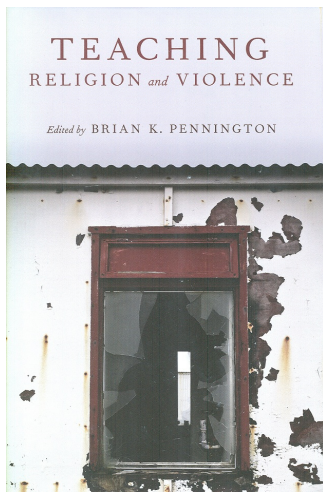


Welcome to The Book Corner. In each March and October issue, we will feature books that have recently been published by Oxford University Press in the various AAR/OUP book series. The books featured in this issue were published between January and June 2012. For more books published in the various series, visit www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books.

Pennington, Brian, ed. *Teaching Religion and Violence*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

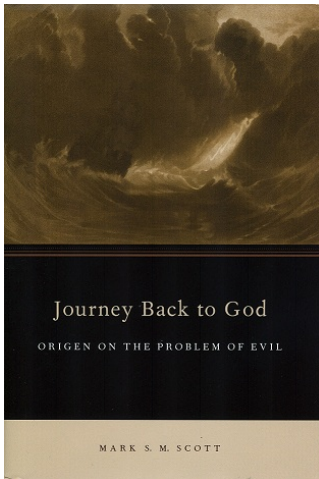


Many people now see religious violence as one of the defining characteristics of the modern world. Instructors are often asked about it in their courses that deal with religion. Classroom discussion of violence committed in the name of religion can either open the door to a more subtle appreciation of complex and divisive social realities or allow students to display the kind of ignorance, prejudice, and recalcitrance that can derail critical analysis. The etiology of religious violence requires careful distinctions that instructors must work hard to communicate even in the best of classroom circumstances.

Teaching Religion and Violence represents the accumulated professional insights and experiences of expert college and university instructors who teach and write about the intersections of religion and violence. Some contributors summarize the teachings of the major religious traditions of the world on such topics as warfare, sacrifice, terrorism, and the coercive propagation of a faith. They examine the histories of the traditions they discuss as well as recent global events to provide teachers the resources and classroom strategies that are effective for cultivating critical thinking and interdisciplinary inquiry among college students about these topics



Scott, Mark. *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil*. Oxford University Press, 2012.



Journey Back to God book explores Origen of Alexandria's creative, complex, and controversial treatment of the problem of evil. It argues that his layered cosmology functions as a theodicy that deciphers deeper meaning beneath cosmic disparity. Origen asks: why does God create a world where some suffer more than others? On the surface, the unfair arrangement of the world defies theological coherence. In order to defend divine justice against the charge of cosmic mismanagement, Origen develops a theological cosmology that explains the ontological status and origin of evil as well as its cosmic implications.

Origen's theodicy hinges on the journey of the soul back to God. Its themes correlate with the soul's creation, fall and descent into materiality, gradual purification, and eventual divinization. The world, for Origen, functions as a school and hospital for the soul where it undergoes the necessary education and purgation. Origen carefully calibrates his cosmology and theology. He portrays God as a compassionate and judicious teacher, physician, and father who employs suffering for

