

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Professor Constance Furey

Greetings from Sycamore Hall! The redwoods and dogwoods are blooming outside and I write with plenty of news to share, about wonderful students, exciting research, significant transitions—and a special request to consider contributing to the Todd Sullivan Fund, to support the research of our intrepid graduate students.

First, the transitions. We bid farewell this year to several important members of the department. Connie May, who kept us all calm and organized during her five years as the departmental secretary, left to join her husband, who has a new job in Fort Wayne. Abby Gitlitz, our unflappable events coordinator, now directs the Bloomington Creative Glass Center, which she founded. In May, we celebrated the graduation of another terrific class of undergraduate majors and minors, as well as two MA's and one PhD student. Shaul Magid, the Schottenstein Professor of Jewish Studies and Religious Studies has accepted a position at Dartmouth, and it is with sadness that we announce the death of Gerald Larson, an emeritus professor who passed away in April. The contributions of both of these wonderful professors are highlighted in separate columns.

Meanwhile, the department continues to grow. Welcome additions include Sonya Spencer, who just joined us as a Departmental Secretary; our new Communications and Events Coordinator, Martha Michelson, an accomplished graphic designer who is responsible for the new colors in our hallways and the new look of our website and publicity materials; and Laura Carlson Hasler, a graduate of Yale University and author of a forthcoming book on empire, archives, trauma, and writing in the ancient world. Hasler joins us as the Alvin H. Rosenfeld Professor of Hebrew Bible. Happily Jim Ackerman, who has decamped for San Diego, was able to join us for one of the Hebrew Bible candidate lectures. This new position ensures that his legacy lives on.

Several awards and promotions confirm the quality of the research and teaching mission at the heart of everything we do. Winni Sullivan was named a Provost Professor. Amali Ibrahim was awarded tenure. Jeremy Schott and Rebecca Manring received promotions to the rank of Full Professor. In December, the Department was awarded a one million dollar, five year grant for the "Being Human" project, and now houses the newly founded Center for Religion and the Human.

Finally, our graduate students do much with little. They teach, they learn new languages, they participate in challenging seminars, they do independent research, they write impressive dissertations, and they secure grants, fellowships and tenure track jobs. They do all this while being supported by stipends lower than those at almost every peer institution. This year it has become clear to me that our most pressing financial need is for additional funds to support research trips and conference travel for these students. Any amount you are able to give to the Todd Sullivan Fund, established to honor the memory of a beloved graduate student, will ensure that students can worry less about money and more about the important work they are doing. Many thanks to those of you who have already given so generously, and to all of you for considering this request for additional funds!

SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

Gifts to IU Religious Studies greatly benefit our graduate & undergraduate students. To give online, please visit our website.

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR 2019
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GRADUATES**

Ph.D.

Aziza Shanazarova

M.A.

Justin Brown
Josie Wenig

Religious Studies Majors

Benjamin Haddon
Camden Hill
Jordan Kipp

Farzana Memon
Hanna Stalder
Desi Stephens

Religious Studies Minors

Sophia Bird
George Clark
Victoria Crouse
Renee Fields
Jacob Gilley
Christine Greco
Emily Hannon
Athanasios Liodos
Kiersten Mann

Erin McCreedy
Michael Melfi
Mark Novakovich
Robert Pendergrass
Michael Riddle
Sabrina Ruiz
Nikhil Shah
Hannah Shirley
Emily Vetne

PROMOTIONS & PUBLICATIONS



JEREMY SCHOTT TO FULL PROFESSOR

Jeremy's teaching and research lie at the intersections of Religious Studies, Ancient History, Classical Studies, Philosophy, and Literature. His courses focus on the cultural, social, and literary histories of religion and religions in the late ancient and early medieval Mediterranean and Near East. Jeremy currently serves as our Director of Graduate Studies.



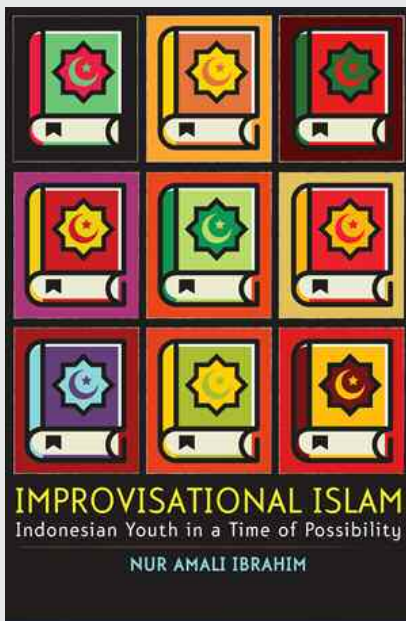
REBECCA MANNING TO FULL PROFESSOR

Rebecca specializes in Asian languages and literature (Sanskrit, Bengali), religions of South Asia, religious community, and iconography. She teaches courses in Sanskrit, women in South Asian religious traditions, religion in South Asian cinema, and literatures of India in translation. Rebecca has a dual appointment with Religious Studies and the Dhar India Studies Program.

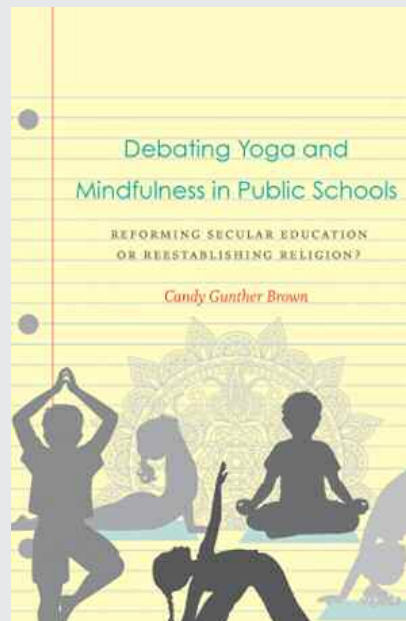


AMALI IBRAHIM TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

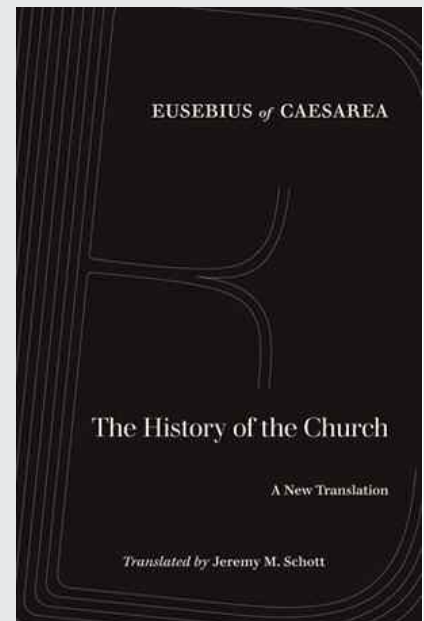
Amali is an anthropologist of religion and politics who teaches in both the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of International Studies. His research interests focus on Islam in the modern world, Islam in Indonesia, pedagogy and socialization, social movements, and religion and media.



Nur Amali Ibrahim



Candy Brown



Jeremy Schott

IU RELIGIOUS STUDIES AWARDED \$1M LUCE FOUNDATION GRANT

Thanks to the hard work of professors Constance Furey, Lisa Sideris, and Winnifred Sullivan, IU Religious Studies has been awarded a \$1 million grant by the Henry Luce Foundation to support our "Being Human" project, as well as other research and outreach initiatives. The grant is funded through the Luce Foundation's Theology Program. IU is one of only a small number of research institutions to receive grants through this program. The "Being Human" project will study what makes us human—from the terrible to the playful, in different places and times, in areas from imaginative arts to empirical sciences.

The question of what it means to be human is an age-old one that is made newly urgent by advances in technology, artificial intelligence, and fast-moving social and political change. "The question of being human is, among other things, a religious question," said Constance Furey, co-recipient of the grant and chair of the Department of Religious Studies. "Because theology and religion are inspired as much by what we don't know as what we do, they enable the sort of open-minded thinking we urgently need right now, about what it means to be a human living on and with the Earth," said Furey.

In conjunction with the five-year grant, and with additional support from the College of Arts and Sciences and a \$500,000 commitment from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, a new IU Bloomington Center for Religion and the Human will host the "Being Human" project. Professor Sullivan will serve as the center's first director. "Together, the new center and the 'Being Human' grant will enable and support innovative, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural scholarship on religion for the benefit of researchers and students at IU Bloomington, as well for those studying religion in institutions throughout the country and beyond," said Sullivan, Professor of Religious Studies and an Affiliate Professor at IU Bloomington's Maurer School of Law. "Our aim is to provide material and intellectual support for innovative scholarship, cultivate the next generation of thinkers and demonstrate that scholarly conversations can inspire and sustain multiple forms of public engagement," said Sideris, Professor of Religious Studies, who will serve as Associate Director of the Center for Religion and the Human, and oversee the Religion, Science and Technology programming.

The grant will also involve IU Bloomington scholars from the departments of English, Anthropology, History and Biology, as well as The Media School, the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, and the Integrated Program in the Environment. The grant's initiatives include:

Religion, Science and Technology examines how science and technology, as forces shaping and shaped by religion, are impacting humanity and nature.

American Religion broadens the conversation about religion in the Americas to include emerging and often marginalized scholarship, through the creation of a new journal, a digital platform and various public events.

Teaching Religion in Public (TRIP) features collaborative meetings between faculty, students and people teaching religion in public settings outside the university, such as high schools and nonprofit organizations.

Emerging Scholars Program consists of a series of four summer institutes for multidisciplinary scholars from across the United States working on religion.



WINNIFRED SULLIVAN RECEIVES PROVOST PROFESSOR AWARD

Congratulations to Winnifred Sullivan who just received the Provost Professor Award! This award is intended to bring significant honor to IU faculty members who have achieved local, national, and international distinction in both teaching and research.

Winni is interested in religion as a broad and complex social and cultural phenomenon that both generates law and is regulated by law. Her particular research interest is in understanding the phenomenology of religion under the modern rule of law. She has training in law and in religious studies and has taught both in law school and in religion departments. She practiced law after graduating from law school before returning to graduate school to study religion. Her training in the academic study of religion is in two fields, American religious history and the comparative study of religion. Winni's focus on the intersection of religion and law in the U.S. within a broader comparative field, both theoretically and cross-culturally. Within legal studies, her work falls broadly in socio-legal and critical legal studies.

FACULTY NEWS



STEVE SELKA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA

This April, Stephen Selka participated in an event hosted by the Weatherhead Research Cluster on Religion and Public Life in Africa and the Americas at Harvard University. The event drew scholars from around the US to discuss intersections of religion and the public sphere. Professor Selka presented on a panel about Black Evangelicalism in the African Diaspora, and his paper highlighted some of the issues and challenges of talking about black evangelicalism across the Americas. Drawing on encounters between Afro-Brazilians and African Americans in Brazil, Professor Selka focused on the ways in which the category of black evangelicalism is negotiated and contested through transnational dialogue.



COOPER HARRISS RECEIVES TRUSTEES TEACHING AWARD

This year's Trustees Teaching Award goes to Cooper Harriss whose teaching has been praised by colleagues and students alike. Cooper conveys his passion for the material he teaches in undergraduate and graduate classes courses on topics ranging from sports and religion to Zora Neale Hurston, from Disaster and Irony in American Fiction to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. In courses that integrate religion, literature, race studies, and critical theory, Cooper manages to keep dark and often contentious topics fun and exciting, teaching always, as one student observed, "with student learning as his paramount concern."



IU GATEWAY: MEXICO CITY

This March, Cooper Harriss and Sarah Imhoff hosted a research workshop at the IU Gateway Campus in Mexico City, "Re-Centering American Religion" built on momentum from their "Taking Exception" project of 2017-18, which sought to imagine the study of American Religion outside the framework of US exceptionalism. On the campus of Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, invited scholars from across the Americas, including our own Winnifred Sullivan, circulated an image or a sound to introduce important issues in their current work and to spur on reflection about common themes and pressure points that these discussions raise.

CANDY BROWN'S BOOK TOUR

Candy Brown published a new book this year, *Debating Yoga and Mindfulness in Public Schools: Reforming Secular Education or Reestablishing Religion?* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019). Professor Brown has been blogging about the book and related news stories at *Psychology Today* and she will be signing books at Barnes & Noble in Encinitas (San Diego), California, on July 13th. There will also be an Author-Meets-Critics session on Professor Brown's book at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting in San Diego next November.

JERUSALEM: THE HOLY CITY

Jason Mokhtarian just completed a travel companion course to Jerusalem in May. As a holy city to three religions, Jerusalem is one of the world's most frequented tourist and pilgrimage cities. Regardless of personal background, touring Jerusalem is transformative: walking the Via Dolorosa, the route Jesus took to his crucifixion; touching the aged stones of the Western Wall, a 2,000-year-old structure where ancient Jews prayed; seeing the Al-Aqsa Mosque where Islamic tradition holds the Prophet Muhammed ascended to heaven—these are moments and places that create an unparalleled experience.

NEW FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP

A New Frontiers Exploratory Travel Fellowship was awarded to Jeremy Schott. He will be traveling to several European archives to begin work on a study of Byzantine reading practices using ancient Greek and early Christian literature in the 9th-13th centuries. This project aims to make a contribution to the history of Byzantine book culture by studying the material traces of Byzantine reading practices. In addition to shedding important new light on the ways these readers used copies of ancient Greek and early Christian literature, this project will consider the ways in which modern readings of these texts depend on and/or diverge from Byzantine practices.

FACULTY NEWS



Professor Lisa Sideris

LISA SIDERIS ON RELIGION, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, AND HER 2020 GIFFORD LECTURE

The year 2020 will mark the bicentenary of Adam Lord Gifford, in whose name the prominent Gifford Lecture series was set up in the late nineteenth century. To mark this occasion, the University of Aberdeen is organizing a series of six lectures to commemorate the event during the 2020-21 academic year. It is a sign of her international stature that Professor Lisa Sideris was selected to be one of the speakers in this prestigious series.

Professor Sideris has become very interested in an image of “the human” that appears again and again across a whole range of literatures on the Anthropocene, astrobiology, and geo-engineering or de-extinction proposals, where humans are cast as a kind of world-making or world-shaping creature par excellence. She points out that one way this idea gets clothed in contemporary science is in the concept of niche construction that has become very popular among some scientists. On this view, other organisms shape their environments (beavers and earthworms are common examples) but the claim is that humans do this in ways that are “exceptional” and “unprecedented,” both in terms of sheer scale—like the whole planet!—and in terms of the uniquely self-conscious way in which we shape the environment.

Professor Sideris emphasizes that this view entails an investment in human distinctiveness or exceptionalism, in an optimistic narrative of the human as the exceptionally creative world-making species. She is suspicious of this, not only because of the human chauvinism it entails but because it too easily ratifies behaviors that created our environmental crisis in the first place. “Of course, the scientists who write this way wouldn’t call what they’re doing theology, but it sure looks that way,” she recently commented in an interview about her Gifford Lecture.

HABERMAN IN THE HIMALAYAS

David Haberman will spend the summer high in the central Himalayas studying climate change and Hinduism supported by an American Institute of Indian Studies research fellowship. This is an extension of Professor Haberman’s work with an international team of scholars researching religion and climate change in the global south, which has included gatherings in Washington D.C.; New Delhi, India; Lima, Peru; and Port of Spain, Trinidad. This work was funded by a three-year Henry Luce Foundation grant through American University’s Center for Latin American Studies program. As a result of this research, Professor Haberman has edited a volume under contract with Indiana University Press titled, *Understanding Climate Change Through Religious Lifeworlds*.

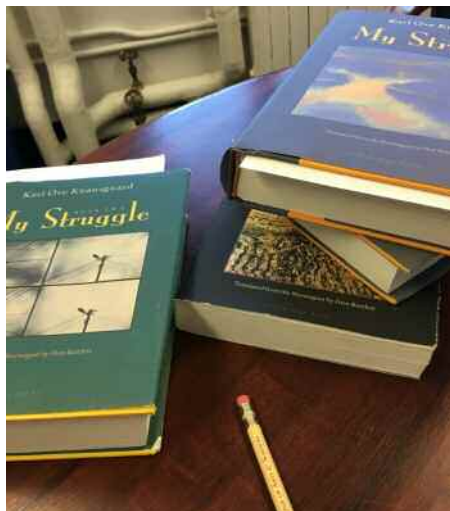
HEATHER BLAIR ABROAD

Heather Blair organized a panel titled “Empathy, Morality, and Community Formation in Asian Children’s Literature” for the 2019 Children’s Literature Association National Conference, which will take place in Indianapolis June 13-15. The panel brings together work on Taiwan, Bengal, Korea, and Japan. From there, Professor Blair will head to Japan to do some reconnaissance work for a future study abroad course on design and sustainability in Japan. The course is tentatively titled “Making Place: Heritage, Community, Art” and will focus on the city of Hiroshima and on Naoshima, Teshima, and Inujima in Japan’s Inland Sea. Professor Blair will also be giving a paper titled “Art / Heritage / Literature: Seeing the Heike in Picturebooks” at the Asia Studies Conference Japan in Tokyo at the end of June.

MICHAEL ING “IN TRANSLATION”

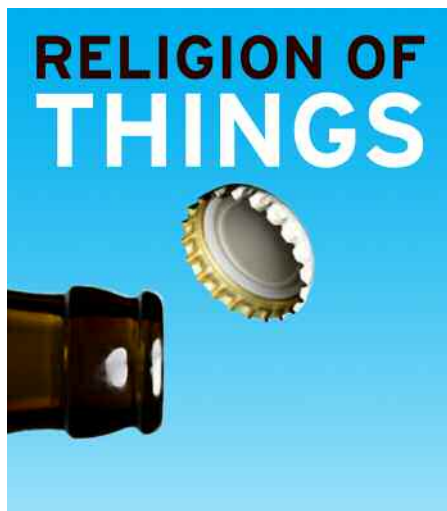
Michael Ing and graduate student Naiyi Hsu are completing their translation of an early Chinese text called the *Da Dai Liji* (Dai De’s Records of Ritual). Dai De was an official in the Han dynasty during the first century BCE. He is credited with compiling a text that stresses the importance of proper governance based largely on material from the time of Confucius (5th century BCE). *Da Dai Liji* is one of the few classical texts from the time period that has not been translated into English. The notion of ritual in the title refers to a series of attitudes and practices that extend beyond what the word “ritual” usually refers to in English. In this context it includes ceremonies, customs, governmental policies, and any other practices or plans that might lead to building a good society.

FACULTY NEWS



THE RELIGION OF KARL OVE KNAUSGAARD

Min Kamp (*My Struggle* in English), a six-volume novel by Karl Ove Knausgaard is being recognized as one of the most significant literary works of the twenty-first century. "The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard" is an ambitious multi-year project undertaken by a small group of scholars including IU professors Winni Sullivan and Cooper Harriss, who are committed to reading *My Struggle* and other related works by Knausgaard. Each of the participants has quite different training and expertise in religious studies, social scientific as well as humanist, ranging from philosophy of art to the sociology of contemporary spirituality. They have now met four times (in Jan. 2016 and Jan. 2017 at Columbia University and in Jan. 2018 and Jan. 2019 at IUB). Focused on selected passages from the novel and previously circulated essays by each participant, these conversations have been intense and productive, now leading to a jointly authored publication projected for 2020. A final meeting in Bergen, Norway, where one of the novels takes place, is planned for Aug. 2019. This project is jointly funded by Columbia University and Indiana University.



RELIGION OF THINGS

Funded by a Public Humanities Project Grant from the IU Arts and Humanities Council, the Religion of Things reimagines how we talk and think about religion in public. Most often, religious studies scholars interact with the public in the context of religious groups and communities—talks in churches and other institutions or discussions of specific religious and people and contexts through civic engagement. These are viable and fruitful pursuits, but the Religion of Things strives for something different, something that permits members of the public to encounter religious studies at work, recognizing in the process the myriad ways that religion is inextricable from our daily lives regardless of what we profess or practice (or do not profess or practice). To do this, we invite scholars to choose a thing—a common object—whose unexpected religious dimensions and contexts they relate in an accessible way to an audience in a non-university space (a coffeeshop and a brewpub, thus far).



FROM WISCONSIN TO ST. MARY OF EGYPT

In May, Sonia Velázquez completed a year-long residential fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she used her time to finish the manuscript of her first book, a study of beauty and holiness through the figure of the holy harlot Saint Mary of Egypt, titled *Promiscuous Grace: Re-Imagining Beauty and Holiness with Saint Mary of Egypt*. While in residence, she was also invited by the graduate students of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UW to speak about her research on early modern religion and the arts, focusing on the curious convergence of gambling and conversion in the dramatic oeuvre of Miguel de Cervantes, Caravaggio's canvas *The Cardsharps*, and Blaise Pascal's Wager. In addition to thinking about grace, beauty, and holiness, she became a convert to fried cheese curds and enjoyed walking on a frozen lake.

FACULTY NEWS



RELIGIONS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

Bringing together their combined expertise, professors Lisa Sideris and Patrick Lally Michelson presented a co-written paper at the department's Spring 2019 faculty colloquium. The paper explored Russian Orthodox and European Romantic influences on present-day Anthropocene studies. What Sideris and Michelson demonstrate in their work, which they intend to submit for publication later this year, is that the ways in which advocates of the "good" Anthropocene often talk about humanity's role in solving planetary changes are drawn from specific currents in modern Christian thinking, including heroic, Trinitarian, and soteriological narratives. The paradox here is that advocates of the "good" Anthropocene regularly offer their stories as exclusively scientific, empirical, and materialistic, despite the fact that many of these stories are fully, if anthropocentrically, Christian. The colloquium was hosted by Professor Rebecca Manring, and was attended by faculty members and graduate students from the department.



MEMORIES OF VIOLENCE IN JERUSALEM

Jason Mokhtarian has organized a Themester event for Fall 2019. This public lecture by renowned archaeologist Oded Lipschits, Director of the Institute for Archaeology at Tel Aviv University, explores the concept of religious memory as it relates to holy sites in Jerusalem. Indeed, the old city of Jerusalem is perhaps the most concentrated area of collective religious memory on the planet. Measuring only 0.35 square miles in size, the walled city is home to a large number of holy sites for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike—from the Western Wall where Jews mourn the destruction of the ancient Temple, to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Jesus was laid in tomb, to the Dome of the Rock where Muhammad experienced his night journey. As this lecture demonstrates, these holy places are ripe for deep reflection about the role of memory in religious life and the tensions between archaeology, literature, and lived experience. This event is sponsored by the Olamot Center for Scholarly and Cultural and Exchange with Israel.



BETWEEN RELIGION AND RUSSIA

In October 2018, Patrick Lally Michelson returned to his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, to deliver a lecture titled "Orthodox Impossible: Russian History and the Limits of Studying Religion." The lecture, which was hosted by UW's Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia, focused on a key problem in the study of Russian Orthodoxy, namely the assumption that there is a single, self-evident, irreducible religion called Russian Orthodoxy and that the task of the scholar is to "protect" it from all sorts of other things, such as politics, culture, society, and supposedly inauthentic forms of Russian Orthodoxy. Instead, Michelson proposed that scholars who study the history of Russian Orthodoxy approach its many practices, manifestations, texts, and concepts not as singularity or essence, but as variety and contestation.

In the fall of 2019, Michelson will lead a reading group at IU's Center for Theoretical Inquiry in the Humanities. The reading group, which is composed of faculty members and graduate students from across IU's many units, will focus on the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), a Russian thinker who greatly influenced various fields of academic study, including religious studies, linguistic anthropology, semiotics, philosophy, and literary criticism. The reading group is accompanied by a symposium of invited speakers. The symposium is scheduled for early December.



UNDERGRADUATE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION RECEPTION





UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE COURSES



FACULTY NEWS

TEACHING RELIGION in PUBLIC (TRiP)

Spring 2019 was the planning semester for the Being Human project. TRiP, one of the project's four components, set the stage for subsequent work with a series of collaborative meetings between faculty and graduate students. The aim was to reflect on diverse experiences of teaching religion both within and outside the public university classroom; to create a distinct sort of public among ourselves; and to reimagine teaching religion in public as a shared activity rather than a transmission of expertise. Our first gathering was jointly led by Josie Wenig, who had just returned from the Weaving Knowledge Workshop in Thailand, and Naiyi Hsu, a graduate student from Taiwan who specializes in Confucian and Daoist texts. We watched a video from Josie's workshop, read a short piece about "world-weaving", and discussed Japan's Imperial Rescript. This pairing of seemingly unrelated topics, none of which are necessarily or obviously religious, prompted a wide-ranging discussion about what teaching involves, where religion can be found, and how encountering religion outside the classroom might change the way we teach and learn. These discussions continued in five subsequent TRiP workshops during the Spring semester:

John Walsh, Associate Professor of Information and Library Science at IU, presented "Spider-Man and Swinburne: Modeling Text Corpora in Pop Culture and Victorian Poetics." Professor Walsh discussed ways to make (arguably religious) archives accessible and analyzable to public audiences through digital means.

Jolyon Thomas, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, presented "Making Morality: Moral Education in Japanese Public Schools, Postwar and Present." Professor Thomas discussed the ways in which Japanese public education has sought to shape morality from the 1950s to present day.

Richard Nance, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at IU, presented "Difficulty." Professor Nance asked: Teaching is hard - should we try to make things easier, either for ourselves or for our students? What is gained, and what is lost, when we paper over—or when we avoid papering over—the hard stuff? In this workshop, Professor Nance explored a series of exhibits that embody, point to, or create different forms of difficulty—forms that may have something to teach us about our own predispositions and temptations as teachers and students of religion.

Meng Zhang, graduate student in Religious Studies at IU, presented "Teaching Religion in Public: the Case of Yuelu Academy." Meng discussed the Yuelu Academy, which hosts three departments: the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, the Department of History, and the Department of Archeology. Her discussion focused on the Academy's understanding of the goal of education together with its self-identification and public engagement. She asked: Do we have a similar or different understanding of the goal of education? Can we do similar things when teaching religion in public?

Erin Parks, IU Religious Studies 2007 Graduate and local athletic strength and conditioning coach, presented "Teaching the Volatile to the Vulnerable: Athletics and Religion in Public." Erin shared her experience of personally shifting from an "idea presenter" in the lives of children to her current role as an "in the difficulty" mentor to over 160 of our community's children. She asked: When we give adolescents the responsibility of living in the tension of uncertainty, exposing the monumental task of defining one's own framework for decision making, do our responsibilities change as educators? How do we explain volatility as a prolific, dynamic environment and not simply destruction of boundaries and knowledge? Should we?

The department will continue these important and provocative discussions next year, in thematic semester discussions each led by a pair of faculty and graduate students.



POLITICS OF RELIGION AT HOME AND ABROAD

This two-day symposium was held in early May at Indiana University. Led by Professor Elizabeth Hurd (Northwestern University) and our own Winnifred Sullivan, the "At Home and Abroad" project studies the intersection of politics, law, and religion at the dynamic pivot between the "domestic" and the "foreign" at a moment when the political role of religion is under renewed scrutiny, and the nature and the role of the nation-state is under revision. The goal is to understand and make visible the structure of the capacity of religion(s) to support widely diverse projects. With the generous support of the Luce Foundation's Initiative on Religion in International Affairs and Northwestern's Buffett Institute for Global Studies, "At Home and Abroad" has involved a number of activities including a curated series on The Immanent Frame titled "Theologies of American Exceptionalism," several workshops focusing on various perspectives on the inside/outside framework culminating in two book manuscripts, support for a postdoctoral fellow, summer graduate student research grants, and the assembling of a set of online, open access teaching modules, each centered around a different legal case involving law and religion in a various parts of the world. The capstone conference featured discussions of two manuscripts that have emerged from the project, a panel on "Views from Europe," a presentation of emerging scholarship in the field, and a panel featuring new additions to the Teaching Law & Religion Case Archive.

FACULTY NEWS



FORTHCOMING FROM J. KAMERON CARTER

J. Kameron Carter, who joined the IU Religious Studies faculty in 2018, finished two books while on research leave. The first, *The Racial Sacred: White Supremacy as Political Theology* (being published by Yale University Press), examines fascism's resurgence in democratic societies during the age of Trump. Professor Carter makes the case that this fascism is bound up with white supremacy or, more simply, with whiteness. But also, he shows that whiteness is a political economy of power that, undergirded by a wayward practice of the sacred, regulates desire and the possibilities of life together or assembly and gathering. He calls this operation "white supremacy as political theology." The second book grows out of *The Racial Sacred*. It's called *Black Rapture: A Poetics of the Sacred*. In it Professor Carter charts an alternative imagination of the sacred and thus for being together, for getting together, for life together with each other and with the earth itself. The understanding of the sacred and thus of the social that Professor Carter lays out in *Black Rapture* is informed by the black radical tradition.

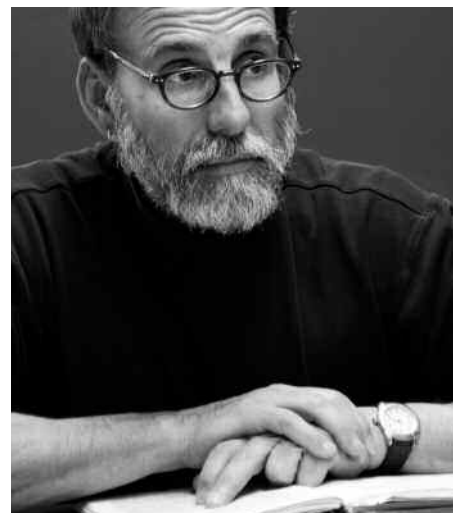


LAURA CARLSON HASLER JOINS IU

We are happy to announce that Laura Carlson Hasler has accepted the offer to join Religious Studies as an assistant professor and Alvin H. Rosenfeld Chair in Hebrew Bible, with a joint appointment in Jewish Studies.

Laura, a native of Maine, received her doctorate in Hebrew Bible from Yale's Religious Studies Department and was most recently a visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at Bates College, where she taught courses in Judaism and Christianity. Her research identifies a culturally potent mode of writing history in ancient Judaism, one that symbolizes the reassembly of knowledge and community after significant loss. Her teaching likewise draws attention to the cultural power that inheres within ancient Jewish texts and their interpretation, moving students to examine and judiciously wield their own interpretive authority.

Laura recently organized an interdisciplinary conference at Yale that investigated the intertwined concepts of normativity, sacred texts, and political authority within the humanities.



GOODBYE TO SHAUL MAGID

After having spent 15 years at IU, Shaul Magid, the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Professor of Jewish Studies and Religious Studies, recently accepted a job at Dartmouth. Shaul's publications include books on Hasidic thought as well as a provocative study of American Post-Judaism in America. He is currently completing a book entitled *Meir Kahane: The Rise and Fall of an American Jewish Survivalist*, and a book on the Satmar branch of Hasidism, *A Jewish Political Theology of the Anti-Christ: Joel Teitelbaum of Satmar and his Battle Against Zionism*. His book *From Metaphysics to Midrash: Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbala* (2008) won the American Academy of Religion Book Award for Excellence in Religion in the Textual Studies Category.

As this range of publications attests, Shaul has always been as inquisitive as he is learned, able to ask great questions of colleagues, and inspired by the multi-disciplinary nature of religious studies. He will be missed by us all!

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

THE DEVONIA & STEVE STEIN FUND FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN RELIGIONS

The Stein Fellowships in the Study of American Religions is for graduate students working in the Religion in the Americas field. It is awarded to graduate students presenting their research at an academic conference or traveling to an archive or other research site for a clearly defined purpose during the 2019-2020 academic year or following summer. This year, the Stein Fund Fellowships were awarded to Jacob Boss and Hannah Garvey.

Jacob Boss was awarded the Devonia and Steve Stein Fellowship for his research in grassroots transhumanism. He'll travel to Toronto to present his work at the biennial meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion. He will also perform dissertation fieldwork this summer at GrindFest—"the premier event for the do-it-yourself human augmentation movement"—in Tehachapi, California and in the Biohacking Village at DEFCON in Las Vegas.

Hannah Garvey was awarded the Devonia and Steve Stein Fellowship to pursue archival work concerning W.E.B. DuBois's "data portraits"—charts that chronicle Black American life at the turn of the twentieth century and the subject of her paper "The Form of the Color Line: DuBoisian Charts, Antiabsorption, and the Strange Meaning of Being Black"—at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the W.E.B. DuBois Center at UMass-Amherst.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Graduate Prize for Teaching Excellence is given to two graduate students this year, Hannah Garvey and Brian Hillman.

Hannah Garvey, as instructors and students well know, is an outstanding Religious Studies teacher. She is personable, engaging, and dynamic in the classroom, where she regularly brings students into worlds of religion that they did not know existed. Hannah's teaching is highly regarded by students, who learn from her that religion is not just a thing to be named, questioned, and classified, but also an experience communicated through art, beauty, stories, performance, and provocation. Hannah is also a great classroom ambassador for Religious Studies, mainly by showing students that the study of religion expands their horizons and enriches their lives.

Brian Hillman is, as one Religious Studies professor has noted, a "model assistant instructor, one of the very best." Brian's commitment to teaching is almost unsurpassed. He is dedicated, thoughtful, and thorough. As both an AI and a lecturer, Brian draws upon his deep knowledge of religious studies, Judaism, European intellectual traditions, and popular culture (from the NBA to *The Big Lebowski*, from Travis Scott to Roxane Gay) to teach students about the many ways religion shapes and is shaped by us. Perhaps more than anything else, Brian teaches students to question what they know.

GRADUATE ESSAY PRIZE

The graduate committee unanimously awarded the winner of the graduate essay prize to Midadh Khalid, for her paper entitled "The Gap between Confronting Muslim Art and Contemporary Aesthetics." The paper examines how modern art museums in the US, in light of contemporary discourses of Islamophobia, are attempting to promote cross-cultural understanding by showcasing the work of Muslim artists. Through a close analysis of these exhibitions, Khalid argues that the museums present the art works by Muslim artists as valuable to the Western public in so far as they depict a uniquely Islamic sensibility, rather than a secular sensibility. Despite their attempt to foster unity and tolerance, Khalid suggests that the museums ultimately reify and re-inscribe the differences between Islam and the West. This is a timely, sophisticated, and eloquent analysis of the limits of progressive politics, and most deserving of the graduate essay prize.

GRANT AWARDS

Maggie Slaughter has received an International Enhancement Grant from IU to support internationally focused graduate activities. She will be using this award to attend the Galway Archaeological Field School for a summer program on medieval architecture in the Republic of Ireland.

Emily Stratton, has been awarded a Grant-in-Aid of Doctoral Research Award for her research in Accra, Ghana that focuses on the lives of young unemployed and underemployed men.

GRSA CONFERENCE 2019

The Graduate Religious Studies Association hosted its annual conference on March 22-23, 2019. The conference, entitled "Heresies: Dissonance and Disturbance," sought to answer the questions, What is heresy? Who is a heretic? The answers are familiar—the heretical is a belief, a lay practice, or an individual that threatens orthodoxy. Heresy is thus a mode of negotiating boundaries and managing disturbance. Rather than disposing of the concept of "heresy," this conference pondered whether and how heresies might be leveraged with renewed analytic, historical, and ethical force. The keynote was given by Dr. Jason Ananda Josephson Storm of Williams College. Students from IU, Purdue University, University of Notre Dame, Princeton University, and UC Davis presented papers in addition to two round table discussions, all which resulted in lively discussion and helped to make it a very successful event.



GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

TAYLOR THOMAS TRAVELS ACROSS RUSSIA

Taylor traveled to the Altai mountains in southern Siberia as part of a folklore expedition, living in a village that was settled by several Old Believer families following the 17th-century schism in the Russian Orthodox Church. She primarily met with older women (*babushkas*), learning their stories and customs surrounding the Night of Ivan Kupala, a festival that occurs annually to celebrate the harvest, combining local Slavic folklore and Russian Orthodox belief. Taylor then spent a couple of weeks on the Trans Siberian Railroad, traveling to Siberia and Lake Baikal before ending in Moscow for a few weeks to visit museums and archives, and meeting with local scholars to discuss her research interests.



JACOB BOSS ATTENDS BDYHAX

At the end of February, Jacob Boss flew to Austin, Texas, to attend BDYHAX, the BodyHacking Conference, a three-day event featuring workshops, panels, keynotes, demonstrations, and art exhibits for human augmentation researchers and enthusiasts. The event took place at a legendary music venue in Austin that was repurposed for a weekend of futuristic exploration. Jacob drank clarity boosting mushroom tea, saw the power of human echolocation, watched cyborgs manipulate objects with magnets implanted in their bodies, attended a meditation battle league that used brain-scanning headsets, and took part in a cymatic yantra (worth a google!). He enjoyed the hospitality of his cybernetically enhanced friends, who took care of him and made sure he was included in all the fun, on-site and off. BDYHAX was the first of several site visits Jacob will make this year as part of his dissertation work on the do-it-yourself human augmentation movement.



MATT GRAHAM VISITS SWEDEN

Matt traveled to Uppsala, Sweden, in September 2018 where he presented a paper entitled "Truth at the Edge of Hermeneutics" at the Conference for the International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture. A chief characteristic of the conference was its foregrounding of literature as a productive and necessary domain for a robust analysis of religion.

It was Matt's first time in Scandinavia and he made the most of it. He was able to extend the trip and spend time in the small town of Drobak, Norway which lies directly on the Oslofjord before heading to Oslo and then to Stockholm. Many beautiful sights -and meals- were enjoyed along the way.



JOSIE WENIG VISITS THAILAND

In January, Josie travelled to Chiang Mai, Thailand, in order to participate in Columbia University's Weaving Knowledge workshop, an extension of the Making and Knowing project. Josie spent two weeks in BanRaiJaiSook to learn Lanna (Northern Thai) techniques of spinning, dyeing, and weaving from master weavers. With vastly different kinds of material and linguistic literacy, participants gathered with a common conviction: that doing not only enriches our thinking, but it is itself a kind of cognition and epistemology. Josie then travelled north to mountain villages, where they learned how to warp and use a back-strap loom. Masters teach back-strap weaving and other techniques with few words, but watchful eyes and correcting hands. The language barrier between Josie and the teachers only dramatized the difficulty inherent in teaching and learning any craft process—one must learn through embodied attempt, rather than linguistic transmission and mastery.

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS



SENIOR HONORS THESIS AWARD

The Senior Honors Thesis Award goes to Benjamin Haddon. Ben's thesis unpacks the ideologies that shape how we think about musical continuity and novelty. The variety of metal called Doom, for example, is often criticized as endlessly derivative. Yet Ben emphasizes that when viewed through a critical lens, the Doom scene is "comparable to any other: a massive body of work that has been contributed to by creators at all degrees on a spectrum of varying levels of personal sincerity, independently-inspired originality, technical skill or proficiency, and awareness of other influential works being created within the community and outside of it." From this point of departure, Ben examines "the ways in which this underground music scene's art meaningfully engages with and immerses itself in dramatic narratives of tragedy, horror, and transcendence."

BILL GALLAGHER ESSAY CONTEST

Bill Gallagher went to college to study business and currently owns a successful petroleum distribution company in Denver, Colorado. It was the academic study of religion, however, that he credits with preparing him for the complexity of the world he navigates daily. This prompted him to establish a contest at IU's Department of Religious Studies to encourage students to learn more about religion.

1st Prize: Caleb Shriner

The 2019 Gallagher prize, in the amount of \$500, goes to Caleb Shriner for "Meanings in the Mandala: A Tantric Framework for Vulnerability." Comments from the prize committee: "Caleb's paper takes the concept, practice, and experience of vulnerability and explores the ways in which Hindu rituals and traditions giving meaning to it. It thoughtfully examines experiences of god possession, whereby the human body becomes a space occupied by the divine and the divine becomes embodied in space. Perhaps most provocatively, Caleb's study of vulnerability illuminates the ways in which ambiguity, danger, and impurity, things which we often seek to avoid, might just be catalysts for the thing that many of us are looking for: transcendence. Within a highly competitive field of submissions to the Gallagher Prize, this paper stands above the others."

2nd Prize: Anna Groover

The second prize this year, in the amount of \$300, goes to Anna Groover for "An Inherited Sense of Lack: Memes in an Age of Despair." Comments from the prize committee: "Anna expertly brings together a complex of seemingly unrelated themes and subjects—in this case, literary theory, generational anxiety, economic recession, and internet memes—to explore one of the central concerns of religion: despair and hopelessness. Anna's paper is a wonderful example of how the study of religion, broadly construed, captures what it means to find hope in humor, verbal playfulness, and the everydayness of online communications and social media, as well as what it means to share not just a collective experience, but also to share—in both senses of the word—a collective, meaningful response to that experience."

3rd Prize: Hannah Shirley

The third prize, in the amount of \$200, goes to Hannah Shirley for "Picturebooks and Contemporary Paganism." Comments from the prize committee: "Hannah's wonderfully written and thought-provoking paper marshals a variety of ethnographic studies and theoretical works, as well as visual images, to explore the ways in which North American pagans, a religious group regularly marginalized in the United States, uses a mainstream medium—in this case, children's picture books—to convey the values, norms, and best practices of paganism to its youngest members,

URSA
 UNDERGRADUATE
 RELIGIOUS
 STUDIES
 ASSOCIATION

URSA SYMPOSIUM 2019

The Undergraduate Religious Studies Association hosted its annual conference on March 29-30, 2019. The conference invited undergraduate students to discuss and rethink the many ways in which we study religion. The symposium's central aim was interdisciplinary conversation. The symposium was divided into three panels: "Religion in the Public Sphere: Bringing the Holy out of Hiding," "Devout Doctrines: The Tangible and the Immaterial's Intersection with Us," and "Religion in the Real World: Cultural Practices, Contested and Accepted."

The symposium, organized and chaired by URSA's president and vice president, Baker Nasser and Lucy Kidwell, drew students from Brown University, Columbia University and Jewish Theological Seminary, University of Florida as well as DePauw University, IUPUI and our own Indiana University. The keynote address was given by Nur Amali Ibrahim, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, entitled "The Time I Met the Prophet Muhammad: Reflections on Religion and Politics."

ALUMNI NEWS



SARAH DEES JOINS IOWA STATE

Congratulations to IU Religious Studies alumna (2015), Sarah Dees, who will be joining the faculty of Iowa State University this fall as a tenure track Assistant Professor of American Religions specializing in Indigenous religions. Most recently, Sarah was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Religion, Politics and Global Affairs and visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Northwestern University, where she played an important role in the At Home and Abroad project.



AZIZA SHANAZAROVA TO PITTSBURGH

Aziza Shanazarova received a University Center for International Studies/Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities from the University of Pittsburgh, where she will have a joint appointment with the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of History. Aziza also received a Visiting Research Fellowship at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies to conduct research on her first book project "Female Religiosity and Gender History in Early Modern Central Asia." Aziza defends her dissertation this summer.



IN MEMORIAM - ROB SCHOON

We are saddened to inform you of the passing of Robert Schoon on January 29, 2019. His undergraduate honors thesis, "The New Evolution of God: Prospects for Theistic Evolution" showcased his talents as a writer and thinker. After graduating from IU in 2009, Rob earned a Masters degree in Journalism at New York University. He returned to Bloomington and was employed as a Communications Specialist at IU. He also worked as a writer and editor, in addition to producing programming for Bloomington's community radio station, WFHB. Rob will be sadly missed by many in Bloomington and the IU community.



IN MEMORIAM - GERALD LARSON

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of the Dhar India Studies Program's founding director and first Rabindranath Tagore Professor of Indian Cultures and Civilization, Gerald Larson.

Gerry came to IU in 1995 after retiring from a long career at the University of California-Santa Barbara. He not only was our first director, but he travelled relentlessly around the state of Indiana furthering the cause of the academic study of the subcontinent and raising funds to ensure that IU could continue to host India Studies for many years to come. He worked with Indiana's Indian community, university leadership, faculty and students to create the foundation of what we now enjoy today as Dhar India Studies, creating a PhD minor and undergraduate major and minor, as well as a certificate program. He developed the first iteration of the India Studies "core course," required for the major and the minor, as well as several other courses to add to the repertoire of Hindi and Sanskrit (and now, also Bengali and Urdu). Within a few years the program was vibrant enough to separate from its first home in the Religious Studies Department to stand on its own. Gerry retired (again) from IU as Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies in 2003 and continued to visit Bloomington from time to time to give a lecture and visit with his many friends in the area.

Gerry was a great friend to many of us here at IU and India Studies and will be sorely missed.