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[Region's Website](#)

For details on the AAR Western Region, see <http://www.wecsor.org/about.php> .

The 2013 Regional Meeting was a great success! It was held from March 9–11, 2013, at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

The conference theme was "The Religion and Public Life." For the 2013 conference theme we took a cue from the 2008 AAR publication, "[The Religion Major and Liberal Education](#) ." That white paper tied its vision of a robust future for religious studies to the recognition on many fronts that religion is "an inescapable part" of public life around the globe. How do we in the discipline of religious studies represent that public dimension of religion? The program units making up the Western Region took up this question in a variety of ways. Some focused on

controversies related to religion and politics in the western United States (e.g., same sex marriage or immigration reform), others turned to various regions of the world (e.g., the "Arab Spring"), or to historical antecedents (e.g., the Jesuits' entry into China). Topics raised were richly diverse, including ecology, pluralism, the current "Mormon moment," terrorism, and popular culture, among others.

The program units reflected on how we frame questions and analyses about the ways religion plays out in various public settings. Do we, for instance, tend to privilege particular public expressions of religion as normative or paradigmatic, or even problematic? How is our work shaped by the institutions in which we teach and their calls to, for example, cultivate a critical tolerance of diverse religions or to help students form a religiously informed public voice? By what criteria do we select among traditions, texts, histories, institutions, events, and figures to develop analyses of religion's intersection with politics? And perhaps location does matter; how do distinctive features of our region (California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawai'i, and the Pacific Islands) inform how we approach this theme, and how should it be different from the approach developed by colleagues in other parts of this country and/or other regions in the world?

Amina Wadud, author of *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1999), gave the AAR plenary address.

Sections at the Regional Annual Meeting

- Buddhist Studies
- Catholic Studies
- Ecology and Religion
- Education and Workshops
- Ethics
- Goddess Studies
- Graduate Student Professional Development
- History of Christianity
- Indigenous Religions
- Islamic Studies
- Jewish Studies
- Latino/a Religions
- Nineteenth Century
- Philosophy of Religion
- Psychology, Culture, and Religion
- Queer Studies in Religion
- Religion and Social Sciences
- Religion and the Arts
- Religion in America
- Religion, Literature, and Film

- Religions of Asia
- Womanist/Pan-African
- Women and Religion