 was Academic Director of the Centre for Hindu Studies at Oxford University. First president of the International Society for Hindu-Christian Studies, he is the author of numerous books, including *Seeing the Texts* (1996), winner of the Best Book Award in *Hindu-Christian Studies*, *Hindu God, Christian God* (Oxford University Press, 2001), *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother: Hindu Goddesses and the Virgin Mary* (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Father Bouchet's India* (2006), and most recently, *editor of Jesuit Postmodern: Scholarship, Vocation, and Identity in the 21st Century* (Lexington Books, 2006). Since 2003, he has been Chair of the AAR Publications Committee.

THE PUBLICATIONS Committee of the American Academy of Religion coordinates the AAR's scholarly publications program and works with Oxford University Press, the Academy's publisher, to develop policies and good practices governing the program, and recommends the nature and number of book series and special projects. The committee includes the editors for five book series and a journal:

- The Academy Series (Kimberly Connor, University of San Francisco) is the only series in the field of religious studies devoted to publishing books that originate as dissertations. It provides a venue for first-time book authors who are making the transition from graduate student to academic professional by assisting them in transforming their dissertations into books. The titles published in this series signal new directions in the field and demonstrate the vitality of graduate work in religious studies by reflecting the full range of cultural areas and methodological approaches.
- Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion (James Wetzel, Villanova University) is broadly concerned with theories of religion, the history and nature of religious studies, religious thought, theological investigation, and the philosophy of religion. Approaches to the study of religion or religious studies that tend to defy traditional disciplinary boundaries are welcome, as are more traditional studies of major thinkers and intellectual movements. The common thread is that all the texts in the series engage in critical reflection

on either a religious way of thinking or a way of thinking about religion.

- Religion, Culture, and History (Jacob Kinnard, Iliff School of Theology) publishes scholarly work that addresses the complex interrelationship between religious studies and cultural studies. It seeks to offer close, detailed, and analytical readings of the relationship between cultural phenomena and lived religious experiences on the ground, critique and criticism of existing cultural representations and practices of religion and religious experience, a format for constructive reworking and rethinking of established practices and institutions, and representations of religion in context. By emphasizing the religious dimensions of culture and the cultural dimensions of religion, the series promotes a widening and deepening of the study of "popular" culture and cultural theory, and attempts to de-center our academic discourse about religion by focusing on its particular embeddedness in a wide range of cultural phenomena.
- Teaching Religious Studies (Susan Henking, Hobart and William Smith Colleges) locates itself at the intersection of pedagogical concerns and the substantive content of religious studies. Each volume provides scholarly and pedagogic discussion about a key topic (e.g., a text, theme, or thinker) of significance for teaching and scholarship in religious studies. Taken together, the pieces collected in each volume place the topic firmly within the religious studies context and raise challenging questions about its role in teaching and in the field more generally. The Teaching Religious Studies series seeks creative ideas that represent the best of our work as teachers and scholars.
- Texts and Translations (Kevin Madigan and Anne Monius, Harvard University) is devoted to making available to the religious studies community materials that are currently inaccessible, or that would fill an important research or pedagogical need were they to be collected or translated for the first time. Because of the breadth of this mandate, the series favors no particular methodological approach, and solicits works in all areas of religious studies.
- The *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (Charles Mathewes, University of Virginia) is generally considered to be the top academic journal in the field of religious studies. Now in volume 68 and with a circulation of more than 10,000, this international quarterly journal publishes top scholarly articles that cover the full range of world religious traditions, together with provocative studies of the methodologies by which these traditions are explored. Each issue also contains a large and valuable book review section.

These five diverse and interesting series and a highly respected journal are guided by the editors who constitute the Publications Committee. Like other committees of the AAR, the Publications Committee does most of its work apart from the Annual Meeting (though it does meet at the meeting on Saturday morning). More than most committees, this is a gathering of individuals: editors who work very hard at specific tasks and, occasionally, report back to the committee for feedback, ideas, and encouragement. The

impressive work of these individual editors is further distinguished in two ways.

First, each editor works on all the details of the series with editors and staff at Oxford University Press, including particularly Cynthia Read and Theo Calderara (religion editors), Brian Hughes (marketing), and Patricia Thomas (journals). In this collaborative context, our editors and their OUP colleagues work through the whole process — from initial inquiries and submissions, through the requisite peer review and editing, up to the delivery of finished manuscripts to the press. The cooperation becomes most evident at the annual spring meeting of the committee at the OUP offices in New York, and at the Annual Meeting, where each year we have a special topics forum on publishing: "How to Publish Your Book: Advice from Oxford University Press and the AAR Book Series Editors." In recent years Cynthia Read has chaired the session with the book series editors as panelists; a great wealth of practical detail and wisdom is shared in a give-and-take discussion.

The second distinctive feature of the Publications Committee is, of course, that its members are always in wide-ranging conversations with members of the AAR — and beyond — about manuscripts that can and should find their way to publication. These editors are thus both members of the AAR and of the wider academy of which the AAR is a part.

The members of the committee work together in discussing mundane and practical matters, and we sometimes engage in more theoretical discussions. In all the decisions made regarding the various series, larger issues obviously come to the fore:


- How does one notice boundary-crossing work in the study of religion and culture?
- How does one discern when a new theological theme has come to the fore, in a way that should be highlighted in the study of religion as well?
- How does one even know where the texts are that ought to be translated from particular languages and made known to the wider English-reading audience?
- Of the many fine dissertations that are being produced each year, which should be identified as appropriate for our high-profile Academy Series?
- In our pioneering Teaching Religious Studies series, which topics most urgently deserve a book — and where is the relevant pedagogical wisdom already out there that needs to be taken into account?

More broadly, and in conversation with our OUP colleagues, we also attempt to divine the future of book and journal publishing, the demographics of on-line publication and its relation to a continuing commitment to traditional print publishing, and where the next generation of scholarship is already taking the various fields.

As committee chair, my own work is to convene meetings, set agendas, and, primarily, to admire the work of the very generous individuals who devote their time to the important and often thankless work of editing. I am also happy to make reports to the Board of Directors of the AAR, of which I am ex officio a member. But I close by letting my colleagues speak for themselves:

- **Glenn Yocum:** "Certainly, for me, the best aspects of editing *JAAR* were 1) that it required me to read widely and keep up with my field at a career stage in which it would have been easy to do otherwise, and 2) that it put me in touch with so many interesting, smart people — authors, manuscript reviewers, AAR and *JAAR* committee and board members, AAR administrators — whom I otherwise probably would not have learned to know. It was rather humbling, actually. And I derived satisfaction in assisting younger scholars getting into print."
- **Kim Connor:** "In helping emerging scholars establish a reputation in the field and demystifying the process of publication; seeing what is coming out of graduate schools and staying current; reading texts that are outside of my discipline and being challenged in that way; establishing relationships with the wider academic community by way of peer review process . . . I also think our committee and the roles we play establish a standard of academic identity that values service to the profession and embodies it in the work we do for others by way of editing. My deepest pleasure is being able to give back to the peer community of scholars for all the influence and help it has provided me over the years. I honestly believe what I do is an obligation and I appreciate the opportunity the AAR has given me to fulfill that obligation, to use the wee bit of access and influence we have for another's benefit and for the benefit of the greater good."
- **Chuck Mathewes:** "I think that a key thing to highlight is that the institutional-administrative work we do is on a continuum with some very basic intellectual challenges — about the nature of religious studies as a discipline, its relationship to other descriptions of what we do, and the labor (of love) of evaluating work that must of necessity speak beyond its subdisciplinary home base. The administrative work is not dreary or dull work performed with no intellectual interest, but on the contrary, a very stimulating part of our everyday labors."
- **Susan Henking:** "Because the series reaches across many areas, I have the opportunity to learn about what teachers/scholars are doing in our field. I meet new people who are truly committed, and whose ideas about teaching and scholarship provide me with new insight. The series is important because it is part of what the AAR does to ensure that we honor teaching and support excellence in teaching across our profession. It helps to make real the ways that good scholarship and good teaching are mutually constitutive, and tries to do this in ways that recognize the varied institutional contexts within which we teach, our varied identities, and our various approaches to our field."

And, as one editor put it, "We also get a weekend in New York City every spring!"

As James Wetzel finishes his term of office in 2006, the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series is seeking a new editor from among the AAR membership. See the announcement elsewhere in this issue of *RSN*, and consider taking up the interesting challenges of an editor's work and joining the Publications Committee. 

From the Student Desk

Inviting Religion: What Classroom Visits and Fieldwork Say about the Discipline

John Seitz, Harvard University



John Seitz is a PhD student in religion at Harvard University. He can be reached at jseitz@fas.harvard.edu.

the people in the world who are doing what we are studying. It witnesses to an appreciation for understanding religion as it works on both minds and bodies. Unfortunately, while few would suggest that the invitation model is without risks, we have reached the point where its reasonability and pedagogical solidity are taken for granted in the study of contemporary religion. Why cordon ourselves off? There are no pure fields out there anyway. We've got to interact with those we study. They don't exist just on paper or in video form.

While I can agree with these arguments, I suggest that the invitation model perpetuates a flawed message about what we are studying as students of religion. It is not the immediacy or even the participatory character of this practice that concerns me; these can be excellent tools for learning. Instead, I worry that the invitation model risks an ironic removal of religious people, and perhaps even just those religious people we are least able to understand, from our study.

In short, I believe that we unduly convert religions into performances and religious people into performers when we invite them in. It is not that religious people can't handle it; many of them of course can and

do with great skill and relish. And it's not that performance is not one way to understand religious life. But I believe that our comfort with transforming religions into performances rests on a denial of older paradigms which set up firm boundaries between ourselves and our studies. However, even if we acknowledge that the stark differences between objective and constructive projects in religion may not be as firm as they once seemed, classrooms are not religious spaces. More important, to make them so through the invitation model hinders our ability to understand religion and religious people.


This is not so much a defense of the sacredness of sacred space out there or the purity of the academic sphere as it is a suggestion that what is most interesting for scholars of religion and what is most revealing about religious lives often emerge not in the things that are said or done in ritual performance or rehearsed discourse (although these are of course interesting), but in the things that happen around, in spite of, or alongside those events. As scholars of religion we must be interested in messages and their reception. Intense engagement and boredom. Events and the rumblings around them. Civility and violence. Most important, we need to be attentive to the actions and conversations that take place as religious people negotiate the boundaries between these different orientations. Understanding the tensions, humor, and hatreds which often characterize these negotiations is exactly what the invitation model, despite its best intentions, works against.

Moreover, visitations presume that the values of mobility and pluralism are natural to religion and that religious context is fungible. In some cases these values may indeed be built into the traditions we study, but the invitation model inappropriately skews our studies in that direction (when is the last time a hate-filled exclusivist was invited to perform a religious rite in your department?). Regardless, the model seems to provide scant opportunity to explore and

consider the variety of possibilities on this score within traditions. Finally, considering some of the incongruities between academic and religious practice, religious visitors can readily seem preposterous in the eyes of our students — this is too high a price to pay for the benefit of putting a face to a tradition.

If the invitation model causes these concerns, how should we do justice to the important disciplinary commitments to understanding embodied religion and engaging contemporary practitioners? I think there is a solution in another common but also highly criticized pedagogical practice: the field project.

In this model, students venture out, respectfully enter into some particular religious world, and document their experiences. The crux of the difference is that as fieldworkers we forfeit both implicit and explicit control of the situation. Fieldworkers' tools, which are meant to shape interpretation, often prove insufficient or irrelevant; accordingly, their questions are often transformed, and their place in the world temporarily, at least, undone. As we visit and observe them, religious people are not just performers like dancers at a hotel luau; they step on and off whatever stages they might have set up for themselves. Historians fervently hope to be able to observe these kinds of movements in their work in the archives; students of contemporary religion have a unique chance to be able to observe it all the time in their interactions with living people.

Fieldwork, while not without its own well-documented liabilities and limitations, does justice to the legitimate aims of the invitation model without taking the risk of ironically unpeopling and also removing the skandalon from the traditions and people we study. Religious studies classrooms can and should open out to the world — it is just that we are the ones who should be temporarily displaced, not those whose lives and traditions we hope to understand. 

IN RECENT YEARS classroom visits by religious people have emerged as a common pedagogical practice. On the face of it, this invitation model, whether it has students listening to a talk, observing a ritual, or dancing or chanting with religious visitors, is a laudable attempt to enliven text-based studies and to listen first-hand to

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American Quarterly Requests Proposals for Special Issue on Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States

We invite submissions for a special issue of the *American Quarterly* focused on religion and politics in the United States, to be published in September 2007. In recent years, the role of religion in public life has become a matter of intense deliberation, as journalists, policymakers, and others have turned to questions ranging from the nature of Islam to debates over marriage, from the role of religion in the 2000 and 2004 elections to the religious diversity of local school districts. This special issue will examine the politics of religion, broadly defined, attending to axes of power and categories of difference, placing the United States in its global context. We are interested in two types of work: articles that examine some aspect of the diversity of contemporary religious communities and the political valences of their practices and/or beliefs; and essays that explore the methodological and disciplinary questions that American studies scholars bring to the examination of religion.

Essays should be no longer than 10,000 words, including notes. Send essays to *American Quarterly* by September 1, 2006. Please send any questions about the call for papers to american.quarterly@usc.edu. Information about *American Quarterly* and submission guidelines can be found on our Web site: www.americanquarterly.org. 

Department Meeting

Valparaiso University, Department of Theology

Frederick Niedner, Chair



Valparaiso University is a comprehensive university with five colleges, a graduate division, and a school of law. Current enrollment stands at just under 4,000. Founded by Methodist clergy in 1859 as Valparaiso Male and Female College, it went through several reorganizations over the next six decades. In 1925, an association of Lutherans purchased the campus and it has operated since then as an independent Lutheran university. From 1925 to 1960, students took both required and elective religion courses in a Department of Philosophy. An amicable split in 1960 resulted in the creation of a separate Department of Theology and the renaming of religion courses as courses in theology.

Frederick Niedner received his BA in classics from Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, Indiana (1967), MDiv (1971) and STM (1973) from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and ThD in Hebrew Bible (1979) from Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis. He accepted a one-year appointment in Valparaiso University's Department of Theology in 1973. Three decades later, Niedner has taught nearly every Bible course in the curriculum and is one of several in the rotation of Hebrew instructors. He teaches homiletics for church vocations students, has taught numerous semesters in the university's interdisciplinary first-year core program, and writes a weekly column on matters religious for a regional newspaper. Niedner became chair of the department in 2004.

THE DEPARTMENT I joined just over 30 years ago consisted of approximately 20 ordained Lutheran clergy, all of them male. A small handful held other appointments in the university, such as campus pastor, but most taught full-time. Nearly all had earned doctoral degrees. This faculty staffed necessary offerings for a three-course general education requirement in theology, plus additional courses sufficient to meet the needs of 60 to 70 majors. Areas of expertise in the department mirrored the curriculum, which in turn reflected the most common Lutheran seminary curricula of that era. The department consisted of biblical scholars, church historians, systematic theologians, and some who taught practical theology.

The bulk of the department's majors in those days were women preparing for consecration and professional service in the Lutheran Deaconess Association. Others studied theology for a wide variety of reasons, including eight to ten each year who went on to seminaries and divinity schools.

Two instructors with University of Chicago doctorates had recently joined the department

in order to staff several newly developed courses in the history of religions. That pair of colleagues proved a harbinger of things to come. Though ordained like all the others, these scholars brought with them the ethos and methods of religious studies, and their work inevitably inaugurated an era of attention to interreligious dialogue.

In the three decades during which I have gone from young rookie to resident geezer, the department has shrunk to 13 full-time colleagues and a handful of adjuncts and part-time instructors. The general education requirement in theology has dropped from three to two courses. However, thanks in part to a large bequest earmarked for preministerial student scholarships, the department has doubled its number of majors despite a slightly smaller university enrollment. It has also benefited from the establishment of endowed chairs in Christian ethics and world religions. Two additional endowed university chairs, whose holders' areas of expertise happen to fall chiefly in theology but are not housed in the department, also enrich its programs and serve its curriculum.

The large majority of full-time colleagues are rostered clergy, and a third of them are women. All but three are affiliated with Lutheran churches. Five teach biblical studies and early Christianity. Two work in the field of ethics and two others in world religions. The rest teach theological texts and issues associated with historic periods, including Medieval, Reformation, nineteenth century, American Lutheranism, and Holocaust-related studies. Adjuncts who teach on a regular basis offer courses in African-American theology and issues in psychology and religion. One occupant of a university chair teaches theology and literature, and other topics related to theology, medicine, and healing.

Valparaiso's Department of Theology places a high value on teaching. Indeed, decisions on promotion and tenure rest as much on teaching as they do on research and publication. Class sizes rarely exceed 30, and courses offered specifically for majors are generally kept at 20 or fewer.

A university review and reshaping of general education completed last year resulted in a major change for the Department of Theology. Instead of two separate cafeterias of courses available to students for meeting their two-course general education requirement in theology, one of the two courses must now, more or less, be a common course taken by every student in the university. Beginning next year, a new "Christian Tradition" course will allow students to examine the origins of Christianity, its growth and development into multiple forms and traditions, and its many ways of interacting with host cultures. Students may still select from a wide array of offerings in order to complete their second general education requirement in theology.

The department offers two distinct majors in theology. To fulfill the requirements of the traditional 30-hour major, students complete courses in biblical studies, history of the church and its thought, contemporary religion and ethics, history of religions, and a senior seminar. Students seeking a degree in Youth, Family, and Education Ministry complete a 54-hour major that includes a theolo-

In the course of last fall's AAR/SBL meetings, I met a fellow who turned out to be a long-time department chair at another institution. As we shared stories, and I allowed as how I would rather be teaching full-time, he asked rhetorically, 'Chairing is foot-washing ministry, isn't it?' It didn't take much reflection to realize the accuracy of that description, only I had never thought to frame it that way before.

gy component similar to the traditional major, plus courses offered by the Departments of Communication, Education, Psychology, Social Work, and Sociology.

In addition to staffing its own offerings, Department of Theology faculty teach courses in the university's honors college. They also staff all Hebrew language courses in the Department of Foreign Languages and provide the interdisciplinary first-year core program with the equivalent of one to two FTE's per year.

Several developments in recent years have significantly changed the intellectual climate of the campus. A new facility for the arts, a new library and electronic information center, plus a concerted effort to raise the average SAT and ACT scores of incoming students, have made noticeable differences in the makeup of the student body. The small-time party-school reputation the university once held has essentially vanished, along with all the fraternities who have disbanded in recent years as a consequence of losing their liability insurance.

Nothing has changed the Department of Theology's work more than the influx of students who intend ultimately to enter some kind of full-time church work after graduating. Over the past decade, an unexpected multimillion-dollar gift intended to assist students in getting to the next level of study for church work without accumulating significant debt has both built the number of majors in theology and supported programming that has helped to create a sense of community among those students. To cite an example of what that community spirit can generate, last November nearly a dozen Valparaiso juniors and seniors traveled to Philadelphia to attend the sessions of the AAR/SBL Annual Meetings.


The changing world scene has begun to reveal other new and significant challenges to my department's work. In my 30 years I have seen the minority and international populations among students shift in unpredictable rhythms. Once we had many Iranian students who came to study sciences and engineering, and they added much to general education theology courses. Then came the hostage crisis. Eventually the Muslim population grew again as students from oil-rich Gulf States came to study engineering and business. After September 2001 they vanished, but now a new Muslim clientele has returned. This time, however, they have very different attitudes about taking required courses that focus on the history and theology of Christianity. While we have

never sought to proselytize through our academic offerings and scrupulously avoid the appearance of doing so, especially among Muslim students, we face some new and different challenges in creating an atmosphere of meaningful, interreligious dialogue. We are determined to meet these challenges.

The department will soon face a major rebuilding of personnel, as nearly half its full-time members will reach retirement age in the next five years. It has also limped along for the past few years without a colleague whose work could focus exclusively on the Lutheran Reformation tradition critical to the institution's identity and mission. It seems odd actually, if not scandalous, that a Lutheran university serious about its theological heritage would attract endowed chairs in ethics and world religions, but not in studies so close to its history and core values.

Whenever the chair raises that topic with university administrators, the response from higher up comes in the form of encouragement to go out and raise the funds to make it possible. That, of course, is the new charge to anyone holding an administrative post in the university. Just as support staffs have vanished thanks to the advent of computers, and sophisticated copy machines have replaced those aromatic old ditto machines (along with the personnel who know how to baby them), so deans and chairs who merely administer have gone the way of the spotted owl. We're all fundraisers now, and we also work for the admissions officers more than ever before.

In the course of last fall's AAR/SBL meetings, I met a fellow who turned out to be a long-time department chair at another institution. As we shared stories, and I allowed as how I would rather be teaching full-time, he asked rhetorically, "Chairing is foot-washing ministry, isn't it?" It didn't take much reflection to realize the accuracy of that description, only I had never thought to frame it that way before. The point is not that the work is properly the service of slaves, although sometimes that seems the case. The real point is that most of the work gets done under the table and no one else sees it happening. Yet without that work, everyone's efforts slow down and their opportunities diminish. On the days when I do not even get to, much less accomplish, the things I had planned, I try to remember that conversation.

Perhaps I should set a towel and basin atop my filing cabinet to remind me of my current vocation. 

Research Briefing

Interest in the Intersection: Where Buddhism and the United States Meet

Sid Brown, Sewanee: The University of the South



After earning an MA from Florida State University and a PhD from the University of Virginia, Sid Brown found her way to Sewanee: The University of the South. Her first book, *The Journey of One Buddhist Nun: Even against the Wind, is a deeply contextualized biography of a Thai nun.*

BETWEEN 30 and 40 students crowded the windowless college classroom. Each had brought a container: cardboard boxes, grocery bags, huge plastic boxes with lids. The contents of their boxes made up their “Self-Proclamation Displays,” and that day each had five minutes to explain them. The boxes contained books, clothing, keys, jewelry, all manner of things. (What would you put in a box to illustrate who you are? How big would the box have to be?)

Ajahn (an honorific often used for teachers and monks) Wiichit, a 30-something Thai-born monk who commuted to class from his Theravada Buddhist temple outside Phoenix, Promkunaram Temple, put one thing in his smallish box. Smiling impishly, he told me what it was: “The Buddha.”

When it came time for Ajahn Wiichit to explain his box, he simply lifted out the statue of the Buddha, set it on the table in front of the class, and awaited questions. As far as Ajahn Wiichit was concerned, the statue said it all, just as the Buddha had.

The room was silent.

The room was silent for so many reasons. Most of the other students were in their late teens and early 20s and their boxes held whole railway stations of stuff — stuff they felt could define them in significant, clear, comprehensive ways. Some would have put their cars in the box if they could have. In fact, many included their car keys to symbolize their closeness to their vehicles and how their cars define them. Perhaps the bigger question for most of the people in the room was what to leave out of the box. Besides Ajahn Wiichit, no other person in the room had just one thing in his/her box.

The room was silent also because none of the other students were dressed in yellow robes, their right shoulders bare, their demeanor quiet, reserved, attentive. Most of the students wanted some sort of attention; most gave their own attention only sporadically. The room was silent because none of the other students included any symbol from any religion besides Christianity and even then only a very few brought in a cross or a Bible.

The room was silent because no one knew quite what to do with this.

The room was silent because no one knew how good this monk’s English might be — whether he could understand their questions.


Members of the class were startled, awkward, looking at this open-faced, bald, gentle brown man who sat in front of them wearing his yellow robes, quietly explaining

how at age 14 he had left his family and gone to live in a community of monks near his home, taking the vows of a novice. He ordained at 20 and had been a monk ever since, living the last three years in Phoenix, Arizona.

I stayed at Promkunaram Temple for five months to collect stories such as this one of Ajahn Wiichit, the stories of temple-goers (stories of how the temple came to be, what the members of the temple do and why, what problems they struggle to solve) — be they Thai monks on a contractual three-year stay, non-Thai converts, Thai wives of military men, ex-monks now embracing family life and monks-to-be beginning to spurn it, or born and raised Buddhists from other countries. These stories reveal particularities of this multifaceted country and show just how challenged democracy is to truly include its more recent members. The stories and understandings of these diverse populations make up the heartbeat of Promkunaram Temple, a heartbeat with a new and fascinating rhythm to join the rhythms of other religious heartbeats in this “land of the free.” These new heartbeats evidence the arrival of many people from countries such as Thailand, in which Christianity is the religion of a minority. The United States has more non-Christians than ever before. As for Theravada Buddhism, approximately 600,000 people in the United States identified themselves as racially or ethnically associated with countries where that religion defines and flourishes. As Wendy Cadge notes in her *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America*, “While not everyone who was born in or identifies ethnically with one of these countries is Buddhist, many are,” and many are beginning Buddhist organizations in the United States. (20).

So, the students in Ajahn Wiichit’s classroom sat in silence, considering, often for the first time in their lives, the profound difference not just of living a life primarily informed by religious practices and values, but of the profound differences between some Buddhist traditions and what they know about religion. They began then to see that other religions are not just outdated relics that will be tossed aside with the further growth of Christianity. Nor are other religions just tweaked-up Christianity. In fact, they began to see that their definition of religion as “belief in God” just won’t do, that some religions hardly concern themselves with belief at all. Some of America’s latest arrivals embrace a form of religion that will force these students to reconsider entirely what religion is and what religious diversity means.

It’s a little difficult to accept easily the U.S. national motto since the 1950s, “In God We Trust,” when one’s own religion or the religion of one’s classmate holds up no God, certainly no creator God such as found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in which to trust.

I am deeply grateful to the American Academy of Religion and to the Appalachian College Association, both of which made possible my stay in and collection of stories from the many people of Promkunaram Temple. I am now working on the book (appealing, I hope, to scholars and nonscholars alike) that will weave these stories into a consideration of Buddhism and the United States and its concomitant factors: shifts in immigration patterns and their results, religion in America in general, the contributing factors of race and ethnicity, and the possible implications for democracy of greater religious diversity. 

DE LA TORRE, from p.10

process. And even if hired because one has out-published all white competitors, one will still be made to feel that, in reality, one does not deserve the position. The zero-sum rule assumes that all faculty positions belong to white colleagues and that any position given to a person of color is a position being taken away from a more deserving white candidate.

From the first day a student of color makes the conscious effort to do scholarship from the perspective of marginalized communities, her or his work will be viewed with suspicion. Most of the time, the scholarship done from marginalized perspectives is seen as being too subjective, lacking the Eurocentric call for objectivity. Yet, as we all know, what Euro-Americans normalized and legitimized as objective is in truth their own masked subjectivity. Nevertheless, because they set the academic canon and serve as gatekeepers into the academy, Euro-American colleagues might view as inferior the work of scholars of color who wish to ground their work within their own cultural norms.


Many or most will encounter some form of ignorance, as opposed to the assumption that all will encounter direct discrimination. To “see” scholars of color through the eyes of the dominant culture either consciously or unconsciously constructs obstacles that hinder the scholars’ ability to succeed within academia. Scholars of color wishing to flourish in academia who are not fully aware of these obstacles run the risk of derailing their careers, regardless of the depth of their scholastic acumen. And while more seasoned scholars of color may be available to provide guidance and helpful hints, all too often, because of institutional racism, few are found among campuses.

For this reason, the AAR Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession labored diligently to produce a career guide geared to provide scholars of color with crucial information on surviving within the academy. In the spring of 2005, I was given the honor of editing a guide that would move beyond the task of simply obtaining a teaching position — a guide designed to explore the entire academic career. Written by, to, and for schol-

ars of color, each chapter elucidates typical hurdles and situations normally faced due to ignorance, institutionalized racism, and/or ethnic discrimination. The guide is designed to be intra-active, allowing the reader to post their own insights and contributions to the discourse so that others can benefit.

The AAR Career Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession can be accessed at www.aarweb.org/about/board/rem/careerguide. The guide is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1, *Introduction* by Kwok Pui Lan, concentrates on the identity of scholars of color, exploring the importance of balancing academic careers with self-care. Chapter 2, *Graduate School* by Andrea Smith, discusses concerns and strategies students of color can expect to face as they navigate through the doctoral process. Chapter 3, *Job Search* by Mary Churchill and Miguel A. De La Torre, is a literal nuts-and-bolts guide on how to search, prepare, apply, and interview for job openings. Chapter 4, *Working toward Tenure*, by John J. Thatamanil, Anthony Pinn, and Rosetta Rose, explores strategies and pitfalls for those seeking tenure. Chapter 5, *Post*

Tenure by Peter J. Paris, explores the challenges and stresses faced for the academic period between tenure and retirement. Chapter 6, *Alternative Career Options* by Rita Nakashima Brock, is geared for those interested in career options outside tenure-track academic teaching positions. Chapter 7, *Dealing with Difficult Issues* by Miguel A. De La Torre, explores issues of discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Chapter 8, *Are You Considering the Hire of Racial/Ethnic Scholars* by Lynn Westfield, is the only chapter written specifically to white administrators in predominantly white institutions, prodding them with questions they should consider if they hope to attract and retain scholars of color. And finally, Chapter 9, *Suggested Resources*, serves as a bibliography.

We believe that the guide provides essential information for both scholars of color and for those within the dominant culture who wish to make their institutions more inclusive. But don’t take our word for it — check out the guide for yourself! 

Passages: Life in Retirement

Christine Downing, *Pacifica Graduate Institute*



Christine Downing, Professor Emerita, San Diego State University, served as the first woman president of the AAR in 1974. Her undergraduate degree in literature is from Swarthmore College, and her doctoral degree in religion and culture from Drew University. She taught for just over a decade at Rutgers before joining the Department of Religious Studies at SDSU as its chair in 1975. Her 13 books include *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*, *Journey through Menopause*, *Women's Mysteries, Myths and Mysteries of Same Sex Love*, and *The Long Journey Home*. Since retiring from SDSU in 1992, she has been associated with Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara.

RSN: Tell us about the types of activities you have been involved in since you retired.

Downing: To explain what I've been up to since I retired probably means beginning with how I came to be retired. You may remember that back in 1992 the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State University (which I was then chairing) was threatened with dissolution in response to a budget crisis affecting the whole California State University system. Eventually this dire threat was rescinded; instead the three members of the faculty who were already 60 were told that if we would voluntarily accept a fairly attractive early retirement package, the university would not be forced to fire any of the younger faculty in the department. It was blackmail in a sense. Anyway, the other two and I agreed. I retired, and my partner, River Malcolm, and I decided this meant it was time for us to move to the house that we had bought several years earlier as a long-in-the-future retirement home on Orcas Island near the Canadian border in Washington State.

Well, it took us a couple of years to fully extricate ourselves from our lives in southern California — River is a family therapist and one can't just abandon patients overnight — so it wasn't until September 1994 that we and our dog and three cats actually made the move. We hadn't even fully unpacked our books when I received a phone call from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara inviting me to teach in their newly opened doctoral program in mythological studies. (This wasn't completely out of the blue — I'd been lec-

turing in their depth psychology program off and on since 1986, and David Miller and I had played a major role in helping the school put together the curriculum for the new program.) I agreed to come down and teach a course that next summer, loved doing so, and have been pretty fully involved in teaching there every fall ever since.

So you might say I am — and am not — retired! Which is exactly how I would want it!

RSN: Could you give us some examples of your most enjoyable activities?

Downing: Orcas Island is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Just being here is itself a deep joy — as is taking the same three-mile walk every morning around the lake five minutes from our home with our two Samoyeds (the dog we came here with died some years ago), and discovering how it is never the same walk. We call our home "SoundScape" because from our deck when it's sunny (as it often is, contrary to many people's assumptions) or from our living room when it is not, we have a spectacular view of the Sound and the mountains beyond. Imagine reading — which I do a lot of, perhaps 100 novels a year and lots of professional reading as well — in such a setting! We both love to cook (though this is something River has gotten into only during the almost 25 years we've been together) and probably chose this particular house as much for its wonderful kitchen as for any other of its features.

And of course, there are children and grandchildren scattered all around the country — well, really, on both coasts. Having time for extended visits with them (five of the former, seven of the latter, ranging in age from 6 to 20) is a gift — as is also time spent with my almost-103-year-old mother, and with my siblings, and with River's family.

In May 2004 and again last year, I took a group of 30 (mostly Pacifica alumni and students) to Greece for two weeks. This is something students had encouraged me to do for years; I'd always resisted, thinking I'd hate it. But it turns out I love it — and will go again in May 2006.

RSN: Who have been your role models during your retirement?

Downing: I'm not sure I really have any. My retirement has been so ad hoc — not really planned for ahead and still not really being planned very much while underway. I'm what I call an "Aphrodite person" — living very much in response to the call of the moment (not always easy for my partner.) So that I don't even have a plan for how long I'll continue teaching, even though I'll be turning 75 this March. But one of the things I love about being an academic is that one doesn't have to quit "cold turkey" — that one can taper off. So I guess my role models are people who keep doing what they love as long as they continue to love it — as Freud continued to see patients and to write even when exiled in London and quite ill during that last year of his life.

“I have a son who is an academic, which has made me even more aware than I would be anyway of how much more demanding are the pressures now than when I began my career, on not just junior faculty but also senior faculty: more classes to teach, often larger classes, more committee work — but most dramatically, more pressure to publish.”

RSN: What has given you the greatest satisfaction in your retirement?

Downing: That I still have such zest — for teaching, for writing, for family, for friends.

RSN: What types of reading or research are you doing in retirement?

Downing: Lots of fiction — one of the things that gives me most hope for our species is how many fine young novelists there are: writers who care about language, about looking at the hard parts of being alive, about how difficult love is and how essential. Lots of mysteries, too.

But also serious engagement with the scholarly literature of the most recent 15 years or so in areas I'd neglected during my last years at SDSU: Greek tragedy, Ovid, the Hebrew Bible, Freud, the Holocaust.

I've published two collections of essays in the last few years: *The Luxury of Afterwards: The Christine Downing Lectures at SDSU 1995–2004* and *Preludes: Essays on the Ludic Imagination, 1961–1981* — and another, *Gleanings: Essays, 1982–2006*, will come out sometime this spring. Supposedly I'm also working on a memoir, *ReMembered Lives*, for which I've had a contract for almost a decade — but I seem to work on research for my teaching instead of finishing it.

RSN: Tell us some more about your teaching.

Downing: As I noted earlier, I teach each fall at Pacifica, mostly in the mythological studies program and am probably enjoying this teaching more than I have ever enjoyed teaching before — and I have always loved teaching. In this program I have the opportunity to teach what I'm most interested in and know the most about, without disguising it under the rubric of religious studies (as at SDSU) or psychological theory (as at California School of Professional Psychology, where I also had a full-time appointment during my years in San Diego). At the moment I am most excited about a new course I'll be teaching next fall: it will have three parts — Goethe's *Faust*, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and *Zarathustra*, and Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*.

RSN: If you could design your perfect retirement, what would it look like?

Downing: For now, what I have! But I do also have a vision of an alternative — for later perhaps, or for a year or so pretty soon, after which I might return to the

present pattern. I'd like to spend a year, or a good part of one, in Europe — perhaps in the country of my birth, Germany, or perhaps in Greece or Spain. But I'd want to do so with River — and she is 16 years younger than I and not yet ready to retire — so it's not clear if this will actually happen.

RSN: Knowing what you know now, what might you have done differently during your academic career?

Downing: Not much, maybe nothing. I've always been grateful that I had my children early, before I even went to graduate school. I've felt incredibly lucky that I did my graduate work in a very interdisciplinary program at Drew University, even though I enrolled there simply because it was within a half hour's drive of where I, my husband, and our five very young children were living. I'm glad, too, that I had the courage to give up a tenured professorship at a fairly prestigious East Coast university to come to California after our children were launched. I do sometimes wish I'd been required — or even encouraged — to learn Greek and Hebrew while I was in school. It would have been a blessing to have had older women as role models — but somehow it worked out that women a bit younger than I, women such as Carol Christ and Karen Brown, earlier attuned to a feminist perspective than I, were more than adequate substitutes.

RSN: What has been the most significant change in your life since you retired?

Downing: Coming to live on Orcas Island, back in a world where there are seasons! Not having to wake up to an alarm clock. Being in better shape physically than perhaps ever before (those daily walks around the lake).

RSN: If you could give advice to your younger colleagues who are still teaching, what would it be?

Downing: Don't work so hard! I have a son who is an academic, which has made me even more aware than I would be anyway of how much more demanding are the pressures now than when I began my career, on not just junior faculty but also senior faculty: more classes to teach, often larger classes, more committee work — but most dramatically, more pressure to publish. When I started out, my summers were *mine*: to travel, to read casually, to enjoy my family. Of course, no one could really afford to heed this advice! It requires changes not at the individual but at a more systemic level. RSN

WEBB, from p.22

Learning from my travels

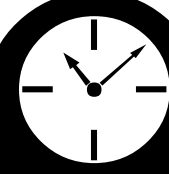
My students made it possible for me to make personal contact with local leaders and institutions, mosques, churches, universities, and pesantren schools. The pesantren schools have been the solution for educating the masses in Indonesia — but the schools vary in terms of their programs' orientation, economic and educational resources, philosophies, and size. In the pesantrens I visited in Yogyakarta, I saw the poverty and spartan living conditions of the youth, as well as good will and hospitality. I spoke to the girl students about their

studies and aspirations. ("I want to learn science as well as religion.") I visited the largest pesantren in Indonesia — Situbondo, East Java, which includes a new center for fiqh (interpretation of Islamic law). This pesantren is a city of youth — 15,000 students ages 6–25, with boys' and girls' dorms in different sections of the city. Lectures were attended by both sexes, who sat on different sides of the room or auditorium. I was invited to give two lectures: one on current discussions of Sufism and one on relations between the United States and Islam. Students were lively, bold, and many times expressed their appreciation of having "an American" come to their school and "take them seriously," and of being able

to share honestly on the state of Islamic/American relations as well as on popular culture in America and Indonesia. I also had fun with them. I was asked to give a "motivational speech" to about 50 girls in the evening! I had no idea what to do. They were a very lively, sweet group of girls — ages 8 to 19. I asked them what they wanted to talk about; they asked me questions about my family, work, children, hobbies. I asked them about their aspirations and favorite subjects in school. Then they asked me to sing to them. (Indonesians love to sing!) I decided "why not ask them to chant the opening chapter of the Qur'an with me?" They were shocked; then they yelled with glee; then they wanted

another song. The only thing I could think to ask was if they knew "Do, a deer, a female deer . . ." from *The Sound of Music*; I had heard it used in an Indonesian television commercial and thought they might know it. They reminded me that they did not have a television, and . . . would I teach them? So we sang "Julie Andrews"; then they sang qasidas (devotional songs in honor of Muhammad) and told me they liked theologian Al-Ghazzali because "he liked music."

Now I am back in the United States and have to answer questions about "why Muslims hate Americans." Boy, do we need dialogue here. RSN



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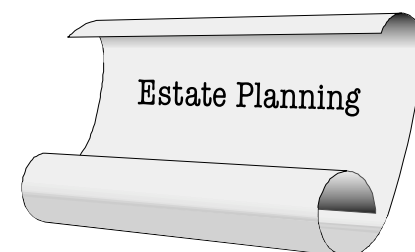
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