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## UNITS

### African Diaspora Religions Unit

#### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

#### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

[The Power of Our Archive: Co-Sponsored with Queer Studies in Religion, and potentially the African Religions Unit and Afro-American Religious History Unit](#)

"I urge States to take concrete steps, with the full participation of people of African descent and their communities, to tackle old and new forms of racial discrimination; and to dismantle entrenched structural and institutional racism." --- UN Secretary-General António Guterres

The year 2024 marks the close of the United Nation's decades-long proclamation to celebrate people of African descent as representatives of a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. 2024 also heralds the 150th anniversary of Afro-Puerto Rican, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, whose collection of Black literature, enslaved peoples' narratives, artwork, artifacts, and diasporic materials has become foremost in the study of Black life. Finally, Lydia Cabrera's iconic work, *El Monte: Notes on the Religions, Magic, and Folklore of the Black and Creole People of Cuba* will turn 70, in 2024; and the first English translation is now available.

Throughout African Diaspora history there have been archives, inviting deep exploration into the unknown, the obscured, and the known. Sometimes hidden in plain sight, including Obeah oaths in the narrative of Tacky's Rebellion and Jamaica's Baptist War; juridical, birth, and death records compared against oral histories, historical art, and illustration of colonial encounters that include but are not limited to narratives of race, ethnicity, gender, class, dis/ability, sexuality/ies under an array of micro and macro violent technologies (fear, shame, physical, psychological and psychosocial abuse); and the Colored Conventions Project (1830) or the Early Caribbean Digital Archives (2011).

This panel seeks to explore the idea, presence, and importance of archives among us when all too often our archives were oral and aural, normatively shaped, vanished, or erased.

[Sustaining Environmental Change-I](#)  
[Co-Sponsored with Space and Place in Religion](#)

This panel asks: in the face of disaster, firestorms, floods, turbulent weather systems, and globalized systems of environmental racism, how do we make sense of climate change, survival of ourselves and the planet, and environmental justice concerning African/Diaspora cosmology and cultural and spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices? Environmental Activist Wangari Maathai in her 2004 Nobel Prize Acceptance Lecture in Oslo states: "Today we are faced with a

challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its life support system... We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wombs and, in the process, heal our own. Indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder." The Yoruba concept of Àṣẹ champions the power of rocks, trees, wind, thunder, waterfalls, and lightning as things, as cipher or orixá constitute the indigenous ecologies that support our lives and culture. Currently, the earth is in an apparent radical transition, resisting and responding to human impact in a myriad of tumultuous ways. Maathai points to Yoruba indigenous culture's cosmological care for the ecology, which, like many indigenous communities, was disrupted through development projects and colonial encounters. Yet, it is clear that, if we do not collectively alter our ways of being by supporting the futurity of ecology and sustainability in the continuation of human and planetary existence, we will evidence greater loss of life, our planetary home, and culture.

## Sustaining Environmental Change II

"There is another step...we have to take another step." – Nikki Giovanni.

In this applied performative session, we will address and engage catastrophe as a conversation with California's shifting ecologies and Diaspora culture and knowledge. A catastrophe signals an event producing a sudden and violent change, producing a subversion of the order or system of things. Since the extraction from our homelands sent Africans to new environs, some chose ontological resistance and quickly "flew home", lest we forget the souls who left Ibo Landing. Leaning into submission was not an option.

Making sense of catastrophic situations invites critical engagement (= paradigmatic change), and radical solutions that acknowledge the situation's gravity without succumbing to victimology by harnessing agency as a mode of survival. Given the threats and vagaries of the present, what futures can historically considered marginalized, vanished, and/or erased peoples imagine? We invite practitioners, artists, and activists to bear witness and help us imagine ways and means of surmounting catastrophe as African descendant peoples.

## Statement of Purpose

The African Diaspora Religions Unit aims to engage a wide range of disciplines and a variety of scholars who work on different aspects of African Diaspora religions. It considers the linguistic and cultural complexities of the African Diaspora, the importance of African traditional religions, Afro-Christianity, Afro-Islam, Afro-Asia, and Afro-Judaism, in the way they have and continue to inform an understanding of Africa, and also the way they have and continue to shape the religious landscape of the Americas, Europe, Asia and South Asia.

Our unit explores broad geographies, histories, and cultures of people of African descent and the way they shape the religious landscape, in the Caribbean and the Americas, Europe, and

Asia. We define “Diaspora” as the spread and dispersal of people of African descent — both forced and voluntary — through the slave trade, imperial and colonial displacements, and postcolonial migrations. This Unit emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and confluent/convergent [spiritual] belief systems which is central to its vision.

## Chairs

- [Scott Barton, University of Notre Dame](#)  
[scott.barton@nyu.edu](mailto:scott.barton@nyu.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Carol Marie Webster, Independent Scholar](#)  
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1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## African Religions Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Our Unit encourages critical inquiry about religions originating and/or practiced in Africa. Proposals should go beyond description; they should critically engage the conceptual tools and methods employed in analysis. The steering committee will evaluate the merit of each proposal based on the clarity of its thesis, the strength of the evidence referenced, and the quality of the conclusions drawn from it in terms of both style and substance. For the 2024 Annual Meeting, we particularly invite papers as well as panel proposals that respond to the following themes relevant to any region of the African continent and its diverse religious cultures:

#### Increasing Prominence of Africa in Global Practice of Islam and Christianity

By 2060, Africa is projected to be the demographic center of Christianity and a major center of Islam, with over 40% of Christians living on the continent and 27% of the global Muslim population residing in sub-Saharan Africa alone. When combined with North African Muslims, the continent will compose a plurality of the global Muslim population as well. Given the increasingly prominent role African Christians and Muslims will play in the global practice of both traditions and the relative lack of attention given to this significant development, this panel seeks papers that analyze the past, present, and future place of African Muslims and Christians within the broader context of the world’s two most widely practiced religions. This panel invites papers that consider how Africa is being defined and located in Christianity and Islam. What makes African Christianity and African Islam “African”? Can Islam and Christianity

be considered African Religions? Potential topics include, but are not limited to, the long history of Islam and Christianity on the continent, the role of both traditions in African geopolitics, “reverse missions” and Muslim and Christian diasporas, African Muslim and Christian involvement in global debates around gender and sexuality, ramifications for Muslim–Christian dialogue and interreligious relations, and religion and development.

#### Religion, Politics, and Elections in Africa

Following the recent attempted and successful coups in West Africa, this panel seeks papers that address the numerous ways religion and politics are intertwined in Africa. With growing concern about the democratic and electoral processes around the world, what role have, do, or should African religious traditions play in politics? Are there lessons the rest of the world can learn from the ways religious traditions in Africa have engaged with or distanced themselves from politics and elections? Although headlines frequently focus on examples of religious and political violence, the panel actively invites papers that focus on nonviolent engagement in political and religious spheres as well, or interrogate the violence/nonviolence binary that is often superimposed on social and political movements. The panel also encourages papers that are attentive to issues related to the differences between traditional and modern/post–colonial political systems, the complicated nature of “secularism(s)” in African societies, and the interplay between religious authority and figures and political authority and figures.

#### Dialogue between African/Afro–Diasporic Religions

Over the past few decades, scholars have increasingly moved beyond simplistic conceptions of a one–directional relationship between African and Afro–diasporic religions. Additionally, given prominent discourses of African purity; the surge of “Africana” as an epistemological category that features Afro–diasporic scholarship; increased connection through modern technology; and the mythic and cosmic role of African religious “homelands,” the relationship between religious traditions on the continent and in diaspora has only become increasingly complex and nuanced. Where some see opportunities to revitalize their communities with access to experts and rituals from a “homeland”, others resist conceptions of continental African traditions as more authoritative, and yet others see opportunities for mutual exchange across several traditions. This panel invites papers that speak to the role of African traditions in Afro–diasporic traditions, Afro–diasporic traditions in indigenous African traditions, and/or the mutual dialogue between these two or more parties. While the most well–known examples of traditions involved in such dialogue include Yoruba orisha worship, Haitian Vodou, Brazilian Candomblé, and Cuban Regla de Ocha/Santería, the panel actively invites papers on all African and Afro–diasporic traditions, the practice of Islam and Christianity on the continent and in diaspora, and African religious traditions outside the Atlantic as well.

## Book Roundtable: Emerging Scholarship on Religion in Africa

This roundtable engages the work of some of the most recent scholarship on religion in African contexts, highlighting emerging themes and methodologies in the field. Each author will offer a brief synopsis of their text and respond to generative themes in one another's publications, emphasizing the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary engagement of the study of religion in Africa. The presentations will be followed by a discussion of future directions and challenges for the field, using these books as a starting point.

Intohan Idumwonyi, *Crashed Realities? Gender Dynamics in Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

David Tonghou Ngong, Senghor's *Eucharist: Negritude and African Political Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2023)

Ayodeji Ogunnaike, *Forms of Worship: How Oriṣa Worship Became Religion in Nigeria and Brazil* (Forthcoming Duke University Press)

Danielle Boaz, *Voodoo: The History of a Racial Slur* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

## Potential co-sponsorship between African Diaspora Religions Unit, African Religions Unit, Afro-American Religious History Unit, and Queer Studies in Religion Unit

The central aim of the African Religions Unit is to address and fulfill the Mission Statement of the American Academy of Religion with particular reference to the African continent as a vital part of our globalized, post-colonial world. The African Religions Unit aims to provide a forum within the American Academy of Religion for the discussion of research on the multiplicity of religious traditions in Africa, methodological issues in the study of the religions of Africa, and African religious responses to ethical and social issues affecting the continent. The Unit encourages the participation of African and non-African scholars in the leadership of the Unit and in participation in its programs. It further actively seeks collaboration with other Units in the AAR, as well as with the African Association for the Study of Religions, in order to promote the study and understanding of religions in Africa in the wider academy. The members of the African Religions Unit come to the subject from a variety of schools of thought and methodological approaches, including but not limited to anthropology, history, history of religions, literary studies, sociology, and theology. The three major religious traditions under investigation are indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam, and the Group's leadership strives to create some balance in the attention paid to these three major traditions.

Website: <https://africanreligionsgroup.wordpress.com/>

## Statement of Purpose

The African Diaspora Religions Unit aims to engage a wide range of disciplines and a variety of scholars who work on different aspects of African Diaspora religions. It considers the linguistic and cultural complexities of the African Diaspora, the importance of African traditional religions, Afro-Christianity, Afro-Islam, Afro-Asia, and Afro-Judaism, in the way they have and continue to inform an understanding of Africa, and also the way they have and continue to shape the religious landscape of the Americas, Europe, Asia and South Asia.

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### **Chairs**

- [Georgette Ledgister, Harvard University](#)  
[georgette.ledgister@gmail.com](mailto:georgette.ledgister@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [David Ngong, Stillman College](#)  
[dngong@stillman.edu](mailto:dngong@stillman.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## **Afro-American Religious History Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Afro-American Religious History Unit invites proposals that explore the religiosity of African-descended people within the geographical and geo-cultural boundaries of the United States. For our 2024 Annual Meeting in San Diego, we are especially interested in proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, or creative presentations that engage one or more of the following topics:

Sources from the Archives of African American Religious History: A History with Violence, of Non-Violence, from the Margin and Center.

In conjunction with the AAR 2024 theme, “Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin” we solicit submissions for a roundtable on Sources from the Archives of African American Religious History. This year’s conference theme invites us to focus on violence, nonviolence and the margin. In this light, African American religious history (AARH) rooted in African traditions,

Islam and Christianity emerged in the context of violence: capture, enslavement, political exclusion, economic marginality. This history also encompasses not just expositions of ideas in support of non-violent strategies present in civil rights movement activism but also deep discourses and debates about its efficacy and viability. In addition to histories of violence, theories of nonviolence, and debates about the efficacy of nonviolence, the archives of AARH also offer instances of transforming violence, reparations and violent struggles for liberation rooted in Black religious ideas, communities and traditions like enslaved uprisings, Black nationalist movements, and anticolonial struggles across the diaspora. In this way, AARH invites us to rethink what we mean by "violence" and its legitimacy in the first place. When viewed through the kaleidoscope of power, margins and centers shift depending on the vantage point along axes of institutionality, sexuality and sexual orientation, color, class, geography and more. Figures whose thoughts and activities have contributed to this landscape include: Callie House, Queen Mother Moore, Mariame Kaba, Andrea Ritchie, David Walker, Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X, Gloria Richardson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin, and Ella Baker.

We invite paper proposals for inclusion on this roundtable about sources from the archive that illuminate these aspects of this year's conference theme.

[Potential co-sponsorship between African Diaspora Religions Unit, African Religions Unit, Afro-American Religious History Unit, and Queer Studies in Religion Unit](#)

[Author meets Respondents session on \*Fire Dreams: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South\* with Laura McTighe and Deon Haywood \(Co-sponsored between the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit and Afro-American Religious History Unit\)](#)

We are also planning an author-meets-respondents session on *Fire Dreams: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South* with Laura McTighe and Deon Haywood focusing on the themes of social organizing, Black feminist liberation, collaborative scholarship, ethnography, the context of the American South, or other facets relating to *Fire Dreams*. Please email Annie Blazer ([alblazer@wm.edu](mailto:alblazer@wm.edu)) if you would like to be considered as a respondent.

## Politics and Black Religions: A History of Engagement

Closed to submissions. 2024 marks the anniversaries of Jessie Jackson's historical first presidential campaign (40th) Freedom Summer, passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Malcolm X's establishment of the Muslim Mosque, Inc. (60th, 1964). These moments reflect important examples of the varied expressions and interactions between Black religions and the political sphere through electioneering, organizing, and critique. In light of these historic



events, we will host a roundtable reflecting on these various iterations at the institutional, individual, social and communal levels. Of special concern in this conversation will be both the expansive and limiting ways that intersections of Black religions and politics have been considered as opening up spheres of influence, generating political critique, and as sites of gendered power and struggle.

In general, the unit would be very excited to receive papers, roundtables and panel proposals on any of the following topics:

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Sylvester Johnson's *The Myth of Ham* (2004)

This panel celebrates the 20th Anniversary of Sylvester Johnson's *The Myth of Ham* and invites works that reflect on the ways that race and religion intersected in the 19th and 20th centuries. Johnson demonstrated the cultural history of the Hamitic Thesis in great detail showing how this idea was used to craft a black other and how black people contended with this idea. Since that time, studies have explored concepts like heathen, 'religio-racial' and fetish to deepen our understanding of the historical and cultural construction of racial others in and through religion and how black folks in particular have contended with these concepts.

Rethorizations of the geographical and cultural boundaries of African-American Religion in relationship to the concept of the West and the Borderlands, specifically:

- Historic movement to, and practices of, African-American religions in the West and on the Borderlands of "America";
- Interactions with and conversations about relationships with Indigenous communities and their religious practices in the West by Black religious practitioners;
- Afro-Spanish, Afro-Indigenous, and other intercultural religiosities;
- Concepts of space, the embodiment of space, and boundaries in African-American religion;
- Black religions among asylum seekers and within immigrant communities in America;
- The impact of immigration upon enactments and definitions of African-American religions.

African American Religions in slavery and freedom

- Relations between enslaved and Indigenous people;

- Policing of religious communities and practices during slavery and after emancipation and strategies of evasion, resistance and reframing;
- Formation of independent churches during slavery and after emancipation;
- Influence of government institutions on the Black religious expressions and geographies;
- Oral and aural literacies and the propagation of Black spirituality;
- Persistence of cultural practices like the ring shout, performance of hymns after emancipation;
- Formation of complex Afro-Protestant institutions (HBCUs, Prince Hall Freemasons / Order of the Eastern Star, Greek organizations).

#### Black Religions and property, land, environment

- Historical markers and historical black church communities;
- Process of securing historical status;
- Intersections between religious communities and landholding, environmental issues and activism;
- Court cases regarding burial grounds and property disputes.

#### African-American Religion and climate catastrophe, broadly configured, particularly:

- Historical topics that elucidate contemporary environmental landscapes and futures, especially in light of climate catastrophe and its impact on Black communities;
- The legacies and impacts of migration patterns and how they have and continue to shape practitioners of African-American religions;
- African-American religions and the environment, nature, and the land.

#### African-American Religion and so called “illicit” practices, specifically:

- Black religious communities, carceral systems, and the (de)criminalization of recreational substance use;
- Histories of African-American religion and narcotic and/or alcohol use, broadly configured (ritual, entheogenic, recreational, medicinal, etc.);
- Black religious communities and religious activism in relation to the history of other practices criminalized or deemed illicit, especially queer sex, sex work, pornography, and other practices.

#### Redressing the historiographical dearth of LGBTQI+ African American religious histories, specifically:

- The theoretical possibilities of “queering” African-American religion;

- The historical presence of gender nonconformity, gender fluidity, and a spectrum of sexualities and genders physically and conceptually within Black religious communities;
- The methodological and theoretical limitations of heteronormativity and gender normativity;
- The intersections of Black trans studies and African–American religions.

#### Histories and historiographies of African American Religious History

- Generations of historical writing on African American religions;
- Transitions and currents in thought about African American religions
- Themes and paradigms in the interpretation of African American religious histories: sacred vs. secular, excited worship, opiate vs. catalyst, etc.;
- Periodizations and turning points in history;
- Beyond history: limits and challenges of the archives;
- Tracing themes in African American religious history: migration, regional conflict; urbanization;
- Transition from church history to religious studies.

#### Intellectual Trajectories in the Study of African–American Religion – Highlighting Graduate Student Work:

- Proposals for five to seven minute presentations of term papers, dissertation chapters drafts or other short pieces in development are especially welcome.
- The steering committee is open to configuring this session as a conversational space for works-in-progress with comments from a faculty member.

#### Guidelines for successful/strong proposal submissions

Successful proposals should:

- 1) respond directly to the call;
- 2) engage historical and interdisciplinary archival methods and name sources used or examined;
- 3) situate the intervention(s) in historiographical context by engaging relevant authors and key texts, but only as necessary; and
- 4) indicate time period and relevance to the field of African–American religious history.

We also invite creative proposals that are attentive to alternative methods of presenting, including but not limited to multimedia presentations, interviews, flash/micro talks, fireside chats, and facilitated discussions.

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to recover the sources and histories related to the religious experiences of African-descended people in the United States; challenge, nuance, and expand theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of African-American religions; and create forums for critical, creative, and collaborative engagement with new scholarship in the field. The Unit is committed to the historical investigation of the diversity of U.S. African-Americans' religious experiences across chronological periods.

## Chairs

- [Vaughn Booker, University of Pennsylvania](mailto:vabooker@sas.upenn.edu)  
[vabooker@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:vabooker@sas.upenn.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Nicole Turner, Princeton University](mailto:nicolemyerturner@icloud.com)  
[nicolemyerturner@icloud.com](mailto:nicolemyerturner@icloud.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Animals and Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This Unit addresses the study of animals and religion and seeks to engage scholars of religion with the emergent field of animal studies. We welcome theoretically informed paper/panel proposals on all topics related to these themes. We value papers that attend to real animals alongside theoretical constructs, imagery, or representations pertaining to them, and papers that attend to intersectionality with race, gender, sexuality, disability, and other matters of justice.

In addition to this open call for papers, the Animals and Religion Unit is interested in organizing sessions around the following topics, with an eye toward the 2024 Annual Meeting's presidential theme: "Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin."

- Relationships among animals themselves. We spend considerable time reflecting on human–animal relations, but how do religious texts and traditions approach relations between animals themselves? We are especially interested in papers analyzing inter–animal responses to death, care, bonding, and violence.
- Consent and coercion. We are interested in papers analyzing the role of religion in the assumption and/or projection of animal consent, along with the coercion of animal labor (of various kinds).
- Examining the idea of entanglement. We are interested in thinking more carefully about the many valences of interspecies “entanglement,” specifically the ways in which love/care, compassion, dependence, and violence are often difficult to separate. Natality (birth) and mortality (death) are fraught with both care and violence. Compassion and empathy are lauded as virtues, but can also demean through patronizing and disempowering undertones.
- Post–humanism. If the vision of liberal humanism is fragmenting and collapsing, what becomes of the discourse of species in its wake? How might religious texts and traditions that engage with animals de–center overrepresented ideas of “the human” and make space for another way of being? In what ways do religious ecologies preserve the centrality of “the human” and in what ways do religious ecologies make space for new modes of existence and interaction?
- Religion and veganism. How do the practices of veganism vary across religious and cultural differences? What insights might emerge from interreligious and intercultural dialogue focused specifically on veganism? How are violence and non–violence imagined differently in various practices of veganism?
- Animality and the justification of violence. We are interested in analysis of the ways in which perceptions and assumptions of the violence of animals are used to naturalize and justify human violence. Likewise, we are interested in analysis of the complexities of “dehumanization”—wherein human beings are made ideologically “killable” through association with animals and the presumption that animals are, by definition, “killable.”
- Finally, we welcome paper proposals and panel proposals that advance scholarship in the area of Animals and Religion, even if they don’t directly address the prompts above.

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to advance scholarship by providing a forum for scholars whose work addresses the study of animals and religion, and to engage religious studies scholars with the emergent field of animal studies. The Unit emphasizes the theoretical implications of attention to animals for the study of religion and a diversity of approaches, including, but not limited to:

- Cultural and comparative history of religions
- Critical theory

- Ethnography and anthropology of religion
- Descriptions of the role(s) religious/theological traditions have played in mediating representations of nonhuman animals
- Assessments of relationships between religious constructions of animals and those animals

## Chairs

- [Christopher Carter, University of San Diego](#)  
[christophercarter@sandiego.edu](mailto:christophercarter@sandiego.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Eric Meyer, Carroll College](#)  
[ericdaryl.meyer@gmail.com](mailto:ericdaryl.meyer@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Anthropology of Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite proposals from the full range of ethnographic theories and methods exploring diverse traditions, regions, topics, periods, and standpoints from across the discipline. The steering committee has identified the following areas to be of particular interest for individual and panel submissions:

- Anthropology in Times of Crisis. How we negotiate research in contexts of crisis (whether political, social, economic, or environmental), with particular attention to how knowledge is collected, analyzed, preserved, and disseminated. We are especially interested in papers addressing theoretical, methodological, and ethical innovations that come from confronting crises.
- Religion and the Environment. How anthropological perspectives can help us understand the place of the environment in religious traditions and among religious communities. We are especially interested in papers that explore how human interactions with (culturally-postulated) non-human actors shape people's understandings and experiences of the climate crisis.
- Non/areligion. What can anthropologists of religion offer to the expanding scholarship on the nonreligious/areligious/spiritual but not religious? What theoretical lenses work best to situate these categories ethnographically?
- Existential Anthropology and the Study of Religion (book session, for which we are securing a co-sponsor). This session gathers contributors and critics around a new

edited volume at the intersection of anthropology, philosophy, and religious studies. *Between Life and Thought: Existential Anthropology and the Study of Religion* (University of Toronto Press, 2024; see here for the book's website) explores the impact of the work of philosophical anthropologist Michael Jackson on religious studies. This is a preorganized panel for which we are not soliciting proposals.

Further, we encourage panel proposals that use creative and alternative formats that elevate critical dialogue and engage multiple senses, for example:

- Flash Formats. An increased number of presenters are allotted ~7 minutes, followed by a robust, guided discussion. One suggestion would be to choose a (number of) key term(s) in the anthropology of religion, to which panelists can respond.
- Authors Meet Critics. We suggest up to three authors engage with one another's recent books around common themes and questions.
- Sensory Props. Presenters engage with a material form that bears fieldwork significance, such as physical objects, visual images, and/or sound recordings.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit draws together scholars who utilize the methodological tools and theoretical perspectives of anthropology in the study of religion as a social and cultural phenomenon. Given the increasing importance of anthropology and ethnography for the academic study of religion, we serve the academy as an important forum for sustained discussion and critique of anthropological approaches that can connect scholars working on diverse traditions, regions, and eras who otherwise might not have the opportunity to learn from each other. Interested members are encouraged to join our (low volume) list-serv: <https://aarlists.org/>

## Chairs

- [Eric Hoenes Del Pinal, University of North Carolina, Charlotte](#)  
[ehoenes@uncc.edu](mailto:ehoenes@uncc.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jennifer A. Selby, Memorial University of Newfoundland](#)  
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1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Arts, Literature and Religion Unit welcomes paper and panel proposals for the following themes. Please indicate to which of these themes you are responding. There will not be an open call for papers this year.

Workshop: “Art Theology, Non–Violence, and Wisdom from Margins.”

Contact: María Mercedes Carrión ([mcarrio@emory.edu](mailto:mcarrio@emory.edu)), and Angela Hummel ([ahummel@iliff.edu](mailto:ahummel@iliff.edu))

Theology methodologies are usually based on argumentation and discursive reasoning. Art Theology, grounded in Expressionism and cognitive sciences, promotes the idea that divine love is a reality that expands our ideas of love, rather than seeking to be “right”. Through art making, Art Theology questions how the discipline of theology has both accentuated and erased the lines of violence and marginalization.

This interactive workshop invites participants to make theology by making art and reflecting on the meanings that lines and colors hold. Choosing from a variety of materials (pastels, paints, colored pencils, markers, colored paper, etc.) we will reflect on our own understanding of the world through color. As the art making process unfolds, participants will consider theological questions such as what divine love is and how it relates to violence or to the creation of margins.

Workshop schedule: Presentation of Art Theology by Angela Hummel (15 minutes). Introduction to the workshop and set up (15 minutes). Creation and meanings of color and lines (20 minutes). Sharing wisdom from that creation and meanings (20 minutes). Creation of color and lines in response to art theological questions (15 minutes). Sharing findings (15 minutes). Group discussion and next steps (20–25 minutes).

The workshop will be led by Angela Hummel, MFA, and PhD candidate at Iliff school of Theology. Hummel is the recipient of a Roanridge grant to practice Art Theology. Her work on Art Theology has led to her being invited to be a TEDx speaker. Hummel is also a top blogger for the Wabash Foundation, and an adjunct professor at Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design.

Prospective participants, please submit a 300–words statement of interest and a one–page CV.

Practices of art engagement in theological writing

Contacts: Gloria Maité Hernández ([ghenandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:ghenandez@wcupa.edu)), and Benjamin DeSpain ([Benjamin.DeSpain@acu.edu.au](mailto:Benjamin.DeSpain@acu.edu.au))



How does engaging art influence research in theology, philosophy, and religious studies? With increased attention on the value of engaging art, appeals to performance, poetics, and the visual have become commonplace throughout theological studies. While there is a long history of theological arguments about art, engagements with art – whether performance, painting, music, or poetry – are now being used to advance theological conversation on several topics including the nature of God, of time and eschatology, the significance of materiality and embodiment, and the identity and participation of marginalized communities in theological discourse. This raises interesting methodological questions about how practices of sitting with or making art change the way we undertake theological research. This panel will interrogate how art engagement – both receiving and making art – can alter the way we think about writing theology by exploring the role of art-engagement in catalyzing research questions, refining concepts, and tackling challenges.

#### Interpreting cartographies

Contacts: Adam Newman, ([anewman4@illinois.edu](mailto:anewman4@illinois.edu)), and George Pati, ([george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu))

We invite papers and panel proposals on cartography or mapping for this session. We are particularly interested in cartography in a religious setting, including natural and imagined spaces, bodies as maps, and maps as sacred literature. We welcome papers focusing on cartography from the margins and the art of cartography, inviting participants to demonstrate cartography as a religious meaning-making technique. This session is interested in and open to a wide range of methodological and disciplinary perspectives.

#### Violence, nonviolence, and the margin

Contact: George Pati, ([george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu))

The presidential theme for 2024 AAR is “Violence, Nonviolence, and The Margin.” For this session, we invite papers and panel proposals on violence and nonviolence from the margins in arts and literature. Violence is perceived not only in physical and visible forms but also in social structures and how such violence is responded from nonviolent means through arts and literature from the margins.

#### The embodied artist; the artist as text

Contacts: Cia Sautter, ([cialuna13@gmail.com](mailto:cialuna13@gmail.com)), and Akhil Thomas, ([akhilthomas@g.harvard.edu](mailto:akhilthomas@g.harvard.edu))

This session considers the embodied knowledge of the artist and artwork. Embodied art may include performances of the human body like dance and theatre, but also film, visual arts, and literature as embodied. Papers may discuss the theological or religious discovery inherent in the embodied act of creating art, the embodiment of religious values in the art work, or a combination. We also encourage live performances braided with the papers and are open to a wide variety of traditions and imaginations.

#### Art and literature as human experience

Contact: Ossama Abdelgawwad, ([ossama.abdelgawwad@valpo.edu](mailto:ossama.abdelgawwad@valpo.edu))

We invite papers that discuss work in the study of Arts, Literature, and Religion, which tends most often to read cultural expression through ideas, themes, and texts deemed religious, theological, spiritual, secular, philosophical, and ethical (to name a few). How does studying art, literature, and religion allow us to articulate the most challenging aspects of human experiences, such as death, suffering, pleasure, happiness, etc.? How does it make conceptual interventions to theological, religious, and philosophical questions? We invite individual papers and/or panel proposals on human experiences expressed in art-making, texts, religious discourses, etc., broadly defined.

#### Art and literature as intervention

Contact: Cooper Harris, ([charriss@iu.edu](mailto:charriss@iu.edu))

We invite papers and/or panel proposals on what it means to reverse this course, understanding expressive texts, repertoire, and phenomena to intervene actively in (rather than to respond to) discourses understood to be religious, theological, secular, philosophical, or ethical (this list is not exhaustive)? What difference does this reversal of readings make? What aspects, functions, and significances of artistic expression, broadly construed, illuminate the condition or experience of being human? Is art uniquely capable of doing so? How and why does this matter?

#### [Contemporary iconography \(co-sponsored with the Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit\)](#)

Contacts: Ashley M. Purpura ([apurpur@purdue.edu](mailto:apurpur@purdue.edu)), and Gloria Maité Hernández ([gheandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:gheandez@wcupa.edu))

For this session, we invite papers and panel proposals on religious iconography. We are particularly (but not exclusively) interested in styles, theological interpretations, religious

praxis, and the public use of iconography in the contexts of, or in comparison with, Orthodox and/or Eastern Christianity. We welcome consideration of contemporary iconographic developments, the political use of icons, icons in secular spaces, mysticism and icons, unofficial and subversive icons, the use of icons in prayer and theology, and invite participants to demonstrate iconographic techniques or bring physical examples. This session is interested in, and open to, a wide range of methodological and disciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to ethics, theology and religious thought, art history, material culture, anthropology, and practicing iconographers/artists.

#### Cinematic Adaptations of Literature (Co-sponsored with the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit)

Contact: Joel Mayward ([jmayward@gmail.com](mailto:jmayward@gmail.com)), and George Pati, ([george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu))

How have works of literature been adapted or translated to the cinematic medium for religious purposes? What are the losses and gains of such transpositions, and how have they been utilized in religious contexts and communities? The Art, Literature, and Religion Unit and the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit invites pre-arranged panels or individual papers that investigate the adaptation, creation, and reception of such audiovisual works. We also welcome panels which provide an in-depth consideration of a single cinematic artwork from a variety of methodologies and perspectives. We welcome submissions that theorize the adaptation and interpretation process and/or examine the implications of such cinematic works for various religious or socio-political groups, particularly marginalized communities. We are particularly interested in exploring cinematic works which are outside the "Bible film" genre.

The term "Cinematic" may include film, television, advertisements, museum installations, graphic design, video curriculum, YouTube, online social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, etc.), digital communication, and other forms of audiovisual moving images.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit seeks to engage the critical issues at the intersection of religion, literature, and the arts. We are concerned with both the aesthetic dimensions of religion and the religious dimensions of literature and the arts, including the visual, performative, written, and verbal arts. Approaches to these two avenues of concern are interdisciplinary and varied, including both traditional methodologies — theological, hermeneutical, and comparative approaches associated with the history of religions — and emerging methodologies, those that emerge from poststructuralism, studies in material culture, and cultural studies.

### **Chairs**

- [Gloria Hernández, West Chester University](#)  
[ghernandez@wcupa.edu](mailto:ghernandez@wcupa.edu)

1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

- [George Pati, Valparaiso University](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu)  
[george.pati@valpo.edu](mailto:george.pati@valpo.edu)

1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## **Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit**

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

#### Roundtable on New Books: Transpacific Asian American Religions

What is a transpacific approach to Asian American religions in particular and American religions in general? How does it shape historical and social scientific approaches to studying religion? How does a transpacific turn help us rethink the religious and secular as well as categories such as race, empire and the state? We engage these questions at the intersection of Melissa Borja's *Follow the New Way*, Helen Jin Kim's *Race for Revival* and Justin Tse's *The Secular in a Sheet of Scattered Sand*.

#### Paper Session on the History and Future of Asian American Religious Studies

In 2024, we celebrate ANARCS' 30th anniversary and APARRI's 25th anniversary. We reflect on the history of these foundational organizations and developments within the field of Asian American religious studies. In discussing the state of the field, we also engage the 2023 Pew report, "Religion among Asian Americans", to anticipate future trajectories and trends. In this paper session, we especially invite reflection upon the study of underrepresented communities and traditions in Asian American religious studies, including Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh communities as well as those who identify as atheist, agnostic, "spiritual but not religious," and with multiple traditions.

#### Paper Session on Asian American Religions and Secularisms

The Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit and the Secularism and Secularity Unit seek paper and panel proposals that address APIA religions and religious communities in relationship to secularism. For example, how have APIA communities navigated competing systems of secular discourse and state power between Asia and North America? How have disparate cultural dynamics or state institutions across the Pacific shaped APIA religions? Are there ways that APIA religions shift our understanding of secularism(s)? We welcome analyses

that explore how trans-Pacific religious communities encounter, contest, or conform to competing definitions of religion, race, science, nation, or liberty.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit (hereafter referred to as ANARCS) is one of the primary vehicles for the advancement of the study of the religions and practices of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States and Canada. As an integral player in the development of the emerging field of Asian American religious studies, ANARCS has cultivated the work of junior and senior scholars from an impressive array of disciplines, including the history of religion, sociology, theology, philosophy, ethics, anthropology, psychology, education, and American and ethnic studies. ANARCS encourages new perspectives on Asian North American religious practices and faith communities, as well as innovative theoretical work that extends the concepts of empires, diaspora, transnationalism, globalization, im/migration, orientalism, adaptation, acculturation, race, ethnicity, marginalization, oppression, and resistance. In addition to this list of concepts, ANARCS will explore theoretical, philosophical, and theological concepts, such as aesthetics, beauty, and love. ANARCS seeks to foster and mentor scholars (junior, senior, and nontraditional) through preconference sessions, gathering for meals, and maintaining a robust listserv.

## Chairs

- [Helen Jin Kim, Emory University](#)  
[helenkim@emory.edu](mailto:helenkim@emory.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Sueleane Koh, University of California, Irvine](#)  
[sj.koh@uci.edu](mailto:sj.koh@uci.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Augustine and Augustinianisms Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Two Sessions on Augustine, Slavery, and Race

Slavery was ubiquitous in late Antique Rome, and the concept of slavery profoundly shaped Augustine's theological, ethical, philosophical, and political thought. Recent work in Augustine studies has begun to explore these topics critically analyzing Augustine's account of slavery and its role in his broader ethics and politics, exploring slavery's central but often disavowed role in the Augustinian tradition of political thought, while also pressing toward constructive

alternatives in conversation with the resources of Black Studies. Given Augustine's importance to the history of slavery and the role of the Augustinian tradition in the development of modern logics of racialization, there is ample opportunity for further work on Augustine, slavery, and race. We, therefore, are invited papers employing methods from any and all disciplines engaging Augustine and Augustinianisms on the topics of slavery and race.

Supplementing our open call for papers on Augustine, slavery, and race, we plan to hold a book panel on two books soon to be published on the subject, "Recent Books on Augustine, Slavery and Race: Toni Alimi's *Slaves of God: Augustine and Other Romans on Religion and Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2024) and Matthew Elia's *The Problem of the Christian Master: Augustine in the Afterlife of Slavery* (Yale University Press, 2024)." Both authors will be present and talk about their books, respond to the other's book, followed by a robust conversation.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a forum for the historical and constructive study of issues relating to the life and thought of Augustine of Hippo, including how it was received in various eras and how it might be a resource for religious thought today. We work collaboratively with other units and constituencies of AAR to promote scholarly conversations across fields and methodologies. We are committed to providing an inclusive scholarly environment where new voices are heard and critical analyses advanced. Calls for papers, new publications, and other updates in the field of Augustinian Studies can be found on our "AAR Augustine & Augustinianisms Unit" [Facebook](#) page.

### **Chairs**

- [Michael Lamb, Wake Forest University](#)  
[k.michael.lamb@gmail.com](mailto:k.michael.lamb@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, University of Geneva](#)  
[sarah.stewartkroeker@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.stewartkroeker@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Baha'i Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

All papers are welcome that deal in any way with the history, theology, texts or practices of the Baha'i community. The unit also is interested in papers on the Baha'i Faith and methods in the

study of religion. What are the characteristic ways that Baha'is study religion – their own and others? How have Baha'is attempted to integrate Baha'i theological perspectives into their work, and how (and to what extent) have academic perspectives informed Baha'i belief, practice and community life?

## Statement of Purpose

The Baha'i Studies Unit explores the study of Baha'i history, theology and spiritual practices as well as how Baha'i social teachings can be applied to contemporary social problems. The Unit welcomes research about the history of the Baha'i Faith, its primary figures and texts and Baha'i communities around the world. We are also interested more broadly in the role of religion and social reform in the modern world, particularly issues relevant to Baha'i teachings concerning racial justice, gender equality, science and religion, inequality, nonviolent social change, and human interconnectedness across the globe. The Unit seeks to bring together a diversity of perspectives and traditions, and all are welcome to participate.

## Chairs

- [Julia Berger, Montclair State University](#)  
[juliamberger@gmail.com](mailto:juliamberger@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Christopher Glen White, Vassar College](#)  
[chwhite@vassar.edu](mailto:chwhite@vassar.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Bioethics and Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Bioethics and Religion Unit welcomes paper and/or panel proposals that examine how religious and spiritual traditions and practices affect the field of bioethics. We are particularly interested in the following themes, but we also welcome any proposals that address issues in bioethics and religions:

- In consideration of the AAR Presidential Theme for the 2024 Annual Meeting regarding the role of religious and spiritual interpretations of violence, nonviolence, and marginality, the Bioethics and Religion Unit welcomes proposals that examine bioethics and healthcare in light of any of the following: the sixtieth anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; bioethics and religious concepts within political theology;

- the exploitation of marginalized bodies; violence against healthcare workers; and Artificial Intelligence and marginality.
- The Bioethics and Religion Unit also welcomes proposals that interpret the theme as relates to violence against healthcare professionals in the pandemic or post-pandemic era. Healthcare providers and caregivers have expressed their physical, emotional, psychological, moral, and spiritual exhaustion during the pandemic and the post-pandemic phase of Covid. We welcome proposals that address issues of burnout, exhaustion, and revival among healthcare providers and caregivers in the context of the pandemic. We are interested in various narratives, analyses, and/or other presentations that address violence, nonviolence, and healing as they add to bioethical considerations.
  - We welcome proposals that address any aspect of the relationship between bioethics and religion.

#### Co-sponsored session with Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

The Science, Technology and Religion Unit and the Bioethics and Religion Unit invite papers that interrogate matters of religion, spirituality, or the philosophy of religion as they intersect with brain-machine interfaces, neuroprosthetics, and neuroenhancement and related technologies and enhancement processes through discursive or somatic modes. We especially welcome proposals that address these matters in light of the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme which considers violence, nonviolence, and marginality. President Jin Y. Park writes: “Nonviolence has long been a vital teaching of many religious traditions, but has the study of religion sufficiently engaged with this topic? This year, I invite the AAR to take up the issues of violence and nonviolence and explore the meanings and value of nonviolence and how the study of religion envisions practicing it in our times.”

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit offers a unique venue within the AAR for addressing the intersections of religion, bioethics, and health/healthcare related matters. It encourages creative and scholarly examinations of these intersections, drawing on such disciplines as religious and philosophical ethical theory, theology, ethnography, clinical ethics, history, and law. It seeks to undertake this scholarly work by drawing on a variety of perspectives (e.g., Feminist/Womanist/Mujerista, cross-cultural, and interreligious) and to demonstrate the contributions that religious and ethical scholarship can offer to the critical exploration of contemporary bioethical issues.

### **Chairs**

- [Terri Laws, University of Michigan, Dearborn](mailto:terrlaws@umich.edu)  
[terrlaws@umich.edu](mailto:terrlaws@umich.edu)



1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

- [Hajung Lee, University of Puget Sound](mailto:hjlee@pugetsound.edu)  
[hjlee@pugetsound.edu](mailto:hjlee@pugetsound.edu)

1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Black Theology Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Black Theology Unit invites individual papers and panel submissions on the topics identified below and proposals on additional topics of interest that advance the discipline of Black theology. In accordance with the 2024 theme: "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," we invite submissions that explore black theological discourse through topics such as:

- Black Theology and Hope/Black Aliveness
- Black Theology and the 2024 Election
- Black Theology and Theories of Violence
- Black Theology and the Legacies of Bishop Carlton Pearson
- Black Theology and Pentecostalism
- Black Theology and Black Time
- Black Theology and the Question of the Human
- Black Theology and Liberative Practice
- Black Theology and Affect
- Black Theology and Public Health Concerns
- Black Theology and Black Evangelicalism
- Black Theology and Queer/Queer Theory
- Black Theology and Ecological Violence

We also invite paper and/or panel submissions on:

- New directions and methods in the field of Black Theology
- Violence in Black Theology
- Books recently authored by Black religious scholars
- The Relevance/Irrelevance of Black Theology
- The Future of Black Theology.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Black Theology Unit seeks to further develop Black theology as an academic enterprise. This is accomplished, in part, by providing opportunities for intellectual exchange related to the

fundamentals of Black theology's content and form. In addition, the Unit seeks to broaden conversation by bringing Black theology into dialogue with other disciplines and perspectives on various aspects of African diasporic religious thought and life.

## Chairs

- [Jawanza Eric Clark, Manhattan College](#)  
[jawanza.clark@manhattan.edu](mailto:jawanza.clark@manhattan.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Eboni Marshall Turman, Yale University](#)  
[eboni.marshallturman@yale.edu](mailto:eboni.marshallturman@yale.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Body and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Body and Religion Unit aims to provide a forum for multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary conversations that theorize the contribution of the body and embodiment to religions.

This year, we invite proposals as follows:

- [For a possible co-sponsored session, the Body and Religion Unit, Women and Religion, and Class, Religion, and Theology units](#) invite proposals addressing reproductive labor broadly defined (including the many labors of social reproduction, such as caring labor and emotional labor). We are particularly interested in understanding such labors as embodied practices/experiences within gendered, classed, and racialized structures of inequality and religious traditions. We are open to individual paper proposals, panel/roundtable proposals, or innovative interactive formats.
- Lightning Sessions: We invite short presentations of 6–8 minutes on the following two topics. If you are interested in participating in a session utilizing these short presentations, please include it in your proposal.
- The violence of academic labor. As part of this year's theme "Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin," we invite short presentations of 6–8 minutes considering the impacts of academic labor on our bodies. Some questions to consider: What does our labor do to us? How do we embody the academic experience? What does violence or non-violence mean in academia?

- Words of the body. Many words are commonly used to describe the religious body, but we would like to explore new and different interpretations of those words as ways to stretch and transform our theoretical and methodological considerations of the body. We invite scholars to consider words of the body that can help move forward religious considerations of the body. Some words to consider: heart, pain, flesh, joy, touch
- Roundtables: We invite roundtable proposals on diverse methodologies and understandings of the body within various religious contexts. For roundtable proposals, we would like to see a focus on discussion rather than presentation of prepared papers (e.g. each panelist is given five–seven minutes at the beginning to discuss their work and then the rest of the time is devoted to discussion).
- Papers: We invite paper panels and individual papers. When reviewing your paper proposals, we particularly appreciate proposals that do not simply discuss bodily activities but also explicitly reflect on the difference this focus makes to the academic study of religions. This year we are interested in proposals on body/bodies and religion in relation to the following themes: virtual bodies, future bodies, embodied pedagogy

\*Please note that we are issuing an open call for roundtables but not an open call for papers. Papers must focus on the themes outlined above.

If your proposal gets accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in the annual meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Please note that it is the policy of the Body and Religion Unit to refuse no–shows at the Annual Meeting from the program for up to the following two years.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

[In anticipation of the American Academy of Religion's June 2024 virtual conference, the Body and Religion Unit is seeking proposals for a joint session with the Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit on, "Divine Bodies."](#) Bodies presenting and re–presenting sacrality in both ancient and modern contexts are ripe for analysis. Topics may include but are not limited to shaping, sizing, theriomorphism, hierophanics, kratophanics, iconographic stratifications/layering, planar extension, absence/concealment, accessorizing, co–location, tellurism, chthonics, gendering, and substance/makeup. Diachronic and synchronic approaches are both encouraged, along with artifactual/material culture, discursive and hermeneutical analysis. We especially welcome panels/presentations using innovative formats that will enhance discussion and collaboration in an online environment.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit aims to draw together scholars working with different methodologies who address body and embodiment as a fundamental category of analysis in the study of religion. The Unit provides a forum for sustained discussion and critique of diverse approaches to body and religion by scholars working on a wide range of traditions, regions, and eras.

#### Journal

The Body and Religion Unit launched the peer-reviewed journal, *Body and Religion*, through Equinox, in 2017. We invite papers for submission on a rolling basis, including papers presented on panels hosted by, but not limited to, the Body and Religion Unit. Journal Homepage: <https://journal.equinoxpub.com/BAR>

#### Steering Committee Membership

Those who take on the responsibilities of being steering committee members will participate in decision-making processes for the annual call for papers, respond to unit communication, and read, rank, and comment on submitted proposals in March. If a steering committee member finds that they are not able to fulfill these tasks in a given year, they should communicate with the co-chairs. If a steering committee member cannot participate in this work, the co-chairs may replace them.

#### Chairs

- [Wesley Barker, Mercer University](mailto:barker_wn@mercer.edu)  
[barker\\_wn@mercer.edu](mailto:barker_wn@mercer.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Gwendolyn Gillson, Illinois College](mailto:gwendolyn.gillson@ic.edu)  
[gwendolyn.gillson@ic.edu](mailto:gwendolyn.gillson@ic.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## [Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit invites paper proposals on themes related to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life, theology, and legacy.

As 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of Bonhoeffer's provocative 1944 prison writings, we are especially open to proposals that bring his letters and papers from prison into conversation with contemporary theological and ethical discourses.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a dedicated educator: confirmation teacher, pastor, university lecturer, underground seminary leader, and mentor to many. Therefore, we also welcome papers that engage one or more aspects of “Bonhoeffer and Education,” including papers on Bonhoeffer the teacher, on teaching Bonhoeffer, on the role of teachers and institutions of higher education today, as well as on the many varieties of what Bonhoeffer called “ethics as formation.”

Additionally, as we anticipate an AAR annual meeting on the heels of an election year, we welcome proposals that either engage Bonhoeffer through lenses afforded by public and political theology or that draw on Bonhoeffer to offer constructive engagement with questions of politics and political engagement.

#### [Possible co-sponsored session with the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit](#)

Bonhoeffer scholarship has a long history of engagement with questions related to 2024 AAR President Jin Y Park’s conference theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” We are pleased to welcome proposals that offer new constructive explorations of these themes in relation to Bonhoeffer’s theological, practical, and ethical legacy, especially as these might engage the above themes of Bonhoeffer’s prison theology, education, or political theology.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit seeks to explore the historical and contemporary interface between theology and public life within the context of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s legacy in theology. Together with professional societies affiliated in the study of Bonhoeffer’s life and thought, the Unit has explored a variety of topics from medical ethics to political life in a global context.

### **Chairs**

- [Karen V. Guth, College of the Holy Cross](#)  
[kguth@holycross.edu](mailto:kguth@holycross.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Matthew Puffer, Valparaiso University](#)  
[matthew.puffer@valpo.edu](mailto:matthew.puffer@valpo.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## **Buddhism in the West Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Buddhism in the West Unit is seeking to fill two 90-minute sessions and strongly encourages proposals for fully developed panels, roundtable discussions, or other formats focused on a single theme, question, or recent publications. The Unit is happy to support co-sponsorships with other Units including, but not limited to: the Buddhism Unit; the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit; the Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit; the Space, Place, and Religion Unit; and the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit. The Unit is particularly interested in responding to the 2024 Presidential Theme: Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin. Other topics that have been suggested include:

- Buddhism and Buddhists in conflict zones (e.g., Ukraine, the Middle East, the Americas); contact Upayadhi Luraschi, [upayadhi@uchicago.edu](mailto:upayadhi@uchicago.edu)
- Buddhism and ambivalence; contact Blayne Harcey, [bharcey@asu.edu](mailto:bharcey@asu.edu)
- [Buddhism, caste, and race \(with a possible co-sponsorship with either the Buddhism Unit or the Class, Religion, and Theology Unit\)](#)
- [Buddhism outside Asia and the transnational \(with a possible co-sponsorship with the Space, Place, and Religion Unit\)](#)
- Reader response to forthcoming volume on Buddhism in Europe; contact John Harding, [john.harding@uleth.ca](mailto:john.harding@uleth.ca)
- [In collaboration with the Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit](#), an panel or roundtable discussion of the Wu-Tang Clan's album, "Enter the Wu-tang"; contact Justin Smith [jmsmith@apu.edu](mailto:jmsmith@apu.edu) and Daniel White Hodge [dan@whitehodge.com](mailto:dan@whitehodge.com)
- Empowerment of Lay Buddhist practitioners, egalitarianism, and challenge of Monastic Authority in Asian Buddhist communities outside of Asia; contact: Xiao HAN, [han.xiao@courrier.ugam.ca](mailto:han.xiao@courrier.ugam.ca)
- Buddhism in Oceania – Beyond East/West and other Binaries; contact Kim Lam, [lam@deakin.edu.au](mailto:lam@deakin.edu.au)
- What is "the West?"; a discussion on theory and method in the study of Buddhism outside Asia; contact Scott Mitchell, [scott@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:scott@shin-ibs.edu)
- Buddhist studies academic labor; contact Scott Mitchell and Courtney Bruntz, [scott@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:scott@shin-ibs.edu), [cbruntz@southeast.edu](mailto:cbruntz@southeast.edu)

AAR membership is not required to submit a proposal. Please contact the unit co-chairs with questions.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to:

- Provide a venue for new studies on Buddhism in non-Asian locales

- Facilitate communication and exchange between scholars working on Buddhism outside of Asia
- Offer a forum within which to collectively clarify the intellectual and methodological underpinnings of research on Buddhism in the West, and consider new possibilities in methods and approaches

## Chairs

- [Adeana McNicholl, Vanderbilt University](#)  
[adeana.mcnicholl@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:adeana.mcnicholl@vanderbilt.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Caroline Starkey, University of Leeds](#)  
[c.starkey@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.starkey@leeds.ac.uk)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Buddhism Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Buddhism Unit welcomes proposals for Papers Sessions, Roundtables, and Individual Papers in all areas of the study of Buddhism. To encourage greater exchange among the various subfields within Buddhist Studies, we are particularly interested in sessions that confront enduring problems in the study of Buddhism, raise important theoretical or methodological issues, and/or bring fresh materials or perspectives to bear on themes of broad interest, especially those that address multiple regions and/or time periods. All proposals should demonstrate their coherence and significance in language accessible to the Steering Committee, which includes individuals working on diverse aspects of Buddhism. We are also committed to diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, rank, institutions, etc. WISAR

(<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>) is an excellent resource for ensuring gender balance (if you are not listed in WISAR and would like to be, please consider uploading your information).

For Individual Papers this year, although everyone is welcome to submit a proposal, we are prioritizing contributions by graduate students and/or postdocs. Four Individual Papers will be chosen for an omnibus session entitled “New Work in Buddhist Studies.” Please do not submit a paper as both an Individual Paper Proposal and as part of a Papers Session Proposal.

All AAR sessions are now 90 minutes or 2 hours in length. If you wish, you may indicate which time-length you have in mind for a session, but we cannot guarantee it.

We welcome proposals on this year's Presidential Theme, "Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin," or proposals that relate in some way to the location of the Annual Meeting (San Diego, California).

Below are some of the themes that our members have proposed for the meeting, but please also feel free to submit a proposal on topics not represented on this list. If you are interested in contributing to a proposal on one of these topics, please contact the organizer directly.

Archaeology and Buddhist Studies: New Findings, Interpretations, and Directions (Contact: Jon Thumas, [jthumas@g.harvard.edu](mailto:jthumas@g.harvard.edu))

Following up on the advances in the study of Buddhism through material sources, this panel explores how archaeological approaches are currently contributing to work in Buddhist studies. Seeking papers from interdisciplinary scholars currently engaging with archaeological methods to study Buddhism in all places and times.

[Author Meets Author: The Two Truths in Buddhist Studies](#) (Contact: Kin Cheung, [cheungk@moravian.edu](mailto:cheungk@moravian.edu), Jue Liang, [jue.liang@case.edu](mailto:jue.liang@case.edu), and Andrew S. Taylor, [ataylor9@css.edu](mailto:ataylor9@css.edu))

This roundtable invites Buddhist Studies scholars to take part in an exercise of self-reflection. Each speaker will pick a category (gender, feminism, agency, body, mind, medicine, healing, science, ...) and critically examine their engagement with these categories in Buddhist Studies by making two opposing arguments that are equally valid. By doing so, we hope to open up a space to articulate the challenges we face in putting emic categories in dialogue with more traditional religious studies categories, and what we gain and lose by doing so.

Possible co-sponsorship with the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit and the Global-Critical Philosophy of Religions Unit.

Buddhism and Gender Based Violence (Contact Ann Gleig, [Ann.Gleig@ucf.edu](mailto:Ann.Gleig@ucf.edu) and Sarah Jacoby, [s-jacoby@northwestern.edu](mailto:s-jacoby@northwestern.edu))

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed against an individual because of their gender or violence that impacts people of a particular gender disproportionately. As reported by the United Nations, women are disproportionately harmed by GBV, largely due to systemic gender inequality. This roundtable seeks to illuminate and examine the different ways that GBV is reproduced and resisted in Buddhist cultures and contexts. It also considers the question of



whether GBV, a relatively new concept, can be retrospectively applied. Buddhism and Gender Based Violence or Gender Based Violence in Buddhism

Buddhist Encounters in Yunnan (Contact: Megan Bryson, [mbryson4@utk.edu](mailto:mbryson4@utk.edu) or Lu Huang, [lu.huang@temple.edu](mailto:lu.huang@temple.edu))

This panel explores interactions between different forms of Buddhism in southwest China's Yunnan Province. Yunnan is known for its diversity, which extends to the many forms of Buddhism practiced there, past and present. We seek papers that consider encounters between different forms of Buddhism (e.g., different languages, traditions, ethnic groups, etc.) in Yunnan. The papers are welcome to focus on a specific site, text, or figure, and we are open to different time periods and methods.

Buddhist Languages and the Language of the Buddha in Early South Asia (Contact: Liyu Hua, [lh569@cornell.edu](mailto:lh569@cornell.edu) or Anne Blackburn [amb242@cornell.edu](mailto:amb242@cornell.edu))

The panel aims to explore how early South Asian Buddhists utilized languages, embraced and critiqued Brahmanical language theories, and developed their own theories of language. We seek to delve into the topic by examining the practical and theoretical aspects of language as understood by the early South Asian Buddhists. Individual presentations will encompass topics such as the stage of fluid Middle Indo-Aryan languages and their role in the formation of Buddhist canons. We will reconsider the fluidity of the MIA texts and the process of linguistic standardization in the light of intellectual reflections on the nature of language in commentarial and scholastic texts and associated knowledge of languages (grammar, etymology, etc.)

Buddhist Narratives and Lay Buddhism (Contact: Julian Butterfield, [butterf@stanford.edu](mailto:butterf@stanford.edu))

This panel explores Buddhist narratives by, about, and/or for laypeople, considering how stories contribute to our understanding of Buddhist practices, lives, and histories outside the monastery. We seek short research-grounded papers from scholars working with diverse narrative media (text, image, song, film, et cetera) across historical and geographic contexts.

Collective Mandala: Interdisciplinary Collaborations in Buddhist Studies (Contact: Manuel Lopez, [mlopezzafra@ncf.edu](mailto:mlopezzafra@ncf.edu))

We invite scholars in Buddhist Studies to submit proposals for the round table, "Collective Mandala: Interdisciplinary Collaborations in Buddhist Studies." This round table seeks to showcase the significance of collaborative projects in Buddhist Studies. We encourage contributions that transcend disciplinary boundaries, fostering a collective understanding of Buddhism's richness, diversity, and complexity. The round table aims to highlight how collaborative efforts (across disciplines as well as across cultures) can provide new insights into our field.

Contemporary Buddhisms (Contact: Brian J. Nichols, [bnichols@mtroyal.ca](mailto:bnichols@mtroyal.ca))

This panel will explore diverse ways Buddhist traditions in Asia and beyond are adapting to twenty-first-century conditions in response to political, economic, ecological, and social challenges and realities. Scholars conducting ethnographic studies of contemporary communities are encouraged to submit proposals.

Critical Examination of the Relationship between Gender and Morality in Buddhism (Contact: Hiroko Kawanami, [h.kawanami@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:h.kawanami@lancaster.ac.uk))

This panel seeks a discursive space and invites discussions to critically examine the relationship between gender and morality in Buddhist monastic communities and understand why so many LGBTQIAs in the West try to hide their 'true' identity in their Buddhist communities. It is an attempt to deconstruct the sexual binary conventionally accepted in Buddhist studies and understand what a non-binary position implies to Buddhist practitioners both lay and monastic. It hopes to problematize the binary assumption that links morality and the female body in Buddhism, and understand the practice of celibacy for transgender nuns, and non-binary practitioners in the monastic community, and explore various avenues that Buddhist women pursue in their struggle to achieve liberation.

The panel also questions why Asian Buddhist nuns, who have become freed from patriarchal pressures go on to adhere to a stricter moral framework in the monastic community, which confines them to many communal rules and norms. Every feature of their mode of conduct is restrictive and even their religious attire is aimed at preserving feminine virtues associated with traditional good womanhood in a patriarchal society. And yet, many modern young women accept them without resistance. In addition, the panel hopes to examine why the notion of motherhood continues to hold an important image for celibate nuns who take on the role of honorary mothers to monks and transgender Buddhists becoming active nurturers in their role as donors to the monastic community.

Empowerment of Lay Buddhist Practitioners, Egalitarianism, and Challenge of Monastic Authority (Contact: Xiao HAN, [han.xiao@courrier.ugam.ca](mailto:han.xiao@courrier.ugam.ca))

This panel seeks to shift the focus from global, well-established, institutionalized Buddhist organizations to critically examine the significantly expanding influence of ordinary laypersons and practitioners in contemporary Buddhism, particularly in countries outside of Asia, from diverse perspectives: ethnographically, historically, sociologically, etc. It will emphasize lay practitioners' roles, both organized and unstructured, in sustaining monastic communities and in fostering egalitarian organizational structures within Buddhist institutions. Additionally, this discussion will examine how these lay actors are challenging traditional monastic hierarchies and authority, contributing significantly to the reinterpretation and adaptation of Buddhist education, rituals, and doctrines. The panel will also be interested in discussing the democratization of Buddhist institutions, the rise of socially engaged movements and ecumenism within Buddhism in contemporary global contexts, highlighting the empowerment brought about by transnational networks, international politics, and digital media.

Gender and Sexuality across Buddhist Traditions (Contact: Lu Huang, [lu.huang@temple.edu](mailto:lu.huang@temple.edu))

This panel explores the issue of gender and sexuality across Buddhist traditions. We seek papers that discuss these issues from various perspectives (e.g., doctrinal, philosophical, historical, anthropological, etc.) The papers are welcome to focus on a specific school, text, figure, or region, and we are open to different time periods and methods.

Green Orientalism and Imagining Buddhism: Nature, Religion, and the Global Politics of Environmentalism (Contact: Marielle Harrison, [mbh7@uchicago.edu](mailto:mbh7@uchicago.edu) or Bruce Winkelman, [bwinkelman@uchicago.edu](mailto:bwinkelman@uchicago.edu))

This panel seeks to expose a certain type of Orientalist assumption that often arises in popular understandings of Buddhist traditions. Drawing on Larry Lohmann's concept of "Green Orientalism," we will explore different ways in which Western constructions of "Eastern" religions are romanticized and used as resources for modern liberal and environmental values.

Images, Caves and Stone Inscriptions: Funerary Practices among Buddhist Women in Asia (Contact: Lan LI, [lil148@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lil148@mcmaster.ca))

This panel aims to delve into the Buddhist practices and devotional projects conducted by non-mainstream communities like women in Asia. I invite scholars to collaboratively investigate the Buddhist funerary practices of female practitioners by examining three types of materials:

textual records, archaeological evidence, and epigraphical sources. This study will shed light on exploring women's role, whether as monastics or laity, in the dissemination of Buddhism.

Images of Buddhism, Buddhist Images (Contact: Brooke Schedneck, [schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu))

This panel surveys the multiple meanings of photographs, statues, figures, and representations of Buddhism. Such images have played a significant role in the transmission of the tradition, but less attention has been paid to the reception of various types of religious media within Buddhist studies. What do photos of famous monks mean to contemporary practitioners? How have historical actors and texts considered Buddha statues? I am looking for co-panelists to create a diverse set of papers for broadening and theorizing our understanding of the reception of Buddhist images.

Investigating Buddhist Wonder Houses: The Pasts, Presents, and Futures of Museums of the Buddha (Contact: Aik Sai Goh, [ag2yd@virginia.edu](mailto:ag2yd@virginia.edu) and Stephanie Bell, [sab2346@columbia.edu](mailto:sab2346@columbia.edu))

The emergence of Buddhist museums was first brought to Western scholarly attention by the anthropologist Louis Gabaude who reported on a "new phenomenon in Thai monasteries: The Stūpa-Museum" (2003). Since then, scholars such as Yui Suzuki (2007), Justin McDaniel (2017), Pamela Winfield (2021), and Aik Sai Goh (2022) have found the phenomenon of Buddhist museums productive to think with.

This session examines past and present manifestations of Buddhist museums broadly defined. These may be archaeological site museums, museumified historic temples, memorial museums, open-air museological theme parks, arts museums, art galleries, museums inside temples, temples inside museums, hybrid stūpa-museums, or temple-museums. What do these tell us about secular and sacred places in their respective contexts? Why did governments, organizations, or individuals establish Buddhist museums? What regional differences may account for the different types of Buddhist museums?

On the Margins of Buddhism and Heritage (Contact: Paulina Kolata, [pkk@hum.ku.dk](mailto:pkk@hum.ku.dk), or Paride Stortini, [paride.stortini@ugent.be](mailto:paride.stortini@ugent.be))

This roundtable will facilitate a discussion on how the study of Buddhism contributes to rethinking "heritage" (engaging and venturing beyond UNESCO definitions) and vice versa. We welcome short presentations from scholars working across geographic contexts (including the intersections of Buddhism and heritage beyond Asia) and methodological approaches (historical, social-scientific, theoretical).

Violence and the Problem of Evil in the Buddhist Traditions (Contact: Eric Haruki Swanson, [eric.swanson@lmu.edu](mailto:eric.swanson@lmu.edu))

This paper session seeks to explore the problem of evil as expressed in Buddhist traditions across geographical areas and historical time. In recognition of the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme: Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, we especially invite explorations of the negotiation of evil as it pertains to the margins. How is salvation articulated, whether through text, image, or practice, in the face of violence and evil acts? This paper session invites scholars of all ranks including graduate students working across historic, geographic, and methodological contexts.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Further information about the Online June Sessions will be forthcoming from AAR. When you submit the proposal to PAPERS, you will be able to select the Online June Sessions as an option. Please consult the above CFP for proposal ideas and reach out to the organizer about whether it will online or in-person. We discourage roundtable submissions for the June session as these are best carried out in person.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit is the largest and most diverse forum for Buddhist studies in North America. We embrace the full historical range of the Buddhist tradition from its inception some two-and-a-half millennia ago to the present and span its entire geographical sweep — the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan, and the West. In addition to being historically and geographically inclusive, we have made efforts to encourage methodological plurality. Papers presented in recent years reflect, in addition to the philological and textual approaches of classic Buddhology, the methods of intellectual history, institutional history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, gender and cultural studies, art history, literary theory, and postcolonial studies. We will continue to encourage cross-disciplinary exchange. This Unit is the forum of choice for many established scholars. For some years now, we have also striven to provide a forum for younger scholars to aid them in establishing their careers. Under normal circumstances, at least one session at the Annual Meeting is devoted to four or five individual papers; often many or all of these are from graduate students or younger scholars making their first academic presentation at a national conference. In recent years, a growing number of foreign scholars have come to recognize this Unit as a valuable forum to submit proposals, including scholars whose primary language is not English. We wish to continue to promote communication with scholars abroad and to provide opportunities for younger scholars. Finally, in recent years, the Buddhism Unit has hosted

several broader critical conversations about changing methodological approaches in the field of Buddhist Studies. Because it draws diverse scholars from across the field, the Buddhism Unit at the AAR plays a special role in being a forum for conversations about disciplinary formation.

## **Chairs**

- [Amy P. Langenberg, Eckerd College](#)  
[langenap@eckerd.edu](mailto:langenap@eckerd.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Bryan Lowe, Princeton University](#)  
[bdlowe@princeton.edu](mailto:bdlowe@princeton.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Buddhist Critical–Constructive Reflection Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In–Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Buddhist Critical–Constructive Reflection Unit explores how Buddhist thought and practice can address contemporary issues and, more broadly, how Buddhist modes of understanding can inform or be informed by academic study (in Religious Studies, Philosophy, Ethics, Theology, Sociology, Economics, etc.). With this dialogical approach in mind, we seek to support conversations that bring diverse perspectives to bear on the work of critical and constructive reflection.

This year, we welcome paper and panel proposals on any topic pertaining to the unit’s areas of focus. We particularly invite proposals that engage with the theme for the 2024 meeting, Violence, Non–Violence and the Margin, as well as those that might contribute to themes that our members have suggested, as indicated below. Where an organizer’s contact email is provided, those interested in contributing to a proposal on that theme are encouraged to contact the organizer directly regarding a possible panel proposal.

### **Author meets author: the two truths in Buddhist Studies**

This roundtable invites Buddhist Studies scholars to take part in an exercise of self–reflection. Each speaker will pick a category (gender, feminism, agency, body, mind, medicine, healing, science, ...) and critically examine their engagement with these categories in Buddhist Studies

by making two opposing arguments that are equally valid. By doing so, we hope to open up a space to articulate the challenges we face in putting emic categories in dialogue with more traditional religious studies categories, and what we gain and lose by doing so. (Contact: Kin Cheung, [cheungk@moravian.edu](mailto:cheungk@moravian.edu); Jue Liang, [jue.liang@case.edu](mailto:jue.liang@case.edu); and Andrew S. Taylor, [ataylor9@css.edu](mailto:ataylor9@css.edu))

Buddhist perspectives on critical digital literacy (Contact: [kim.lam@deakin.edu.au](mailto:kim.lam@deakin.edu.au))

Critical-constructive evaluation of modern Buddhist developments

Each presentation on this panel will critically evaluate one modern Buddhist development, by drawing both on criteria of any past Buddhist tradition(s) and any modern discipline(s). The evaluation should include the presenter's assessment of both positive (beneficial) and negative (deleterious) aspects of the modern Buddhist development in light of both those criteria. (Contact: John Makransky, [John.Makransky@bc.edu](mailto:John.Makransky@bc.edu))

Defining the scope of engaged Buddhism: debates, oversights, and missing pieces

Images of Buddhism, Buddhist Images

This panel surveys the multiple meanings of photographs, statues, figures, and representations of Buddhism. Such images have played a significant role in the transmission of the tradition, but less attention has been paid to the reception of various types of religious media within Buddhist studies. What do photos of famous monks mean to contemporary practitioners? How have historical actors and texts considered Buddha statues? I am looking for co-panelists to create a diverse set of papers for broadening and theorizing our understanding of the reception of Buddhist images. (Contact: Brooke Schedneck, [schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu))

Psychedelic Buddhism: problems and potentials

Since Buddhism entered the North American consciousness, it has consistently bumped elbows with psychedelic culture. From Aldous Huxley and Alan Watts in the fifties and sixties, to Tricycle's special issue on "Buddhist Psychedelics" in the nineties, to today's emerging Psychedelic Buddhist syncretism, these two traditions have come together in complex and heretofore understudied ways. This panel will explore this convergence of Buddhism and psychedelics and think through some its problems and potentials in both historical and

contemporary times. It welcomes papers that approach this topic from any methodology, that engage with any Buddhist tradition, philosophical school, or practice lineage, and that think through psychedelics broadly construed. Papers should engage in constructive and/or critical reflection on the idea of Psychedelic Buddhism and are encouraged to approach the topic in not only a descriptive fashion but a normative manner. (Contact: Colin H. Simonds, [11cs77@queensu.ca](mailto:11cs77@queensu.ca))

Putting Buddhist environmental ethics to work: contemplative practice and creative tactics (Contact: Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, [curley.32@osu.edu](mailto:curley.32@osu.edu))

[Buddhist ethical responses to current events –possible cosponsorship](#)

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Buddhist Critical–Constructive Reflection Unit explores how Buddhist thought and practice can address contemporary issues and, more broadly, how Buddhist modes of understanding can inform or be informed by academic study (in Religious Studies, Philosophy, Ethics, Theology, Sociology, Economics, etc.). With this dialogical approach in mind, we seek to support conversations that bring diverse perspectives to bear on the work of critical and constructive reflection.

This year, we welcome paper and panel proposals on any topic pertaining to the unit's areas of focus. For the Online June Sessions, we particularly invite proposals that might contribute to themes that our members have suggested, as indicated below. Those interested in contributing to a proposal on that theme are encouraged to contact the organizer directly regarding a possible panel proposal.

Buddhism and International Humanitarian Law (Contact: Christina Kilby, [kilbyca@jmu.edu](mailto:kilbyca@jmu.edu))

Buddhist Studies and Disability Studies in Dialogue: Affect, Animacies, Embodiment, Exemplars (Contact: Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, [curley.32@osu.edu](mailto:curley.32@osu.edu))

## **Statement of Purpose**



The Buddhist Critical–Constructive Reflection Unit explores how Buddhist thought and practice can address contemporary issues and how Buddhist modes of understanding can inform or be informed by academic studies (in Religious Studies, Philosophy, Ethics, Theology, Sociology, Economics, etc.).

## Chairs

- [Barbra R. Clayton, Mount Allison University](#)  
[bclayton@mta.ca](mailto:bclayton@mta.ca)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Melissa Anne–Marie Curley, Ohio State University](#)  
[curley.32@osu.edu](mailto:curley.32@osu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Buddhist Philosophy Unit

### Meeting

In–Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Members are encouraged to submit papers on any topic that fits under the purview of the unit. Due to the number of high quality proposals we receive, it is generally best to gather several presenters and submit a proposal for a panel on a topic. Individual paper proposals are rarely accepted. Panels can be organized in a variety of formats — with shorter or longer presentations, one or several or no respondents. Please feel free to reach out to the co–chairs (Karin Meyers, [karin.L.meyers@gmail.com](mailto:karin.L.meyers@gmail.com) and Connie Kassor, [constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu](mailto:constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu)) with any questions about organizing a paper or submitting a panel. So far, this year the following panel topics have been suggested. If you are interested in one of these topics please contact the point person listed:

- Omnibus panel for grad students (Constance Kassor, [e.kassor@lawrence.edu](mailto:e.kassor@lawrence.edu))
- Buddhist philosophy and translation (Pierre–Julien Harter, [pjharter@unm.edu](mailto:pjharter@unm.edu))
- Buddhist and Indigenous Thought (Jessica Zu, [xzu@usc.edu](mailto:xzu@usc.edu))
- Ambedkar as Buddhist Philosophy (William Edelglass, [williame@buddhistinquiry.org](mailto:williame@buddhistinquiry.org))
- Emotion and Yogacara (Davey Tomlinson, [tomlinson@villanova.edu](mailto:tomlinson@villanova.edu))
- Textual–focused panel / possible co–sponsor with Hindu philosophy (Chihying Wu, [chihying\\_wu@berkeley.edu](mailto:chihying_wu@berkeley.edu))
- [Buddhist ethical responses to current events / co sponsor with BCCR](#) (William Edelglass, [williame@buddhistinquiry.org](mailto:williame@buddhistinquiry.org))
- [What is the Buddha’s mind like? / Omniscience \(possible co–sponsor with Global Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit\)](#)
- Decolonizing Buddhist philosophy in the classroom (Jessica Zu, [xzu@usc.edu](mailto:xzu@usc.edu))

- Public philosophy / writing Buddhist philosophy for the public (Constance Kassor, [e.kassor@lawrence.edu](mailto:e.kassor@lawrence.edu))
- [Translation Workshop: Akalaṅka's Astaśatī and its Non-Jain Interlocutors](#) (Anil Mundra, [mundra@rutgers.edu](mailto:mundra@rutgers.edu))
- Buddhist Epistemology and Virtue Epistemology (Yat-Ching Yeung, [yat.ching.yeung@temple.edu](mailto:yat.ching.yeung@temple.edu))

We especially welcome panels that represent diverse voices. In assembling your panels, please consider the demographic and professional diversity of potential participants. In an effort to encourage more graduate students and early-career faculty to participate in our unit, please forward this call for proposals widely.

Review Process: Once papers and panels are submitted to the Buddhist Philosophy Unit, steering committee members perform a blind review based on the intellectual merits of the proposals, their fit with the BPU's statement of purpose, complementarity to other proposed topics, area diversity, and novelty of the topic for the BPU or field. Committee members cannot see any identifying information about the proposers. Based on the committee's ratings and comments, the chairs recommend several possible slates of panels to the steering committee, including co-sponsorships with other units. At this time, the chairs (who can see identifying information) may also share demographic information about the proposers in order to promote greater diversity of representation (including gender, race, career status or stage, and people who have not presented in the BPU before). Through discussion via Zoom or email, the committee forms a consensus about which panels to accept. To ensure the integrity of this process, please do not include identifying information about the proposers in the wording of the proposals.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a forum for the scholarly study of Buddhist philosophical thought in its various forms across all regions and traditions of the Buddhist world. We seek to develop tightly organized sessions that deal not only with intra-Buddhist philosophical issues — such as those involving major philosophical traditions and major thinkers and texts — but also with topics involving the relationship between Buddhist philosophy and other traditions of philosophical thought, both ancient and modern. The Unit likewise provides a venue to examine the relationship between Buddhist thought and Buddhist practice. We encourage work on the full range of Buddhist philosophy, including but not limited to metaphysics, epistemology, soteriology, ethics, social philosophy, political philosophy, philosophy of language, process philosophy, philosophy of mind, and cross-cultural philosophy, etc. The Buddhist Philosophy Unit is committed to promoting greater diversity and inclusion within the Unit and in the field at large.

## Chairs

- [Constance Kassor, Lawrence University](mailto:constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu)  
[constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu](mailto:constance.e.kassor@lawrence.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Karin Meyers, Mangalam Research Center](mailto:karin.l.meyers@gmail.com)  
[karin.l.meyers@gmail.com](mailto:karin.l.meyers@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Catholic Studies Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Catholic Studies Unit invites submissions on diverse subjects in the study of Catholics and Catholicism across time and place. We are interested in proposals that are attentive to the ways in which history and theory relate to one another within the field of Catholic Studies. Co-chairs are happy to consult with those who are developing individual papers, paper sessions, roundtable proposals, or other creative formats.

The Unit encourages proposals on the following topics for the 2024 meeting in San Diego, CA.

#### Sense of Brown Catholicisms

The Catholic Studies Unit requests proposals that explore the conceptual and ethnographic viability of “brown Catholicisms.” Here, the prompt for thinking is José Muñoz’ work *Sense of Brown*, an episodic exploration of feelings of brownness, that is a non-identitarian way of being (manera de ser) that he names “a brown commons.” While rooted in Chicano movements in the 1970s, Muñoz concept of the sense of brown is a being-with and being-in-difference that he extends beyond Latin American and Latinx communities to mark the existence of global diasporic communities as an already-existing brown commons. Is one “manner of being brown” shaped by Catholic rituals and practices? How does “brown-ness” shape Catholicism? What might a “brown” Catholicism look like? In what ways do brown Catholic aesthetics and performances invoke alternate futurities, or create modes of being that contest and exceed the structures of coloniality?

#### Queer Sacramentality

Building from David Tracy's theology, Fr. Andrew Greeley's notion of a "Catholic sacramental imagination" has remained a vital heuristic for the study and expression of Catholicism. Just to take one example, the Met Gala of 2018 operated under the theme "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination." Greeley's words graced the opening hallway and animated the entire exhibit. The Catholic Studies Unit seeks proposals that explore sacramentality, but with an eye on the ways queer sacramental forms transform, challenge, or augment traditional representations of the Catholic sacramental imagination.

### South Asian Catholicisms

The Catholic Studies Unit requests proposals that address South Asian Catholicism. We are particularly interested in exploring both local and global dimensions of South Asian Catholicism in diaspora. Areas of interrogation include: Hindu-Catholic relations, both on the subcontinent and abroad; vernacular theologies that grapple with emplaced meaning-making and/or the experience of belonging to a minority religion; historical and ethnographic approaches to material mediation of Catholic/Hindu divinity in an interfaith contexts; challenges to the very category of "Catholic" versus/with/alongside/through practices and/categories of "Hindu," "Muslim," "Jain," "Sikh," etc. in South Asian contexts.

### Women & Minoritized Creators and the New Catholic Horror

The Catholic Studies Unit requests proposals that address new developments at the intersection of Catholicism and the horror genre. In particular, we are interested in proposals that explore the work of women and minoritized directors and writers in this area and that consider the ways their works challenge or revise standard tropes. Roundtable proposals on a particular manifestation of this phenomenon--say, on the 2019 film *St. Maud* and its director Rose Glass--would be particularly compelling. Proposals in this vein that help answer the question "Why study Catholic horror?" are also particularly welcome.

### Structure

We urge all paper and panel proposals actively to address questions of format and timing. It is the Catholic Studies Unit's preference to have individual papers never exceed 12 minutes in length and for every panel to include a well-planned allotment of time for audience involvement. We strongly encourage proposals that include innovative, interactive, and dynamic formats.

### Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides a scholarly forum to study the global Catholic community. We welcome critical studies, cultural, ethical, historical, and theological perspectives. We seek to mirror the subject community's diversity in pursuing equally diverse methods to study that community.

## Chairs

- [J. Michelle Molina, Northwestern University](#)  
[molina@northwestern.edu](mailto:molina@northwestern.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [John Seitz, Fordham University](#)  
[jseitz@fordham.edu](mailto:jseitz@fordham.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Childhood Studies and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Childhood Studies and Religion Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers and sessions that engage the intersection of religion and childhood or children, broadly construed. We are especially interested in proposals from non-Euro-American and non-Christian perspectives, and we welcome a range of methodologies from across the humanities and the social sciences.

For the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting, we hope to organize sessions around one or more of the following topics:

Re-imagining Eschatology: Pediatric Hope, Chronic Illness, and Children's Experiences

A book panel that engages Duane Bidwell's new text *After the Worst Day Ever: What Sick Kids Know About Sustaining Hope in Chronic Illness* offers an opportunity to re-imagine hope, eschatology, chronic illness, and healthcare from the perspective of children, asking, "What do sick children know about hope that the rest of us have forgotten?" The book uses grounded theory to identify five practices that children with end-stage renal disease use to nurture hope: realizing community, claiming power, attending to Spirit, choosing trust, and maintaining identity. Scholars and practitioners who would like to participate in the panel conversation should send a brief description of their interest to Duane Bidwell at [duane.bidwell@gmail.com](mailto:duane.bidwell@gmail.com)

## Children, Childhood, and Disability

How are disabled children represented across different times, places, and traditions? How do they appear (or disappear) in religious spaces? Is it possible to separate the study of children and disability from the long history of infantilizing people with disabilities?

## Theologies of Child Well-Being

What would it mean to devote sustained attention to children in religious and theological studies? What could sustained theological and religious reflection secure for children that might promote their thriving in a world not ergonomic, a world even sometimes hostile, toward them?

If you are interested in proposing a session that is not listed above, we welcome panel and roundtable proposals. In your submission, please indicate the type of session you are proposing (panel or roundtable). Innovative and interactive sessions are especially welcome, and our co-chairs are happy to discuss what category might best fit any given proposal. In keeping with our commitment to presenting diverse perspectives and voices in each of our sessions, we also urge you to indicate what types of diversity your proposal or participants might represent.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Childhood Studies and Religion Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers and sessions that engage the intersection of religion and childhood or children, broadly construed. We are especially interested in proposals from non-Euro-American and non-Christian perspectives, and we welcome a range of methodologies from across the humanities and the social sciences.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit's overall aim is to investigate the complex and multifaceted relation between religion and childhood. The specific goals of the Unit are as follows:

- Provide a forum for focused interdisciplinary and interreligious dialogue about the diverse relations of children and religion
- Heighten academic interest in this topic in all fields represented in the AAR
- Prepare scholars in religious studies to contribute to wider academic discussions about children and childhoods
- Lend the voice of the academy to current questions of public policy and child advocacy

The focus of the Unit is both timely and significant given the present concern for children across the globe and the rising interdisciplinary academic interest in childhood studies. The Unit functions as a forum at the AAR for advancing childhood studies as a line of scholarly inquiry; we also

welcome collaborations with other AAR program units for which childhood studies represents a "new" intervention.

## **Chairs**

- [Wendy Love Anderson, Washington University, Saint Louis](#)  
[wendylove@gmail.com](mailto:wendylove@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Kishundra King, Iliff School of Theology](#)  
[kking@iliff.edu](mailto:kking@iliff.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Chinese Christianities Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Chinese Christianities Unit at the American Academy of Religion invites papers for the 2024 Annual Meeting that speak to themes that expand the breadth of what can be covered in the field of Chinese Christianities.

The Chinese Christianities Unit began as a seminar in 2015. From 2015–2019, the seminar explored various ways in which Chinese Christianities cross boundaries in regional, social, religious, and ecclesiological ways. In so doing, scholars in Chinese Christianities have developed understandings of the field that challenge the consistency of both the terms ‘Chinese’ and ‘Christianities,’ as both may refer to a range of phenomena in our burgeoning field of study. As a unit, the Chinese Christianities Unit has explored how terms like ‘Bible’ and ‘Sinophone’ are also germane to the expansion of what the field could entail, opening up multiple worlds that Chinese Christianities may inhabit.

As we continue to expand the scope of what Chinese Christianities could cover, we welcome papers that address the following topics:

- Chinese Christianities and literature, protests, and public theologies
- Chinese Christianities, nationalisms, transnationalisms, and minorities
- Chinese Christianities, transhumanism, and artificial intelligence
- Chinese Christianities and Sinophone studies
- Chinese Christianities in China–Africa geographies
- Chinese Christianities in the covid–19 pandemic

We also seek proposals for state of the field panels and collaborations with other groups, especially the Chinese Religions Unit.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same as above.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a collaborative forum for scholars of different disciplines to engage in an academic discourse about the field of Chinese Christianities. Christianity is the fastest growing religion in mainland China today, and arguably the religion of choice for a growing number of diasporic Chinese. “Chinese” is an expansive term, including mainland China proper as well as a large, linguistically, and culturally diverse diaspora, encompassing more than a fifth of the world’s population; the Han Chinese people are sometimes described as the world’s largest ethnic group. Hence, with the increasing critical mass of Chinese Christians, there has likewise been a growing academic interest in various instantiations of Chinese Christianities, as understood across geographies (e.g., mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, North America, etc.) and groupings (e.g., house and state-sanctioned churches, Catholic, Pentecostal, etc.). Chinese Christianities both transcend and hinder a number of regional, social, religious, etc. boundaries. Over the course of these five years, this unit will offer a unique opportunity for scholars to engage and to debate the implications of the multiplicity of Chinese Christianities with regards to the boundaries they engage.

## **Chairs**

- [Justin Tse, Singapore Management University](mailto:justintse@smu.edu.sg)  
[justintse@smu.edu.sg](mailto:justintse@smu.edu.sg)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Stephanie Wong, Villanova University](mailto:stephanie.wong@villanova.edu)  
[stephanie.wong@villanova.edu](mailto:stephanie.wong@villanova.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Chinese Religions Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**



All proposals for both panels and papers are very welcome and will be given careful consideration. We encourage panel organizers to take various forms of diversity into account, including race, gender, rank, kind of institution, region, etc., especially for presenters and respondents. For gender diversity, you can look for participants in the database Women in the Study of Asian Religions (<http://libblogs.luc.edu/wisar/>). For our 2024 Annual Meeting of the AAR, the presidential theme is violence and non-violence, and proposals related to this topic are very welcome.

Please feel free to direct any general questions about panel and paper submissions to the co-chairs.

If you wish to contribute to the following topics, please get in touch with the contact person listed:

- Buddhist Encounters in Yunnan (Megan Bryson, [mbryson4@utk.edu](mailto:mbryson4@utk.edu) or Lu Huang, [huang@temple.edu](mailto:huang@temple.edu))
- Chinese vernacular religion and art (Alia Gohr, [agoehr@umn.edu](mailto:agoehr@umn.edu))
- Chinese Buddhist Canon (Darui Long, [daruil@uwest.edu](mailto:daruil@uwest.edu))
- Religion and Overseas Chinese (Kai Shmushko [k.shmushko@uva.nl](mailto:k.shmushko@uva.nl) or to Jens Reinke [j.reinke@vu.nl](mailto:j.reinke@vu.nl))

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is dedicated to the academic, comparative study of Chinese religions in all forms, both historical and contemporary. The Unit makes every effort to recognize Chinese voices in religious practice as well as scholarship, and applies rigorous standards of linguistic, cultural, historical, and social-scientific understanding to the study of religion in China.

## Chairs

- [Susan Andrews, Mount Allison University](#)  
[sandrews@mta.ca](mailto:sandrews@mta.ca)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Rongdao Lai, McGill University](#)  
[rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca](mailto:rongdao.lai@mcgill.ca)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Christian Spirituality Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Christian Spirituality Program Unit is seeking proposals for papers on the topics listed below. Proposals which include some visual component and/or audio component to increase interest, accessibility and participant engagement will be rated higher in the selection process.

- Taking Care of the Broken Body of God: Embodiment, Incarnation, and Cosmic Spirituality – Solutions to the Environmental Crisis
- Spirituality and Artificial Intelligence – Strangers, Partners or Rivals? Given that a core foundation for Christian spirituality and spirituality in general is the human capacity for self-consciousness and the concept of slow knowing (lectio / visio divina) and designers of artificial intelligence are working towards greater capacity for “AI self-awareness” and speed in knowing, what do we conceive as the future interaction between AI and Spirituality?
- [Contemporary Spiritual Practices and their Dis/connections to Social Justice and Collective Healing with respect to Refugees and Migration; confirmed co-sponsor: Religion and Migration Unit](#)
- Emerging Contemplative Methods for Research in Spirituality
- Prisons and Incarceration in Christian Spiritualities: How do Prisons Shape the Tradition and How is the Tradition Fostered in Prisons?
- Christian Spirituality at Different Stages of Life: Generational Divides and Spirituality of Aging
- [A Critical Analysis of how the Lives and Experiences of Persons with Disabilities and/or their Communities Express Prayer in Distinctive, Constructive, or Liberative ways](#); confirmed co-sponsor: Religion and Disability Studies Unit

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Christian Spirituality Program Unit is seeking proposals for papers on the topic listed below. Proposals which include some visual component and/or audio component to increase interest, accessibility and participant engagement will be rated higher in the selection process.

Political Christian Spirituality: Politics as Democratization and Belonging – Present and Past?

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit serves as a forum for scholars working in the interdisciplinary field of Christian spirituality. It is committed to the following: • Developing, refining, and demonstrating appropriate methodologies for the academic study of spirituality. • Exploring models for describing and facilitating interdisciplinary conversation on the nature of spirituality among religion scholars of all perspectives and religions. • Initiating discussion in the field of global spirituality, both religious and secular. • Articulating the connections between scholarship and spiritual practice. • Ensuring diversity in denominational affiliation, gender, race, and ethnic backgrounds.

## Chairs

- [David B. Perrin, St. Jerome's University](mailto:dperrin@uwaterloo.ca)  
[dperrin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:dperrin@uwaterloo.ca)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Beringia Zen, Saint Agnes Medical Center](mailto:beringia.zen@avera.org)  
[beringia.zen@avera.org](mailto:beringia.zen@avera.org)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Christian Systematic Theology Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Christian Systematic Theology Section invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels on diverse themes in the broader field of systematic theology. While we welcome proposals that ground arguments in pre-existing texts from various traditions and discussions, papers should be constructive rather than merely historical.

This year, we especially invite proposals related to pneumatology, for example:

- Spirit, interiority, and experience
- Inspiration, improvisation, and imagination
- Holy Spirit and the incarnation
- Grace, the Spirit, and eschatology
- Spirit, rupture, and resistance
- Freedom, liberation, and the Spirit
- The work of the Spirit in the individual, in community, and in history

In relation to the presidential theme "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," we are also interested in proposals around the following topics:

- Violence in/of systematic thought
- The possibility of nonviolence
- Divine violence
- Atonement, salvation, and sacrifice
- Political theology and politics of marginality, violence, protest

Furthermore, we invite proposals that consider the method and modes of doing theology, such as:

- Theological aesthetics in relation to social and political transformation
- Theological method, the task of theology, and theological imagination
- Pedagogical imagination: How do we introduce theology?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit promotes new constructive work in Christian systematic theology that is in dialogue with the historical Christian theological traditions on the one hand and with all aspects of the contemporary context on the other — intellectual movements, methodologies, multiple theological and religious perspectives, and ethical/social/political contexts.

## Chairs

- [Natalia Marandiuc, United Lutheran Seminary](mailto:nmarandiuc@uls.edu)  
[nmarandiuc@uls.edu](mailto:nmarandiuc@uls.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Hanna Reichel, Princeton Theological Seminary](mailto:hanna.reichel@ptsem.edu)  
[hanna.reichel@ptsem.edu](mailto:hanna.reichel@ptsem.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Class, Religion, and Theology Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Proposals in response to the calls below should clearly indicate how consideration of class inequalities and dynamics shapes the paper's analysis or conclusions and/or how the paper foregrounds issues of class, labor, or workers (while recognizing their intersections with other dimensions of inequality).

General Call: We invite paper or panel proposals that explore the role of class, labor, and/or worker issues in religious communities and traditions or the significance of class, labor, and worker issues in the study of religion and theology or address major questions in the study of class, labor, or workers.

Special Emphases This Year: While open to any proposals relevant to the general call, this year we especially welcome paper or panel proposals addressing the following:

Relationships between structures violence & capital/profit; Forces that obstruct or undermine class solidarity, solidarity among workers, solidarity between working-class and middle-class people; Impact of new technologies on workers, class inequality, and/or capitalism; Capitalism as a religion; Class and labor within global structures of capitalism; Cooperative economy or cooperative movements (both religiously and non-religiously affiliated); How capitalism/worker exploitation and White supremacy/anti-Blackness reinforce and sustain each other.

[Co-Sponsored Session with the Women and Religion unit, Body and Religion unit, and Class, Religion, and Theology unit:](#) We invite proposals addressing reproductive labor broadly defined (including the many labors of social reproduction, such as caring labor and emotional labor). We are particularly interested in understanding such labors as embodied practices/experiences within gendered, classed, and racialized structures of inequality and religious traditions. We are open to individual paper proposals, panel/roundtable proposals, or innovative interactive formats.

[Co-Sponsored Session with the Religion and Ecology unit and Class, Religion, and Theology unit:](#) We invite papers addressing the following themes: solidarity between labor (productive and reproductive) and the environment; the inclusion of nature as subaltern class; the exploitation of the labor of our nonhuman kin, ecology as a site of solidarity.

[Co-Sponsored Session with the Academic Labor and Contingent Faculty Committee \(ALCF\) and Class, Religion, and Theology unit:](#) We invite papers on any aspects of academic labor, particularly wishing to foreground the experiences of contingent faculty members. Proposals could, for example, consider structures of power and privilege within the academy (and models for holding both); interactions of gender, race, and/or disability with class inequalities within academic labor; or models of building effective solidarity among academic workers.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Proposals in response to the calls below should clearly indicate how consideration of class inequalities and dynamics shapes the paper's analysis or conclusions and/or how the paper foregrounds issues of class, labor, or workers (while recognizing their intersections with other dimensions of inequality).

General Call: We invite paper or panel proposals that explore the role of class, labor, and/or worker issues in religious communities and traditions or the significance of class, labor, and worker issues in the study of religion and theology or address major questions in the study of class, labor, or workers.

Special Emphases This Year: While open to any proposals relevant to the general call, this year we especially welcome paper or panel proposals addressing the following:

- Relationships between structures violence & capital/profit;
- Forces that obstruct or undermine class solidarity, solidarity among workers, solidarity between working-class and middle-class people;
- Impact of new technologies on workers, class inequality, and/or capitalism;
- Capitalism as a religion;
- Class and labor within global structures of capitalism;
- Cooperative economy or cooperative movements (both religiously and non-religiously affiliated);
- How capitalism/worker exploitation and White supremacy/anti-Blackness reinforce and sustain each other.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit seeks to study class as a relational concept that needs to be explored in its complex manifestations, which will yield more complex understandings of religion and theology in turn. Avoiding reductionist definitions that occur when studying each class in itself or viewing class only according to stratified income levels or particular historical and sociological markers, this Unit will investigate how classes shape up in relation and tension with each other and with religion and theology. This Unit's investigations of class, religion, and theology also include intersections with gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and ecology.

## **Chairs**

- [Kerry Danner, Georgetown University](#)  
[kerry.danner@georgetown.edu](mailto:kerry.danner@georgetown.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Jeremy Posadas, Stetson University](#)  
[prof.posadas@gmail.com](mailto:prof.posadas@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Cognitive Science of Religion Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Current Theories and Applications of the Cognitive Science of Religion

This call is intentionally broad in scope. We invite scholars who are using current cognitive theories and/or applied research in the study of religion, religions, or religious-related phenomena to submit a proposal for a paper or panel session for inclusion in the 2024 AAR-CSR Unit's sessions.

#### 4E Cognitive Approaches to Religious Phenomena

In recent years, 4E approaches to cognition have gained increasing attention. In contrast to computational approaches, which characterize cognition as a function of input and output, 4E describes cognition as embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended, complicating clear divisions between mind and world. Scholarship using this framework to explore religious phenomena has also been burgeoning. This call seeks papers exploring 4E approaches to religion. This might include instances of applied theory, methodological critics as they relate to religion, or even affinities between religious worldviews and those entailed by 4E.

#### Uncovering the Cognitive and Cultural Foundations of Gratitude

Historically, most research on gratitude as an emotional experience and its corresponding expressions has been conducted among WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) societies. The concept of gratitude and its phenomenology also has deep roots in Western civilization, and especially in Christianity. This panel explores the question of the gratitude as a universal experience and expression beyond WEIRD and Christian cultures by presenting research from a recent 3-year, multi-institution, multidisciplinary grant titled, "Uncovering the cognitive and cross-cultural foundations of gratitude". Panel participants will likely be a mix of grantees from this project as well as non-grantee invited participants.

#### Terror Management Theory and Religion

This panel will explore religion from the perspective of Terror Management Theory. Please contact Kendra Holt Moore ([kendraholtmoore@gmail.com](mailto:kendraholtmoore@gmail.com)) with questions.

#### [Cosponsored: Psychadelics and the Cognitive Science of Religion](#)

We invite proposals addressing psychedelic substances and spirit medicines in relation to contemplative practices and the neuropsychology of altered brain states, for co-sponsorship

between the Cognitive Science of Religion Unit, Contemplative Studies Unit, and Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is dedicated to advancing cognitive scientific approaches to the study of religion in a critically informed, historically responsible manner. “Cognitive science” designates a broadly interdisciplinary approach to the study of the mind that integrates research from the neurosciences, psychology (including developmental, cognitive, evolutionary, and social psychology), anthropology, and philosophy. The main goal of this Unit is to bring together cognitive scientists, historians of religion, ethnographers, empirically-oriented theologians, and philosophers of religion to explore applications of cognitive science to religious phenomena, as well as religious insights into the study of the human mind. We wish to consider ways in which historical and ethnographic data can be used to test theories and discuss theoretical and methodological concerns that are directly relevant to study design and data interpretation.

## Chairs

- [Jed Forman, University of California, Berkeley](#)  
[jed.forman@gmail.com](mailto:jed.forman@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Paul Robertson, University of New Hampshire](#)  
[paul.robertson@unh.edu](mailto:paul.robertson@unh.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Comparative Approaches to Religion and Violence Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Children, Youth, and Competing Religious Future

CARV invites papers on the ideological, rhetorical, ritual, and/or pragmatic roles of children and youth in emerging religious nationalisms, particularly in light of migration, ecological collapse, and climate skepticism. It also encourages papers that explore the roles of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and movements, particularly those that center children and youth, in determining (and resisting) the boundaries of the “nation” in discourses and practices of religious nationalisms.



## Centering Religious Marginalization: Displaced Peoples and their Allies

In response to this year's Presidential Theme, CARV invites proposals that explore religion at the margins and with regards to the marginalized: refugees, displaced persons, children, other-than-human beings, disabled persons, sexual minorities, and/or others who face exclusion or violence at the margins. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- How do boundaries and borders—conceptual, political, geographic, spatial, and natural—reinforce or mitigate processes of violence, exclusion, or marginalization? What role does spirituality play in shaping, policing, or breaking these divisions?
- How do the politics surrounding social, political, economic, religious, or educational institutions—currently and/or in historical perspective—illustrate questions of marginalization? Does religion play a unique role in this political processing? How might such analysis provide more nuanced insight into institutional futures?
- What methods or theories can acknowledge and possibly mitigate the marginalization of displaced people and/or nonhuman beings in studies of religion?

## Teaching Religion / Teaching Violence in the Global Ecumene: Radical[izing?] Religious Subjectivity in the Classroom

How does religion play host to violence, dispossession and erasure in the classroom, whether by directly enacting them or by informing youth with habits of mind that sanction such destruction and discrimination? In what contexts do religion and education map onto charges of, or anxieties about, “extremism”? In what ways can the study of religion and violence in educational settings shed light on religious communities’ shifting boundaries and/or changing understandings of religion? What opportunities does this approach offer to better understanding the multiplicity and relationality of religious groups or movements that are often thought to be distinct or separate? With these questions in mind, CARV invites papers that explore the ways in which educational goals and/or settings stage the naturalization of selfhood, bodies, places, social imaginaries and teleologies in ways that recruit religion toward violent and often political ends. Issues of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Violence as education regarding religious ways of being / acting, especially those that venture beyond the traditional bounds of religious identity.
- Configurations of “nation” and citizenship that employ discriminatory violence in institutions of religious learning.
- Charges of, or anxieties about, “extremism” and “wokeism” in the context of religion and education.
- Homeschooling as an (ironic?) effort to combat or preempt violence, and to safeguard the religious ideals of youth.

- The work of Michael Faris and the evangelical Home School Legal Defense Association in preventing legal safeguards and educational regulations designed to protect children educated outside of traditional schools.
- Competing claims by parents and educators on the minds and bodies of young persons, and the stakes for the “victory” of either side.
- The rise of individual activists and non-state organizations like Moms for Liberty, which seek (among other things) to ban books they perceive as dangerous to children’s moral and religious formation.
- The cooperation of religious and state organizations in enacting violence on Indigenous Peoples through boarding schools.
- Indigenous communities’ strategies of resistance to settler colonial (extractivist) educational regimes that undermine traditional ecological knowledge/s.
- Meaningful ways that scholars of religion might seek to address problems and injustices that arise when religion is weaponized by authors, parents, pundits, state authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other educators, for the purposes of creating, amplifying, and/or enforcing the marginalization of others.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

### **Violence at the Ballot Box: Religion in the Crosshairs of the Electoral Cycle**

In light of this year’s Presidential Theme, CARV seeks to unpack the relationship between religion and marginality as it fuels election-related violence. Broadly, CARV invites proposals that address the role that religion plays in fomenting, negotiating, or mitigating threats and acts of election violence, voter suppression, voter intimidation, online and in-person harassment, and rioting. It likewise welcomes reflections on how these acts of violence relate to, or overlap with, religiously-inspired nationalist movements and identities, as well as analyses of comparative religious and secular nationalisms.

While these issues are of obvious salience for the 2024 U.S. presidential election cycle, CARV also welcomes research that situates religion, marginality, and election violence within a comparative global framework. Fruitful lines of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

Proposals that engage the subject of (non-)violence at the margins, understanding marginality to include broader themes of borders and limits, more specific cases of marginalized peoples and groups, the intentional marginalization of others, and efforts to lay claim to the margins and marginalized identities.

Proposals that recognize the place of gender and sexuality at both the margins and center(s) of politics. These may address the (dis)location of genders and sexualities within the context of election-related violence, and could pursue questions like: How is gender / sexuality rendered central or peripheral to advocacy for, and resistance to, electoral violence? How do patriarchal religious traditions influence actors or movements who commit / support / oppose electoral violence? How are gender and sexuality leveraged as subjects of religious concern, and what role do these presumed entanglements play in the advocacy for, and resistance to, electoral violence? Why?

Proposals that query the role(s) that young people play in advancing or opposing (non-) violence as forms of religious advocacy / protest, especially those that spotlight the shifting ways in which youth and young adults are remaking or redefining religious experiences. What roles are LGBTQIA2S+ children and youth playing in determining (and resisting) the boundaries of the “nation” in religious nationalisms? What ideological, rhetorical, ritual, and/or pragmatic roles are they playing in emerging religious/secular nationalisms? Why?

## Statement of Purpose

Since the end of the Cold War, acts of religiously motivated violence have all too often become part of our quotidian existence. Scholars from various disciplines have attempted to account for these incidents, noting such issues as a resurgence of anti-colonialism, poverty and economic injustice, the failures of secular nationalism, uprooted-ness, and the loss of a homeland, and the pervasive features of globalization in its economic, political, social, and cultural forms. What are the religious narratives that help animate these violent actors? This Unit contends that the theories, methodologies, and frameworks for studying the expanding field of religion and violence remain under-explored and require interdisciplinary work and collaboration to provide greater insights into the complex issues involved. The sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, economics, and political science of religion all have provided great insights into the nature of religion and violence over the last few decades and all are arguably interdisciplinary by nature. This Unit provides a venue devoted specifically to interdisciplinary discussions of the subject. We hope to channel and enhance contributions from the historically delineated (albeit constructed) humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences. In that vein, we hope to hear papers presenting cross-disciplinary dialogue and research on the topic of religion and violence.

## Chairs

- [Flagg Miller, University of California, Davis](#)  
[fmiller@ucdavis.edu](mailto:fmiller@ucdavis.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Chase L. Way, Claremont Graduate University](#)

## **Comparative Religious Ethics Unit**

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Reflecting this year's presidential theme of "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," our call for papers focuses on how comparative religious ethics might contribute to discussions of violence and nonviolence in a way that is attentive to the experiences of marginalized communities.

Themes especially welcome this year include the following:

- Religious nationalism: What kinds of contributions might Comparative Religious Ethics and contemporary theological scholarship make to discussions of religious nationalism? Specifically, (with regard to the AAR's 2024 theme "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin",) how have religious traditions constructed militarism, violence, and the state in relation to nationalism? Contemporary or historical analyses are welcome. (Co-sponsored with the Schleiermacher Unit)
- Ethics and resistance: How have moral and religious traditions conceived of the moral right or duty to engage in resistance, whether in nonviolent or violent forms? What kinds of moral guidelines or limits are appropriate for resistance movements?
- [Violence against LGBTQ people and communities](#): In the contemporary context or historically, how have religious traditions and communities legitimated and/or resisted violence against LGBTQ people? How might queer and trans theories and/or theologies contribute to comparative religious ethical analyses of, and solutions to, these issues? We especially welcome proposals that address the raced, socioeconomic, and femme-based dynamics of some of this violence. (Co-sponsored with the Queer Studies in Religion Unit)
- Ethics and advocacy in comparative contexts: How do we distinguish—or should we—the work of ethics from that of advocacy?

### **Statement of Purpose**

While comparative assessment of the ethics of different religious groups is an ancient and widespread pursuit, the modern field of comparative religious ethics arguably dates from the founding of the Journal of Religious Ethics in 1973. (For the purposes of this statement, "ethics" as a subject will refer to reflection about how best to live as human beings; an "ethic" is one more or less determinate position on the best mode(s) of life.) While there have been a variety of motivations for the attempt to study "religious ethics" rather than or in addition to "Christian ethics," one animating idea has been the growing recognition that people from numerous religions propound sophisticated and powerful moral visions, which possess intriguing similarities and differences and are not easily reducible to a common denominator. In addition,

the variety and particular characteristics of such visions are historically and politically significant in the modern era of increasingly pervasive globalization. Indeed, comparative ethics may be desperately needed in our contemporary context of global interdependence, misunderstanding, and mutual mistrust. There are thus ample grounds, both social and purely intellectual, to suggest that this ethical variety needs to be engaged directly via rigorous comparison. Comparative ethics makes such diversity central to its analysis, which includes three main aspects: • Describes and interprets particular ethics on the basis of historical, anthropological, or other data • Compares such ethics and requires searching reflection on the methods and tools of inquiry • Engages in normative argument on the basis of such studies, and may thereby speak to contemporary concerns about overlapping identities, cultural complexity and plurality, universalism and relativism, and political problems regarding the coexistence of divergent social groups, as well as particular moral controversies. Ideally, each of these aspects enriches the others; for example, comparison across traditions helps generate more insightful interpretations of particular figures and themes. This self-conscious sophistication about differing ethical vocabularies and the analytical practices necessary to grapple with them is what makes comparative ethics distinctive within broader conversations in religious and philosophical ethics. Comparative ethics as envisioned here induces conversation across typical area studies boundaries by involving scholars of different religions; all sessions in this Unit are constructed with this goal in mind, so that data from multiple traditions will be brought to bear on any comparative theme.

## **Chairs**

- [Shannon Dunn, Gonzaga University](#)  
[dunns@gonzaga.edu](mailto:dunns@gonzaga.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Rosemary Kellison, Florida State University](#)  
[rmb07@fsu.edu](mailto:rmb07@fsu.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Comparative Studies in Religion Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We invite papers on the topics below. Submissions for panels or roundtables not listed here are also welcome.

## Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism

Following the 2023 session on Islamophobia, and the recent escalation and intensification of global antisemitism, this session will provide a forum for disseminating historical and contemporary scholarship on these types of hatred and bigotries engendering a comparative and dialogical conversation. (Please contact Roberta Sabbath, [roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu](mailto:roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu))

## Self-Cultivation in Religion and Beyond (co-sponsorship with Korean Religions Unit)

The concept and exercise of cultivating the self, whether on the level of emotion and cognition, body and action, community or cosmos, can take divergent forms and direct toward dissimilar goals. These theories and practices often lie at the heart of religion, but are not limited to religious domain. Recently, the ideas have emerged within the scholarly community for conceptualising various forms of self-cultivation, and the calls for establishing it as a separate field of study, not necessarily subsumed under the rubrics of religion, mysticism, medicine, sports or arts. To promote such developments, case studies of self-cultivation are required, comparing different religious and non-religious concepts and practices of the past and the present. We invite paper proposals on self-cultivation broadly conceived, following traditions that might be perceived as old, newly invented, or non-traditional. We hope that in time, such research will help generate methodological and other tools for future evolution of self-cultivation as a concept and discipline. (Please contact Victoria Ten, [yoneun@gmail.com](mailto:yoneun@gmail.com))

## “Translatability” of Religions

How are religious systems “translated” into new cultural settings? Under what conditions are religious practices “translated” into cultures, and under what circumstances might they “resist” change? This call seeks proposals for comparisons regarding how religions adapt to or otherwise confront new cultural settings. (Please contact Tom Seat, [thomas.seatii@shu.edu](mailto:thomas.seatii@shu.edu))

## Disability and Religious Diversity

The conceptualization of “ablebodiedness” or “disabilities” often shifts between different cultural contexts. This panel seeks to compare how these concepts are portrayed in different texts, rituals, and traditions. In doing so, it explores how “disabilities” may function as a comparative category in the study of religion. (Please contact David Schones, [dschones@austincollege.edu](mailto:dschones@austincollege.edu))

## Serpents, Dragons, and Eagles Narratives: Religious Convergence or Competition?

The nagas, Indian mythological serpent beings, and their Tibetan and Chinese (lu, jiao, and long), often appear in stories, performances and images about their eternal conflict with the Garuda birds. On the other hand, the Hindu god Vishnu, the Buddha, and the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara act as mediators in this conflict, bringing both sides together. This panel will explore how these non-human figures reflect religious convergence and conflict in Asia. (Please contact Gerrit Lange, [langeg@staff.uni-marburg.de](mailto:langeg@staff.uni-marburg.de); and Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan, [ivargas@austincollege.edu](mailto:ivargas@austincollege.edu))

## Comparative Pluralisms

Not all pluralistic societies are the same. This panel will compare different models and expressions of religious pluralism from any historical time period or geographic region using any appropriate disciplinary methods or approaches. Papers with individual case studies should highlight their potential for a comparative discussion. (Please contact Eric Huntington, [erhuntington@gmail.com](mailto:erhuntington@gmail.com))

## Roundtable: Comparison, Empathy, and Second-Order Reflection in Postsecondary RLST Pedagogy

How can we use the tools of disciplined comparison to make our courses more effective, engaging, and meaningful to contemporary students? This roundtable will consider ways that comparison can be used to provide focused, meaningful learning experiences in response to the challenges posed by AI chatbots, student disaffection, and the ever-increasing corporatization of post-secondary education. (Please contact Chris Jensen, [christopher.jensen@carleton.ca](mailto:christopher.jensen@carleton.ca))

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

### Disability, Narrative Prosthesis, and Religious Narrative – Comparative Reflections

This panel will explore the cross-cultural utility and applicability of Mitchell and Snyder's influential notion of "narrative prosthesis" (which considers the ways that mainstream culture employs Othered imaginings of disabled bodies). Papers should engage substantively with Mitchell and Snyder (and/or their inheritors), applying the theory to the particular narrative sources they study. The discussant, and subsequent discussion, will focus on the rectification of this category. (Please contact Chris Jensen, [christopher.jensen@carleton.ca](mailto:christopher.jensen@carleton.ca))

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides the opportunity for significant cross-traditional and cross-cultural inquiry. We traditionally solicit paper sessions that provide occasions for comparative inquiry seriously engaging two or more religious traditions around a common topic and we ensure that critical reflection is given to the conceptual tools therein employed. We welcome co-sponsorship opportunities with other AAR units. This Unit has a listserv (CompRel), which is used primarily for announcements, calls for papers, and discussions about panel proposals. If you wish to subscribe, please send a request to [of@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:of@austin.utexas.edu).

## Chairs

- [David Schones, Austin College](#)  
[dschones@austincollege.edu](mailto:dschones@austincollege.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan, Austin College](#)  
[ivargas@austincollege.edu](mailto:ivargas@austincollege.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Comparative Theology Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Comparative Theology Unit of the AAR seeks proposals on the following topics for its session at the November 2024 Annual Meetings.

We encourage panel or paper proposals on the bulleted themes listed below. We suggest that interested scholars reach out to the contact person connected to each theme. They may be able to connect you with others who are interested or otherwise answer any questions. However, you need not feel compelled to reach out.

Comparative Theology from a Buddhist perspective (co-sponsored with Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies)

Continuing our theme of seeking out how comparative theology is performed from non-Christian traditions, we are seeking proposals for constructive Buddhist comparative theology in conversation with other religious traditions, with a possible focus on the environment, environmental justice, and ecology. Contact Won-Jae Hur, [hurw@xavier.edu](mailto:hurw@xavier.edu) (Comparative Theology Steering Committee Member) or Thomas Cattoi, [tcattoi@scu.edu](mailto:tcattoi@scu.edu) (Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies)



### Comparative Theology and/or with Dalit Traditions

We are seeking possible panels or papers that engage Dalit traditions in comparative theology. Contact Katie Mahowski Mylroi, [mahowskm@bc.edu](mailto:mahowskm@bc.edu)

### Apologetics, Polemics, and Comparative Theology

Historically or contemporarily, how is apologetics and/or polemics entangled with the discipline of comparative theology? Apologetics may be a defense of one's own faith, but alternatively it can also be imagined as defense of "religion" in general (transcendence, the sacred, Truth, the value of "religious accounts" or "comprehensive qualitative orientations") in the context of modernity's secularisms, positivisms, and so forth. Contact Joshua Ralston, [Joshua.Ralston@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Joshua.Ralston@ed.ac.uk)

### Global Indigenous Traditions and Comparative Theology

We are seeking proposals that engage the theme of indigenous traditions (from any region) and comparative theology: methodological approaches, critical interrogations, or constructive projects. Contact Axel Takacs, [atakacs@molloy.edu](mailto:atakacs@molloy.edu)

### Role of Comparative Categories in Comparative Theology

One of the challenges for comparative theology is that of discerning proper and relevant comparative categories. This panel will focus on how those categories are determined and justified. Contact Helmut Zander, [zander@unifr.ch](mailto:zander@unifr.ch)

### Comparative Theology and Interfaith Leadership

We seek proposals that attend to the limits and creative possibilities of practicing comparative theology as public theology and in the context of interfaith leadership. Contact Stephanie Wong, [wong@villanova.edu](mailto:wong@villanova.edu) or Alex Massad, [alex.massad@wheaton.edu](mailto:alex.massad@wheaton.edu)

These are proposed themes, but one need not feel restricted by them, so long as the proposal concerns comparative theology.

Proposal descriptions must be written in such a way as to allow for anonymity during the selection process. Panel proposals must include a diversity statement wherein the conveyor explains in what ways the panel is diverse or the rationale for a lack of diversity. Diversity here may include, but is not limited to, religion, gender, sexuality, race, nationality, disability, and/or academic status (graduate student, senior scholar, etc.).

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Comparative Theology Unit will be participating in the pilot June Online Sessions. We have been allotted one panel session for the June 25, 26, and 27 Online Conference for the AAR. However, the CFP for the June session is identical with that of the November session and we will apply the same rigor in the selection process.

We encourage panel or paper proposals on the bulleted themes listed above. We suggest that interested scholars reach out to the contact person connected to each theme. They may be able to connect you with others who are interested or otherwise answer any questions. However, you need not feel compelled to reach out.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Comparative (interreligious) theology tries to be seriously theological, interreligious, and consciously comparative — all at the same time. It is, like other forms of theology as familiarly understood, primarily a matter of “faith seeking understanding” (or, more broadly, perhaps “the practice of reflective meditative perception” or “insight”) and reflection on this faith as it has been enacted in doctrine, argument, meditation, ritual, and ethical behavior. Like other forms of theology, it is an academic discipline, but may also be about and for the sake of knowledge of God or, more broadly, the ultimate mystery toward which life points. In comparative theology, faith and practice are explored and transformed by attention to parallel theological dimensions of one or more religious or theological traditions, examined historically or in the contemporary context. As a discipline within the academy, this communal and intercommunal faith and practice are open to the analyses, comments, and questions of insiders to the involved traditions, and to scholars not necessarily defined by any such commitments who are nonetheless able and willing to explore the full range of dynamics of faith seeking understanding in a comparative perspective. Please contact any Steering Committee Member for further information on the Unit, including the most recent self-study and statement of purpose, or to be added to the Unit.

The Comparative Theology Unit runs a listserv (Google Group) that may also be used to connect with others in constructing a panel. To be added to the group, please contact Axel Takacs ([atakacs@molloy.edu](mailto:atakacs@molloy.edu)).

## Chairs

- [Catherine Cornille, Boston College](#)  
[cornille@bc.edu](mailto:cornille@bc.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Axel Marc Oaks Takacs, Molloy University](#)  
[atakacs@molloy.edu](mailto:atakacs@molloy.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Confucian Traditions Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We welcome full panel proposals, as well as individual paper submissions, on any theme related to the Confucian traditions. The steering committee has identified the following themes as possible topics for 2024:

- Law and Confucianism, particularly as it relates to the Han and recently excavated material.
- Topics that resonate with the 2024 AAR presidential theme of “violence, non-violence, and the margins.”
- Confucian contemplative practices and methods of self-cultivation.
- Fellowship and community formation, particularly as it relates to living in the diaspora.
- Thinking about gender and Confucianism from religious studies perspectives (in comparison with philosophical approaches).

Other topics are also welcome, as are co-sponsored sessions with other Units.

To submit a proposal, membership in the American Academy of Religion is not required. However, once a proposal is accepted, presenters must register for the AAR Annual Meeting, which will be held in San Diego from November 23 to 26, 2024.

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We welcome full panel proposals, as well as individual paper submissions, on any theme related to the Confucian traditions.

### Statement of Purpose

The Unit is the only global scholarly organization in the English-speaking world dedicated exclusively to Confucianism. It studies the diverse traditions linked to Confucius, his precursors, and followers, collectively referred to as "Ru." This includes exploring intersections between Confucian thought and practices with other traditions. Embracing a variety of approaches — philosophical, historical, literary, sociological and comparative — the Unit operates beyond the confines of any single country or academic discipline.

## Chairs

- [Michael Ing, Indiana University](#)  
[ming@indiana.edu](mailto:ming@indiana.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Bin Song, Washington College](#)  
[bsong2@washcoll.edu](mailto:bsong2@washcoll.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Contemplative Studies Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This year, the Contemplative Studies Unit especially invites proposals addressing the role of different epistemologies relative to Contemplative Studies, comparative or otherwise.

Particularly we are looking for papers on:

- a panel on epistemologies for contemplative studies.
- connected to this, a cross-cultural revisitation of concepts of contemplative studies as a perennialist project.
- a panel addressing conceptions of the subtle body within praxis.
- a panel dedicated to ethnographic conceptions.
- a panel focusing on micro-phenomenology to follow up on the past year's panel on micro-phenomenology.
- a panel exploring Contemplative praxis and research in relation to information, AI and its ramifications with ChatGPT.

Individual papers could not find a home in currently listed panels.

Contact Loriliai Biernacki, [loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu](mailto:loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu) or Michael Sheehy, [ms4qm@virginia.edu](mailto:ms4qm@virginia.edu)

### Statement of Purpose

This program unit aims to strengthen and develop contemplative studies as an academic field of inquiry, especially in the context of religious studies and the AAR. Our Unit provides a forum for:

- The investigation of contemplative practice and experience, considered inclusively and comprehensively
- Critical discussions on the field itself, including theoretical and interpretive issues
- The application of contemplative practice to academic life and university culture, including the possible contribution of “contemplative pedagogy” to teaching and learning

The Unit thus aims to gather together currently diffused groups as well as dislocated, marginalized, and underrepresented individuals in the academy. To this end, we encourage research that is topical, tradition-specific, comparative, and cross-cultural. We also invite scholars to investigate contemplative practice and experience in ways that traverse and transcend the boundaries of traditions, disciplines, and research methodologies.

## Chairs

- [Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado](#)  
[loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu](mailto:loriliai.biernacki@colorado.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Michael Sheehy, University of Virginia](#)  
[ms4qm@virginia.edu](mailto:ms4qm@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Contemporary Islam Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Contemporary Islam Unit is soliciting proposals for the 2024 AAR annual meeting on any topics related to the study of Islam in the contemporary period. This year we have particular interests in the following topics:

- Political theology, violence, and non-violence
- Palestine including:
  - History of apartheid
  - Religious diversity in Palestine
  - Palestinian resistance and activism
  - BDS and academic freedom
  - Anti-Palestinian sentiment, Islamophobia, and the repression of Palestinian solidarity efforts
- Social justice movements in Asia and Africa and global solidarity
- Muslim engagement with arts and aesthetic discourses

- New directions in the field of Islamic Studies
- Religion and agency
- Prearranged author-meets-critics style panels on recently published books

Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate. We also encourage pre-arranged panels to take a broad and inclusive approach to what counts as “Islam,” recognizing the theological diversity within Islam and among Muslims; this includes but is not limited to Shi’a, Ahmadiyya, and the Nation of Islam.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Please note that it is the policy of all Islamic Studies program Units to ban no-shows at the Annual Meeting from the program for the following two years.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same Call as above

## **Statement of Purpose**

The mission of this unit is to provide a venue for discussing emerging issues and developments within contemporary Muslim societies and Islamic Studies.

## **Chairs**

- [Candace Mixon, Reed College](mailto:candacem@reed.edu)  
[candacem@reed.edu](mailto:candacem@reed.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Kayla Renee Wheeler, Xavier University](mailto:krw18@case.edu)  
[krw18@case.edu](mailto:krw18@case.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Contemporary Pagan Studies is an interdisciplinary Unit, and we welcome submissions of theoretically and analytically engaged papers and panels relating to modern Paganism,

Witchcraft, Magic, and Polytheism, employing scholarly analysis to discuss the topic from any relevant methodology or theoretical orientation.

[For a co-sponsored panel with the Religious Conversions unit](#) on the topic of "Alternative Spiritualities and Reframing of Conversion Discourses" we are seeking proposals on how emergent traditions re-frame or re-conceptualize discourse around "conversion." Inquires and proposals can engage expansion, additive and replacement models, texts, alchemical processes, homemaking, music, materiality, epiphanies or altered states of consciousness, shamanic encounters, or seduction, as examples. The session is interested in new ways of conceptualizing, narrativizing and framing both individual and collective spiritual change.

[For a co-sponsored panel with Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit](#), we welcome descriptive or theoretical approaches to witches and the occult on social media (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and beyond), including how social media is changing ways of making meaning, authority and gender, cultural appropriation, connections to politics, aesthetics, consumerism, and forming community.

[For a co-sponsored panel with the Music and Religion unit](#), we seek proposals for a joint session on musical Paganisms and their relationships to various nationalisms, ethnic identities and/or imagined communities. We encourage proposals that address pre-colonial ideologies and textual traditions, heritage construction, figurations of an "other," appropriations of national iconography and folk song in a variety of cultural contexts. As this session is proposed for the pilot AAR Zoom session in June 2024, accepted proposals should if possible outline tracks for a streaming playlist to be listened and engaged by all panelists before the session, as well as announced to interested attendees before the conference.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Contemporary Pagan Studies is an interdisciplinary Unit, and we welcome submissions of theoretically and analytically engaged papers and panels relating to modern Paganism, Witchcraft, Magic, and Polytheism, employing scholarly analysis to discuss the topic from any relevant methodology or theoretical orientation.

[In anticipation of the American Academy of Religion's June 2024 virtual conference, the Body and Religion and Contemporary Pagan Studies Units are seeking proposals for a joint session on, "Divine Bodies."](#) Bodies presenting and re-presenting sacrality in both ancient and modern contexts are ripe for analysis. Topics may include but are not limited to shaping, sizing, theriomorphism, hierophanics, kratophanics, iconographic stratifications/layering, planar extension, absence/concealment, accessorizing, co-location, tellurism, chthonics, gendering, and substance/makeup. Diachronic and synchronic approaches are both encouraged, along with artifactual/material culture, discursive and hermeneutical analysis. We especially welcome

panels/presentations using innovative formats that will enhance discussion and collaboration in an online environment.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Contemporary Pagan Studies Unit provides a place for scholars interested in pursuing research in this newly developing and interdisciplinary field and puts them in direct communication with one another in the context of a professional meeting. New scholars are welcomed and supported, while existing scholars are challenged to improve their work and deepen the level of conversation. By liaising with other AAR Program Units, the Unit creates opportunities to examine the place of Pagan religions and discourses/practices labeled "Pagan/pagan" both historically and within contemporary societies. The CPS unit seeks to examine how other religions may intersect with these dynamic and mutable religious communities and discourses.

## **Chairs**

- [Christopher Chase, Iowa State University](#)  
[cwc@iastate.edu](mailto:cwc@iastate.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Giovanna Parmigiani, Harvard University](#)  
[giovanna.parmigiani@gmail.com](mailto:giovanna.parmigiani@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Critical Approaches to Hip-Hop and Religion Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The frameworks around violence and non-violence approach to social change have been murky, at best, within the Hip Hop community over the past 50 years. Some have advocated for “fighting the power,” while others within the Culture have advocated for a more peaceful “all in the same gang” approach to change. But, what does this all mean when police occupation within marginalized Black and Brown communities continues to be a problem? What does it mean that violence on Black bodies is sport and spectator within the more prominent U.S. popular culture landscape? Hip Hop has been a voice and sounding board for many communities living on the margins and especially those enduring state-sanctioned violence against them; Hip Hop has not always abdicated for a “non-violent” position when dealing with social action or social equity; moreover, within the Hip Hop community rappers like Killer Mike have argued for a well educated, self-reliant, and even armed people to truly be “revolutionary.”



Violence, at times, is relative. Violence, when done in response to what a state or government defines as a “just cause” can not only be accepted but deemed “holy” and “moral.” More importantly, once the public, and or society, has deemed war and violence acceptable in the name of “justice,” the line connected to God becomes easily visible. For example, following the attacks after 9/11, the war was deemed a “holy war” from certain media outlets. To compound that, President Bush, repeatedly stated he had “prayed” and “asked God” regarding his decision to invade Iraq. This type of socio-religious discourse aids in creating acceptance to the murder of children and innocent by-standers as a result of this “holy war.” The acceptance of “God’s will” is further used to ignore violence against non-dominant religious groups such as Muslims. Violence, in this sense, is then seen as a form of “justice” against “those people.” Further, Wade Clark Roof in his article *\*American Presidential Rhetoric from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush: Another Look at Civil Religion\** reminds us that civil religious rhetoric can be just as dangerous as the violence itself because it involves both nationalism and constructs of identity. This type of religio-political rhetoric tends to create myths and fantasy within the public arena in which God is “on our side” and “with us” while being completely “against them” almost increasing the need for more violence against “those people.” These myths are powerful ideological vehicles for any people group and society, particularly in the issuing of violence through military force.

So, in this spirit, we seek and invite proposals and roundtable discussions centering around violence, non-violence frameworks regarding change, social advocacy, and/ or life on the margins within the Hip Hop context. How does one contend with violence as a process of change? How does one attempt to reconcile self-defense as a way of practice? What does it mean to truly be nonviolent? Moreover, is a nonviolent position just a signal of privilege?

We also seek proposals around the 50-year anniversary of Hip Hop culture.

King Britt is permanent faculty now at UC San Diego and has been doing a curated Blacktronica run at some festivals – this could be a great time to engage in this conversation. [https://music-cms.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/regular\\_faculty/king-britt/ind...](https://music-cms.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/regular_faculty/king-britt/ind...)

Author meets critic roundtables.

There are also key anniversaries in 2024 that could potentially be panels as well:

- 40 years – Albums (1984) – Run DMC (Run DMC); Grandmaster Melle Mel and the Furious Five (Grandmaster Melle Mel and the Furious Five). Events (1984) – Summer Olympics in Los Angeles; DeLorean/cocaine acquittal; Regan re-elected; first Hackers Conference held; 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans; Band Aid for Ethiopian famine relief; Bernard Goetz shoots four young Black men in NYC (guilty of 3rd degree possession of a firearm; innocent of all other charges); introduction of crack cocaine into Los Angeles—to name just a few.
- 30 years – Albums (1994) – Fugees (Blunted on Reality); Gang Starr (Hard to Earn); Nas (Illmatic); Outkast (Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik); Jeru tha Damaja (The Sun Rises in the East); Warren G (Regulate...); Organized Konfusion (Stress...The Extinction Agenda); Public Enemy (Muse Sick-n-Hour Mess Age); The Notorious B.I.G. (Ready to Die); Common Sense (Resurrection); Diggable Planets (Blowout Comb); Scarface (The Diary); Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth (The Main Ingredient); Da Lench Mob (Planet of da Apes); Redman (Dare IZ A Darkside). Events (1994) – De La Beckwith convicted of killing Medgar Evers; Nelson Mandela inaugurated as first Black President of South Africa; murder of Nicole Brown-Simpson and Ron Goldman/Start of OJ Simpson case/trial; Woodstock '94; President Clinton signs the Federal Assault Weapons Ban; Iraq disarmament crisis.
- 20 Years – Albums (2004) – (Way Too Much Here, So I'm going to just put a few examples) Kanye West (College Dropout); Madvillain (Madvillainy); Murs & 9th Wonder (Murs 3:16: The 9th Edition); Lecrae (Real Talk); Lil Wayne (Tha Carter); Mobb Deep (Amerikaz Nightmare); Jim Jones (On My Way to Church); Ma\$e (Welcome Back); Jean Grae (This Week); Talib Kweli (The Beautiful Struggle); De La Soul (The Grind Date); MF DOOM (Mm..Food); Nas (Street's Disciple); 2Pac (Loyal to the Game); The Roots (The Tipping Point) Events (2004) – The launch of Facebook; G.W. Bush reelected.
- 10 years – Albums (2014) – Pharoahe Monch (PTSD); Nas (Illmatic XX); The Roots (...And Then You Shoot Your Cousin); Common (Nobody's Smiling); Shabazz Palaces (Lese Majesty); Lecrae (Anomaly); Run the Jewels (RTJ 2); Ghostface Killah (36 Seasons); Royce da 5'9" & DJ Premier (PRhyme). Events (2014) – Ebola outbreak in West Africa; ISIS begins its move into Iraq; killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO; "national recognition" of Black Lives Matter Movement; Obama administration

Potential Co-Sponsorship – Hip Hop, Religion, and Politics – “Rap snitches, telling all their business, Sit in the court and be their own star witness. “Do you see the perpetrator?” “Yeah, I'm right here.” F\*\*\* around, get the whole label sent up for years...” As Mr. Fantastik raps on MF DOOM's “Rap Snitch Knishes (Mm..Food [2004])” rap music has been used by artists as a way of delivering their testimonies (in both a legal and personal/religious sense). Similarly, the

government has used those testimonies as a means of prosecuting artists and labels for state and federal crimes (Andre “Mac Dre” Hicks in 1992, Snoop Dogg in 1996, McKinley “Mac” Phipps, Jr. in 2000, Irv Gotti & Murder, Inc. in 2005, Lil Boosie in 2012, Drakeo the Ruler in 2016, 6ix9ine in 2019, Young Thug in 2022, and Kenjuan McDaniel in 2023).

As Hip Hop turns 50 (2023); crack cocaine turns 40 (c. 1984); and the 20 year old words of “Rap Snitch Knishes” remains true, The Religion and Politics Unit and The Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit invite paper, panel, or roundtable proposals that address these intersections of Hip Hop, religion, and politics through an interdisciplinary lens, with proposals that engage in the personal and the private, the sacred and the profane, issues of illegality and artistic expression, and the engagement in criminal enterprises as culturally, legally, politically, and religiously subversive.

[Potential Co-Sponsorship – Hip Hop, Religion, and Visual Culture –](#) The seminal Hip Hop album “Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)” by the rap collective The Wu-Tang Clan turned 30 in 2023. It represents a generational blending of rap, visual culture, popular culture, and religion, including but certainly not limited to Buddhism and The Five Percent Nation of Islam. Combining inspiration from Kung-Fu films – including “Master of the Flying Guillotine (1976),” “Executioners from Shaolin (1977),” “The 36th Chamber of Shaolin (1978),” “Enter the Dragon (1973),” “Five Deadly Venoms (1978),” “The Mystery of Chess Boxing (1979),” “Ten Tigers of Kwangtung (1980),” “Shaolin vs. Lama (1983),” “Shaolin and Wutang (1983),” “The Eight Diagram Pole Fighter (1984)” – with the religious, political and socio-economic philosophies of Five Percent Islam, “Enter the Wu-Tang” represents an intersectional expression of creative, theological, and cultural genius.

The Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit, The Religion and Popular Culture Unit, The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit, and The Buddhism in the West Unit invite paper, panel, or roundtable proposals that address, through an interdisciplinary lens, these intersections of hip hop, religion, politics and visual culture in its myriad manifestations. Among other possibilities, we are interested in proposals that engage this momentous work as a nascent music genre and/or a series of music videos, as it has rippled across three decades of Hip Hop and The Five Percent Nation of Islam, and as it continues to influence visual, popular, and religious culture today.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit’s purpose is to provide a space for interdisciplinary, sustained, scholarly reflection and intellectual advancements at the intersections of religion and hip-hop culture. We believe the Unit will assist religious and theological studies to take more seriously hip-hop culture,

while expanding the conversation of hip-hop culture beyond a thin analysis of rap music. To these ends, this Unit is marked by an effort to offer critical reflection on the multiplicity of the cultural practices of hip-hop culture. We also see something of value in advancing the field of religious studies through attention to how hip-hop might inform these various disciplines and methods. Understood in this way, scholarly attention to hip-hop will not transform it into a passive object of the scholar's gaze; rather, through our attention to hip-hop, it also speaks back to the work of the AAR, offering tools by which to advance theory and method in the field.

## Chairs

- [Justin Smith, Azusa Pacific University](#)  
[jmsmith@apu.edu](mailto:jmsmith@apu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Daniel White Hodge, North Park University](#)  
[dan@whitehodge.com](mailto:dan@whitehodge.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

With the 2024 presidential theme (Violence, Non-violence, and the Margin) in mind, the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit is seeking proposals for individual papers, panels, or roundtables on the following topics:

- Theorizing religion, violence and conflict
- Temporalities of violence
- Typologies of violence (varieties of violence, such as spiritual or symbolic violence, and the work they are doing)
- What might Critical Theory and theorists (Frankfurt School, Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, Marcuse, etc.) contribute to discourse on violence and conflict in current times?
- Revisiting Benjamin's essay "Towards a Critique of Violence" and Derrida's work on Benjamin's notion of "Divine Violence"
- Harms of scholarship and extractive methods in research

We are also interested in co-sponsoring a panel with the Space, Place, and Religion Unit:

- [Theorizing Space and Place in Religion: Foucault's Heterotopias.](#)

Michel Foucault labeled counter-spaces that influence, contest, mirror, and invert as heterotopias, in contrast to utopias. Even though such places exist in reality, they are at the same time other and outside of mainstream society. Such spaces naturally align with religious practices such as asceticism, mysticism, and eschatology, which all contest authority and orthodoxy, in sacred places such as deserts and mountains. We are seeking contributions on such heterotopias and reflections on its meaning for this panel. Contact: Brooke Schedneck ([schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu))

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

[We are interested in developing a roundtable discussion \(perhaps co-sponsored by the Teaching Religion Unit\) for the June online AAR session: Teaching through Conflict](#)

The Teaching Religion Unit and the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit invite proposals for a roundtable discussion for the June online AAR session on teaching through conflict. Specifically, we invite proposals that wrestle with how critical theory/discourse might be a classroom tool to help navigate conflicts that arise on our campuses due to geopolitics and religious discourse.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion (CTDR) Unit offers an interdisciplinary and international forum for analytical scholars of religion to engage the intersection of critical theory and methodology with a focus on concrete ethnographic and historical case studies. Critical theory draws on methods employed in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history, literary criticism, and political theory in order to bring into scrutiny all kinds of discourses on religion, spanning from academic to nonacademic and from religious to nonreligious. This Unit seeks to provide a forum in which scholars of religion from a wide range of disciplines can examine and question their disciplinary presuppositions. The work of this Unit can be placed under three main rubrics: • Critical investigation of the categories generated and employed by the discourses on religion, such as experience, the sacred, ritual, and the various 'isms' that can be found in classic and contemporary studies of religion • Analysis of new and neglected theorists and works central to the critical study of religion, including those produced in cognate fields such as anthropology, political science, or literary theory • Theoretically-informed examination of elided and often neglected themes in religious studies, including class, race, gender, violence, legitimation, and the material basis of religion

## **Chairs**

- [Katja Rakow, Utrecht University](#)  
[k.rakow@uu.nl](mailto:k.rakow@uu.nl)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Kristin Scheible, Reed College](#)  
[scheiblk@reed.edu](mailto:scheiblk@reed.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit seeks papers that examine the formation and transformation of “religion” and related categories in social, cultural, and political practice in different geographic and historical contexts and in relation to the scholarly study of religion as that study has evolved over time.

This group regularly uses its sessions to develop new models for conference conversation. Toward that end, we ask that participants be prepared to write shorter papers for possible pre-circulation or short position papers for roundtable format. We also welcome suggestions for new conversational models.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit is devoted to historical inquiry into the social and cultural contexts of the study of religion and into the constructions of “religion” as an object of scholarly inquiry.

### **Chairs**

- [Marko Geslani, University of South Carolina](#)  
[Geslani@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:Geslani@mailbox.sc.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Lucia Hulsether, Skidmore College](#)  
[lhulseth@skidmore.edu](mailto:lhulseth@skidmore.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Daoist Studies Unit

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Daoist Studies Unit invites proposals for the AAR Annual Meeting in San Diego, California (November 23–26, 2024). We welcome proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtables concerning any aspects of Daoism regardless of the time period, geographical area,

or methodological and theoretical approach. The proposals could be individual papers, 90-minute paper sessions (consisting of 3 papers, a presider, and a respondent), or roundtables (consisting of a presider and 4–6 panelists). All topics for presentations are welcome. Below are the ideas proposed at the business meeting for 2024.

- Vernacular Chinese arts – Alia Goehr (University of Minnesota)
- Daoist poetry and self-/cultivation – Tyler Feezell (Dartmouth College)
- State Religions – Jiang’nan Li (University of California, Berkeley)
- Daoism in Chinese Culture – Mark Meulenbeld (University of Hong Kong)
- Daoism in Medieval Culture – Tianyu Shi (University of Hamburg, Germany)
- Gender practices in contemporary Daoism – Anna Sun (Duke University)

Please contact the point person if you wish to participate in formulating these panels. Proposals on topics not listed here are more than welcome.

We look forward to receiving proposals that are multi-disciplinary and border-crossing. As we continue to reach out to other program units and promote dialogue between different fields, we strongly encourage applicants to submit their proposals to Daoist Studies and one additional program unit. A complete list of AAR program Units can be found at <https://papers.aarweb.org/program-units>

The Daoist Studies Unit steadfastly supports diversity and inclusivity. We require all pre-arranged panels to incorporate a diversity of gender, ethnicity, seniority, sub-field, and/or methodology.

Please feel free to contact the co-chairs for additional information.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Daoist Studies Unit invites proposals for the AAR Online Conference in June 2024. We welcome proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtables concerning any aspects of Daoism regardless of the time period, geographical area, or methodological and theoretical approach. The proposals could be either individual papers, 90-minute paper sessions (consisting of 3 papers, a presider, and a respondent), or roundtables (which consist of a presider and 4–6 panelists). All topics for presentations are welcome.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Daoist Studies Unit organizes the most consistent venue in North America for sharing research on the Daoist religion. We are guided by a vision with three main goals: to reach into the vast recesses of the largely understudied Daoist tradition; to reach out in conversation with the broader American Academy of Religion, and to promote the Annual Meeting of the AAR as an international venue for sharing and vetting research by all levels of Daoism scholars. Since early 2021, the Daoist Studies Unit has also been hosting regular online presentations and workshops throughout the year under the rubric of the Global Daoist Studies Forum.

## Chairs

- [Jingyu Liu, Rollins College](#)  
[jliu1@rollins.edu](mailto:jliu1@rollins.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Tobias Zürn, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology](#)  
[hmtzuern@ust.hk](mailto:hmtzuern@ust.hk)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit invites papers on the topic of "Navigating Hells: Migration and Depictions of Transnational Hell." This year's call seeks paper on depictions of hell across religious traditions, and the ways in which hell speaks to religious conceptions beyond everyday life—both in the afterlife, and in possible conceptions of transnational and migrant communities at the borders of life and nationhood. Papers are encouraged to explore how various forms of literature, art, or media portray hells in relation to the complex narratives of migration and transnational living and dying. Submissions addressing hells both metaphorical and real are welcome, and we also appreciate non-traditional presentations—whether art installations or those that address topics of music and the spoken word—and those that present a diversity of perspectives.

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit invites papers on the topic of "Going Beyond Human Death: Mourning and Disposal of Non-Human Animals". This call invites papers probing diverse aspects of non-human animal mortality. This panel seeks contributions on animal death and grief, ranging from submissions on biodiversity loss, the extinction of animals, animals as conservation subjects, the disposal of animals, death justice and animals, the treatment of



animals in captivity and responses to death and grief, death and loss of companion animals, the non-disposal of animals viewed as “road kill,” grief among animals themselves, etc. Contributors are encouraged to explore zoo settings’ impact, altered dynamics of human-animal relationships, expressions of animal grief, companion animals, and eco-ethical implications of increased animal deaths. We welcome interdisciplinary approaches that offer discussions on grief, disposal, and eco-ethical considerations. We perceive this call broadly and seek contributions that interpret “animality” from a wide variety of angles.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Death, Dying, and Beyond Unit invites papers on the topic of “Death on Lockdown: Reflecting on Responses to Pandemic Mortality.” This call seeks analyses of pandemic-related mortality, encouraging submissions that retrospectively dissect the dimensions of death experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. We invite submissions examining reactions to death during COVID-19 lockdowns, exploring how COVID-19’s impact intersected with death narratives, analyzing academic perspectives on pandemic death narratives, the marginalized and disabled communities’ encounters with COVID-19 mortality, and the intersectional insights into pandemic death.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit was formed to address all manner of scholarly discussion relating to death. While death is the single certainty in every life, a myriad number of ways exist to study and approach it. Our aim is to provide an outlet for the scholarly discussion of all issues relating to death, the dying, the grieving, the dead, and the afterlife. We are open to all methodologies, religious traditions, and topics of inquiry.

## Chairs

- [John Borchert, University of North Carolina At Greensboro](mailto:jwborchert@uncg.edu)  
[jwborchert@uncg.edu](mailto:jwborchert@uncg.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jamie Brummitt, University of North Carolina, Wilmington](mailto:brummittj@uncw.edu)  
[brummittj@uncw.edu](mailto:brummittj@uncw.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Drugs and Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Drugs and Religion Unit invites proposals for papers, panels, or roundtables on any topics that explore psychoactive substances and religious life. Our interests range from the most mystical flights of drug-induced rapture to the religious dimensions of addiction and recovery. A few potential topics that emerged during our last business meeting focused on:

- teaching courses on drugs and religion
- ethnographic approaches to psychedelic ritual activity
- the role of drugs in Mexican American religious history

### [Drugs, Ritual, and Religion](#)

We invite papers for a session co-sponsored by the Drugs and Religion Unit and the Ritual Studies Unit on the use of drugs in the context of ritual practices.

This unit was created as a means of understanding, expanding, and evaluating the ways in which scholars approach the interconnections of drugs and religion. The connections between drugs and religion have deep historical roots in human history, and can be found across a wide spectrum of human cultures. The most famous connection is perhaps the Indo-Aryan hymns to “soma” of the Rg Veda (c.1500–700 BCE), which has fascinated and confounded scholars for more than a century. Antiquity is rich in psychedelic ceremonialism, from the ritual use of the San Pedro cactus within the Chavín civilization (900–200 BCE) in the Peruvian highlands, to the theurgical practices of Roman Egypt and the spiked viticulture of Greco-Roman society. This imbrication continues to the present day, as represented by the Native American Church’s sacramental uses of peyote, and the use of cannabis in Rastafarianism, for example. While the religious use of drugs is widespread and complicated, it is definitely not simply a thing of the past, nor are they only found in non-Western cultural settings.

## Statement of Purpose

This program unit will unpack the overdetermined category of “drugs” by surveying the global entanglement of substances and religion. Informed by an interdisciplinary approach, our conversation will address the obvious, and not so obvious religious values and purposes invested into caffeine and chocolate, birth-control pills and vitamin supplements, wine and tobacco, among psychedelic drugs. Moreover, looking beyond the use of drugs, this program unit will consider religious prohibitions against drug-use, and religious responses to addiction from a global perspective. The unit aims to expand the study of religion by including theoretical and conceptual perspectives, as well as other disciplines, that open new paths for the value-neutral research into drugs and religion.

## Chairs

- [J. Christian Greer, Stanford University](#)  
[jchristiang@gmail.com](mailto:jchristiang@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Gary M. Laderman, Emory University](#)  
[gladerm@emory.edu](mailto:gladerm@emory.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For 2024 we welcome proposals on the following topics:

#### Orthodox Christianity and Judaism

Since its formation over seventy years ago, the field of Jewish-Christian dialogue has been populated by a steady stream of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, but rarely by Orthodox Christians. This session seeks to widen Jewish-Christian dialogue by considering how Orthodox exegetical traditions, liturgy, history, contemporary thought, and ongoing political experience, especially in the Middle East, can and should affect not only Orthodox Christianity's own relationship to Jews and Judaism, but also its relationship to Jewish-Christian dialogue more broadly. We welcome submissions from a wide range of methodological and disciplinary approaches, including but not limited to theology, history, anthropology and ethnography, political science, and area studies.

This session will be co-sponsored by the SBL Biblical Exegesis from Eastern Orthodox Perspectives unit.

#### Patristic Tradition and Contemporary Christianity

"Patristics" is often closely identified with late antiquity, but among Orthodox Christians the tradition of the "holy fathers" also includes many figures from the medieval period up into the present. Several modern Orthodox theologians called for cultivating the "mind of the fathers" and developing a "neo-patristic synthesis", while others observed limitations in such approaches. For this session, we invite papers and panel proposals that address the relevance of the category of patristics and particular patristic figures for contemporary Christian thought,

practice, or communities. Such proposals might reflect on the significance of particular patristic thinkers for addressing present-day issues, reconsider the framing of the patristic tradition in theology, or evaluate the impact of patristic texts or the veneration of certain saints within specific groups or cultures. Critical or creative approaches to considering the patristic tradition, its potential relevance and limitations, and its significance for constructing religious boundaries and identities beyond Orthodoxy are also welcome.

### [Orthodox Christianity and Disability](#)

We invite presentations on disability experiences and Orthodox Christianity. We are especially interested in examinations of how the religious backgrounds, commitments, or influences of persons with disabilities have been impacted by religious commitments, religious institutions, and local parish life. We also welcome proposals that critically examine the relationship between disability and Orthodox theology, thought, practice, and/or history. Papers are particularly welcomed that confront healing narratives, suffering discourse, and religious stigmas around disabilities with an emphasis on the intersection of disability (as an identity and minority) with gender, culture, and Orthodoxy.

This session will be co-sponsored by the Religion and Disability Studies Unit.

### [Contemporary Iconography](#)

For this session, we invite papers and panel proposals on religious iconography. We are particularly interested in styles, theological interpretations, religious praxis, and the public use of iconography in the contexts of, or in comparison with, Orthodox and/or Eastern Christianity. We welcome consideration of contemporary iconographic developments, the political use of icons, icons in secular spaces, mysticism and icons, unofficial and subversive icons, the use of icons in prayer and theology, and invite participants to demonstrate iconographic techniques or bring physical examples. This session is interested in, and open to, a wide range of methodological and disciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to ethics, theology and religious thought, art history, material culture, anthropology, and practicing iconographers/artists.

This session will be co-sponsored by Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit focuses on the critical study of the theology, culture, history, and practices of the many different Eastern Christian churches, including but not limited to Orthodox, Oriental, and

Eastern Rite Catholic (numbering some 260–300 million worldwide), including their mutual interaction and engagement with Western Christian and non-Christian groups.

## **Chairs**

- [Philip Dorroll, Wofford College](#)  
[dorrollpc@wofford.edu](mailto:dorrollpc@wofford.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Ashley Purpura, Purdue University](#)  
[apurpur@purdue.edu](mailto:apurpur@purdue.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Ecclesial Practices Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Responding to Harm: Ecclesial Practices of Nonviolence

Inspired by the conference theme of Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, we invite papers that use qualitative research methods to explore how churches and other forms of religious community respond creatively and constructively to violence and practice nonviolence. We encourage special consideration of ecclesial communities on the “margins” of traditional discourse and practice. Possible topics include:

- How religious communities on the margin (re)define or (re)imagine violence, harm, and what counts as adequate response
- How faith communities respond to instances of violence and harm that originate outside their communities
- Lived faith responses to violence and harm inflicted by faith communities
- How individuals or religious communities respond to violence embedded within ecclesial organizations, designs, and practices
- Explorations of violence and nonviolence within ecclesial activities, e.g. music, liturgy, arts, social justice, ecological justice, youth work, preaching, pastoral care, religious education, rites of passage, community organizing
- Explorations of constructive theological and ethical shifts in faith communities as a result of encountering violence and harm
- How churches connect with global partners, forge solidarity around colonization and violence, determine the impact of such partnerships, and what difference this makes to their own congregation
- Interfaith responses to violence

- Ecclesial Practices of healing/diffusing/preventing violence

### [Creative Research Methodologies in Practical Theology](#)

#### [Call for a Co-Sponsored Session with Practical Theology Unit](#)

The intersection of Practical Theology and qualitative research methodologies presents a rich terrain for exploration and discovery. We invite scholars, researchers, and practitioners to contribute to a dynamic session focused on creative qualitative research methodologies, including in contexts of teaching and learning and creative ways of combining/integrating/interpreting theological perspectives with social scientific research methods, in Practical Theology.

Key themes for possible presentations:

- Embodied Approaches: Explore methodologies that engage the researcher's own lived experiences and bodily presence in the field.
- Visual and Performative Methods: Investigate the use of visual arts, performance, and other creative mediums as tools for theological inquiry
- Digital Religion(s) and Theology: Examine how digital platforms and technologies can be utilized in qualitative research within the context of practical theology.
- Postcolonial Perspectives: Interrogate traditional research paradigms and introduce postcolonial frameworks to enrich the understanding of practical theology.
- Feminist and Womanist Methodologies: Investigate how feminist and womanist theories and methodologies can be integrated into practical theology research, challenging and expanding current approaches.

For co-sponsored session: abstracts (up to 500 words) should illustrate the research question and best practices, methodology, and anticipated creative contributions. Submissions should embody a creative spirit, as presentations eventually chosen for the session will be asked to demonstrate their methodologies in some way. Presentations will be short, Ted Talk-like introductions of 7–10 minutes.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Ecclesial Practices provides a collaborative space at the intersection of ethnographic and other qualitative approaches and theological approaches to the study of ecclesial practices. This might include churches, other (new, emerging, para-church, and virtual) communities, and lived faith in daily life. International in scope, the unit encourages research contributing to a deeper understanding of “church in practice” in a global context, including decolonization and

postcolonial theologies. The unit encourages ongoing research in the following areas: • Empirical and theological approaches to the study of ecclesial communities (churches, congregations, and emerging communities), especially as interdisciplinary efforts to understand lived faith and practice extending from them • Studies of specific ecclesial activities, e.g. music, liturgy, arts, social justice, youth work, preaching, pastoral care, rites of passage, community organizing • Studies of global contexts of lived faith in relation to ecclesial communities, for example, decolonizing and postcolonial theory and theology • Discussions of congregational growth and decline, new church movements, and ecclesial experiments connected to shared practices in a worldly church • Explorations of Christian doctrine in relation to the potential implications of empirical and qualitative research on ecclesial communities and lived faith for discerning, defining, and challenging standard theological genres such as systematics and doctrine, as well as inviting new ways to understand normative logics • Discussions of methodological issues with regard to qualitative research on theological topics, especially related to ecclesial communities and lived faith • Discussions (both substantive and methodological) of the implications of new technologies and digital cultures for ecclesial communities and lived faith

## Chairs

- [Rachelle Green, Fordham University](#)  
[rgreen36@fordham.edu](mailto:rgreen36@fordham.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Rebecca Spurrier, Columbia Theological Seminary](#)  
[spurrierr@ctsnet.edu](mailto:spurrierr@ctsnet.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Ecclesiological Investigations Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

[In light of this year's presidential theme of "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," we invite papers for a joint session with the Quaker Studies Unit](#) that consider how particular church communities (especially, but by no means exclusively, the historical "peace churches" of Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren) concretely enact their philosophies of nonviolence and principles of peacemaking in situations of violent conflict. In particular, we hope to consider how the varieties of Christian commitments to peace come to render lived or practical ecclesiologies that equip individuals and communities for civil resistance, intercommunal solidarity, or indeed martyrdom.

Additionally, the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit invites papers that explore practices of violence and nonviolence in relation to borders and global migration. Borders are spaces of death and life. Established identities are stretched, at times inciting conflict and at other times transformation. New identities emerge. How do communities of faith engage with the precarity of borders, be they physical borders or the borders we carry in our bodies? Possible topics may include: the ecclesiologies of migrants and/or refugees, church as migrant advocate or opponent, borders and indigenous identities of church members, the church's response to national identity and nationalism tied to exclusion of 'others', and the ministry of faith communities at or near borders.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is a part of the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network, which seeks to serve as a hub for national and international collaboration in ecclesiology, drawing together other groups and networks, initiating research ventures, providing administrative support, as well as acting as a facilitator to support conversations, research, and education in this field. Hence the Network exists to promote collaborative ecclesiology. The Network's five fundamental aims are as follows: • The establishment of partnerships between scholars, research projects, and research centers across the world • The development of virtual, textual, and actual conversation between the many persons and groups involved in research and debate about ecclesiology • Organizing and sharing in colloquia, symposia, and conferences • Encouraging joint teaching and exchanges of postgraduate students and faculty • The Unit seeks to publish the best fruits of all such collaboration in our new Palgrave Series, Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue, as well as in the journal Ecclesiology (Brill), published in association with the Network. The Network is a "network of networks" serving a "church of churches." See <http://www.ei-research.net/> for more information.

## Chairs

- [Dennis Doyle, University of Dayton](#)  
[ddoyle1@udayton.edu](mailto:ddoyle1@udayton.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Cristina Lledo Gomez, BBI Australian Institute for Theological Education](#)  
[cristina.gomez2@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cristina.gomez2@bbi.catholic.edu.au)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Esotericism Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting



For all proposals, we especially encourage papers that employ innovative theoretical or methodological approaches and that consider cross-cultural perspectives.

In addition, we will consider proposals for pre-arranged panels on a specific topic. We encourage panel organizers to consider the composition of panels which reflect diversity, which can include gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and academic rank.

This year we invite proposals for the following themes:

### Esotericism and (Non)Violence

In Jane Robert's 1970 channeled text *The Seth Material*, Seth declared with authority that "There is never any justification for violence." In lieu of the Presidential Theme of the 2024 meeting, we welcome papers that explore the complex relationship of esotericism, violence, and nonviolence. Possible subjects could include but are not limited to:

- Rhetoric of violence (or nonviolence) in esoteric texts or practices, such as Buddhist tantras or New Age channeled texts,
- Esoteric beliefs or practices that result from or interact with moments of historical violence (i.e. Spiritualism in the wake of the Civil War and widespread racial violence),
- The relationship between violence and secrecy in accusations of violent practices directed at esoteric religious groups, or alleged in broad terms in normative discourses surrounding such groups (i.e., accusations of poisoning against alchemists, etc.)
- Historical and contemporary connections between esotericism and violent politics: including colonialism, far-right/fascist movements, and in the works of specific figures like Julius Evola.
- Historical moments of violence and/or violent rhetoric directed towards esoteric religious groups (i.e. the Inquisition and execution of figures like Giordano Bruno, violent anti-Sufism in Muslim communities, etc.)
- Esotericism and ethics in broad terms, including nonviolence, vegetarianism, moral regard for humans and nonhumans, etc.

### Celebrity Esotericism

Madonna and Kabbalah. The greater Oprah spiritual universe. Aleister Crowley on the cover of Sgt. Pepper's. Celebrity culture has been a persistent vector for the popularization and dissemination of esoteric beliefs and practices. The Esotericism Unit invites proposals on the intersection of esotericism and celebrity in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to:

- Specific celebrities and their esoteric practices (astrology in the Reagan White House, the varieties of New Age practices described on daytime talk shows with figures like Oprah Winfrey),
- The celebrity of major esoteric figures, like Helena Blavatsky,
- Esotericism as described or practiced in popular music or other media, such as the Five Percenter Islam of hip-hop artists like the Wu-Tang Clan,
- Esoteric practices of devotion related to celebrities, fandom, and parasocial relationships.

#### Co-Sponsored with the Yoga in Theory in Practice Unit: Esotericism and Yoga

We welcome papers on the relationship between Yoga and esoteric ideas and practice. Contact Anya Foxen ([afoxen@calpoly.edu](mailto:afoxen@calpoly.edu)) with questions.

#### Co-Sponsored with the Mysticism Unit: Entangled Histories: Mysticism, Esotericism, and Hybridity

The 19th and 20th centuries saw a boom in what might today be considered “spiritual but not religious” movements. Spiritualism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, to name only a few, synthesized – often uncritically – post-Protestant Christianity with imported traditions from central and south Asian yoga and tantric traditions, along with a vast array of symbolic and mythological themes drawing from gnosticism to medieval alchemy to astrology. How might contemporary scholars locate much less “define” the boundaries between “mysticism” and “esotericism” – and, are these terms even useful in organizing and categorizing these areas? This panel invites papers which address issues of hybridization in mysticism and esotericism, particularly from outside of European traditions, as well as challenge methodological and definitional assumptions, particularly a too rigid separation of “the esoteric” from “the mystic.”

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

For a possible online session, we welcome individual paper or panel proposals on any aspect of the study of esotericism.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this unit is to promote, expand, and constructively critique the academic study of esotericism. “Esotericism” is now conventionally seen as an umbrella term covering a range of historical currents associated with notions of “hidden knowledge” that have been conceived of – by historical actors or by later scholars – as “alternative” to or “rejected” by established religious institutions in Europe and beyond. In this sense it typically includes a wide range of

currents such as Gnosticism, Hermetism, and theurgy, occult sciences and ritual magical traditions, Paracelsism and Rosicrucianism, Mesmerism, spiritualism, and Theosophy, and various forms of “alternative” spirituality. The unit continues to support new work on all aspects of such currents, from antiquity to the present day. However, it specifically encourages work that 1) challenges the cultural and geographic demarcations of the field by looking at esotericism in e.g. Islamic and Jewish contexts, colonial and post-colonial societies (e.g. India, South America, Africa, the Pacific); 2) seeks new ways to engage in cross-cultural comparisons of esoteric practices and discourses; and 3) explores innovative theoretical and methodological approaches to esotericism and interrogates key terms in the field (e.g. esotericism, gnosis, secrecy, initiation, marginality and rejectedness). By encouraging such work, the unit is committed to refining “esotericism” as a critical concept in the study of religion, and opening up and expanding the field through an engagement with other disciplines and theoretical perspectives.

## Chairs

- [Justine Bakker, Radboud University](#)  
[justine.bakker@ru.nl](mailto:justine.bakker@ru.nl)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Timothy Grieve-Carlson, Rice University](#)  
[tgriev Carlson@gmail.com](mailto:tgriev Carlson@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Ethics Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This year the Ethics Unit welcomes proposals on the following themes:

#### Tragedy and Religious Ethics

From its literary to its social, historical, and personal forms, tragedy poses a range of ethical and religious questions. This session invites paper or paper session proposals that examine the ethical and religious significance of tragedy. We welcome proposals that compare tragic, ethical, and religious interpretations of and / or responses to ruin and catastrophe, as well as proposals that explore tragedy as a genre of and / or stimulus to religious ethics.

Voices from the Margins about Gaza

After October 7, 2023, North American discourse was replete with opinions from Jews, Muslims, and evangelical and mainline Christians. These voices critiqued, defended, condemned, and mourned the war in Palestine. This session invites proposals about voices in religious ethics that have gone largely unheard in the North American context—religious minority groups, “non-Western” traditions, and other marginal or marginalized perspectives—and shed light on the violence and suffering in this region.

### Technology as an Existential Threat

“Mitigating the risk of extinction from A.I. should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks, such as pandemics and nuclear war.” So reads a statement signed last year by A.I. scientists, business leaders, and professors. As the statement suggests, this is not the first time humanity has worried about the existential threat posed by new technologies. How, as religious ethicists, can we provide context for the “risk of extinction” A.I. poses? We welcome proposals that examine episodes from history and/or insights from the history of religious ethics that provide a comparative lens on these concerns.

### Holmes Rolston, Religious Ethics, and Theology

Holmes Rolston III’s work has been remarkably generative for the fields of environmental ethics and religion and science. Yet despite its explicitly Christian motifs, this work has stimulated less interest among ethicists and scholars of religion outside these fields. On this twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Rolston’s Gifford lectures (*Genes, Genesis, and God: Values and their Origins in Natural and Human History*), we invite proposals that interpret and evaluate the ethical and theological import of Rolston’s work, particularly from vantages besides environmental ethics and religion and science.

In response to the 2024 Annual Meeting Presidential Theme of Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, this year the Ethics Unit will also sponsor a prearranged papers session featuring invited panelists discussing Christophe Ringer’s recently published *Necropolitics: The Religious Crisis of Mass Incarceration in America*.

## Statement of Purpose

The Ethics Unit seeks to serve the AAR by providing a forum for scholarly engagement with the ethical dimensions and implications of religious traditions.

## Chairs

- [Nichole Flores, University of Virginia](#)

[nichole.flores@virginia.edu](mailto:nichole.flores@virginia.edu)

1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

- [Frederick Simmons, Princeton Theological Seminary](mailto:frederick.simmons@ptsem.edu)

[frederick.simmons@ptsem.edu](mailto:frederick.simmons@ptsem.edu)

1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Evangelical Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Theme for 2024: Evangelicals, Violence, and Nonviolence

The Evangelical Studies Unit invites proposals for individual papers or complete panels related to the presidential theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” We welcome papers exploring how this theme manifests within evangelical theology, history, culture, politics, protest, practice, and/or social vision, and are particularly interested in projects that offer constructive and synthetic approaches to suggest new directions for the study of evangelicalism.

Possible framing questions include: What is the relationship between evangelicalism and violence? In what ways do evangelical structures, beliefs, and commitments foster or reject violence? Where are the sites of nonviolent resistance within evangelicalism? How is violence a part of defining the margins and conceptions of belonging within evangelicalism?

We welcome research related to evangelicals and various ways of defining “violence” using a wide array of spiritual, physical, psychological, and cultural resources. Examples of sub-themes include:

- War
- Guns
- Anger, Protest, & Political Engagement
- Economics and Class Warfare
- Mission & Evangelism
- Gender Roles
- Embodiment & Purity Culture
- Abortion

- Sexual Identity
- Race
- Immigration
- Environmental Care

Lastly, the Evangelical Studies Unit and Religion and Politics Unit welcome proposals a joint session that explore evangelical religion, politics, social polarization in the United States.

## Statement of Purpose

The Evangelical Studies Unit promotes critical analysis and innovative thinking around the study of Evangelicalism through multifaceted approaches by fostering dialogue across disciplines and diverse social locations. Unlike many groups aimed at the study of Evangelicalism, there is no confessional expectation or requirement for membership or participation within this Unit.

## Chairs

- [Peter Choi, Graduate Theological Union](#)  
[pchoi@gtu.edu](mailto:pchoi@gtu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Jessica Wong, Azusa Pacific University](#)  
[jessicawong@apu.edu](mailto:jessicawong@apu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the 2024 November meeting, we seek proposals related to the purpose of our unit with attention to two specific themes:

[For a possible co-sponsorship with Religion and Food](#), we welcome papers on the sexual and religious politics of meat, food porn, food as resilience and nourishment in the face of violence and marginalization, and food in relation to embodied humans and an embodied ecological Earth.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with Contemporary Pagan Studies](#), we welcome descriptive or theoretical approaches to witches and the occult on social media (Tik Tok, Instagram, Facebook, and beyond), including how social media is changing ways of making meaning, authority and gender, cultural appropriation, connections to politics, aesthetics, consumerism, and forming community.

[We are also planning an author-meets-respondents session, co-sponsored with Afro-American Religious History](#), on *Fire Dreams: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South* with Laura McTighe and Deon Haywood focusing on the themes of social organizing, Black feminist liberation, collaborative scholarship, ethnography, the context of the American South, or other facets relating to *Fire Dreams*. Please email Annie Blazer ([alblazer@wm.edu](mailto:alblazer@wm.edu)) if you would like to be considered as a respondent.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

With curiosity about future directions for feminist theory and religious reflection, we invite proposals on interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary topics, stories, questions, and/or issues that are nascent or understudied. Examples of multi-disciplinary approaches may include: theories of religion and climate psychology, queer theory and the religious/secular binary, reproductive labor and indigenous land care practices, fat studies and ecological ethics, theories of play and violence, and other intersections. Preference will be given to proposals that include methodological reflections about the “how” and the “why” of emergent transdisciplinary explorations.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit has consistently provided programmatic space for a wide variety of feminist theories, including feminist theology, queer theory, continental feminist theory, feminist political theory, etc., as these intersect with a broad understanding of “religious reflection”, including institutional religious settings, or intersections of religion and culture, religion and aesthetics, religion and the body, and religion and nature. As the 21 century commences, FTRR will plan to invigorate feminist analyses of religious discourse within a global setting. Urgent concerns include forms of religious violence and climate crises, among others.

## Chairs

- [Annie Blazer, College of William and Mary](#)  
[annie.blazer@gmail.com](mailto:annie.blazer@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [M. Cooper Minister, Shenandoah University](#)

## Gay Men and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Gay Men and Religion Program Unit invites papers and panels exploring the following subjects/themes:

- The experiences of gay men and men who have sex with men from the global South, including religious experiences, sexual experiences, the formation of identities, social and religious systems/structures; LGBTQ rights in relation to colonialism and de-colonialist responses. We highly encourage papers from a variety of religious identities and belongings.
- We also invite proposals concerning gay men, religion, and violence. Topics might include: violence gay men commit against each other; systematic violence that happens at the intersection of gay men, religion, and society (law, economics, moral norms, etc.); the use of violence in gay activism (e.g., the Lavender Panthers); the role of gay men in non-violent strategies of resistance.
- [The Gay Men and Religion Program Unit and the Quaker Studies Program Unit are co-sponsoring a panel](#) featuring Brian Blackmore's forthcoming book, *Quaker Approaches to Queer* from Temple University Press. We invite responses to the book, and the panel will conclude with author comments.

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Gay Men and Religion Program Unit invites proposals for the AAR Summer 2024 online gathering. Our summer session is titled, "Works in Progress," an opportunity for scholars to present early-stage projects (theses, seminar papers, dissertations, books, journal articles, and other projects, etc.). This will be an opportunity to both share ideas and receive supportive feedback on scholarship in-progress. Very often, AAR presentations represent completed works—but we acknowledge that where we often need collegial feedback is in the midst of our work. This session is open to scholars of every level of their career, but a special invitation is extended to early career/emerging scholars. The GMar Program Unit is fully inclusive of masters and doctoral students as colleagues in the field.



Colleagues with accepted proposals will receive 5–10 minutes to present their work in progress, followed by 10 minutes of open forum for constructive feedback. We encourage presenters to come with questions for the forum (e.g., concerning methodology, research resources, etc.)

## Statement of Purpose

The Gay Men and Religion Unit: Provides scholarly reflection and writing on the intersections of gay male experience, including sexual experiences, with religious traditions and spiritual practices. Fosters ongoing contributions by (or about) gay men—or men who have sex with men—to religious scholarship in all its forms; we are especially interested in gay men’s experiences across a range of religious traditions and in a wide variety of geographical contexts. Critically challenges homophobic scholarship and religious teaching, on the one hand, and aspects of the LGBTQI equality movement that promote assimilation and normalization of hegemonic patriarchy and heterosexism, on the other. Engages a variety of theoretical and political discourses, which fosters vigorous dialogue between essentialist and constructionist notions of gay male identity; this includes recognizing the insights and limitations of any theoretical and methodological approach to the study of religion and sexuality.

## Chairs

- [Richard McCarty, Mercyhurst University](#)  
[rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu](mailto:rmccarty@mercyhurst.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Michael Pettinger, New York University](#)  
[mfpettinger@gmail.com](mailto:mfpettinger@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Global–Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit

### Meeting

In–Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the 2024 AAR annual meeting, the Global Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit is happy to welcome submissions on the following topics (longer descriptions below):

- Theodicies under suspicion (contact person: [nrloewen@ua.edu](mailto:nrloewen@ua.edu) and [knepper@drake.edu](mailto:knepper@drake.edu))
- [Ancestors](#) (contact person [m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk) and [nrloewen@ua.edu](mailto:nrloewen@ua.edu))
- Existential anthropology and the study of religion (contact person: [m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk) and [premawardhana@emory.edu](mailto:premawardhana@emory.edu))

- Buddhist Critical Phenomenology (contact person: [m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk) and [brennanj@kenyon.edu](mailto:brennanj@kenyon.edu))
- [Author Meets Author: The Two Truths in Buddhist Studies](#) (contact person: [nrloewen@ua.edu](mailto:nrloewen@ua.edu) and [jue.liang@case.edu](mailto:jue.liang@case.edu)),
- [Translation Panel: Akalaṅka's Astāśatī and its Non-Jain Interlocutors](#) (contact person: [m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.gorisse@bham.ac.uk) and [ammundra@gmail.com](mailto:ammundra@gmail.com))

Looking forwards to our discussions!

Marie-Hélène and Nathan

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### Theodicies under suspicion

How might theodicies serve to mask and marginalize structural violence? (either tacitly or explicitly) “Theodicy” here works as a category for arguments that defend religious or metaphysical claims from contradictions based on events of the actual world. We seek proposals that articulate a theodicy, and then critically analyze how it functions to justify structural conditions such as inequalities, civil violence, xenophobia, political structures, or disparities of health, education, etc. Proposals may work with typical sources (e.g. texts, scriptures) or less-conventional sources (e.g. oral traditions, social media, laws, etc.). We wish to host a conversation that is typically on the margins of discourses in our field.

### [Ancestors, Co-sponsored with the Philosophy of Religion Unit](#)

Ancestors—including reverence for ancestors, communication with ancestors, and conceptions of ancestral afterlives—are central to peoples' lived experiences of religions worldwide. And yet this topic receives little to no attention within the philosophy of religion. The Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit and Philosophy of Religion Unit invite submissions to a co-sponsored session on this important area of inquiry.

Existential anthropology and the study of religion, Potentially co-sponsored with the Anthropology of Religion Unit

This session gathers contributors and critics around a new edited volume at the intersection of anthropology, philosophy, and religious studies. *Between Life and Thought: Existential Anthropology and the Study of Religion* (University of Toronto Press, 2024) explores the impact of the work of philosophical anthropologist Michael Jackson on religious studies, beginning from the premise that there is something significant about the fact that his turn from phenomenological anthropology to existential anthropology coincided with his appointment at Harvard Divinity School, thus with his institutional location being for the first time in a religious studies rather than anthropological program. Especially since that time, nearly twenty years ago, his work has come to be widely read, engaged, and admired by a range of religious studies scholars, particularly ethnographers and philosophers. The multidisciplinary character of this volume's contributors, all dealing with religion through the lens of existential anthropology or existential anthropology through the lens of religion, illustrates a key claim of the volume as a whole: that in the ever growing space for ethnographic approaches to the academic study of religion, existential anthropology provides an organic bridge not only between anthropology and religious studies, but between the social sciences and the humanities at large. Existential anthropology offers a genuinely humanistic approach to anthropology, stressing such matters as indeterminacy, ambiguity, embodied everyday experience, and the limits of discursive knowledge. Moreover, existential anthropology draws on a deep reservoir of existential and phenomenological thinkers who have long and prominently figured in multiple areas of inquiry—philosophical, theological, and historical—in the academic study of religion.

Buddhist Critical Phenomenology

Potentially Co-sponsored by the Yogācāra Unit, the Buddhist Philosophy Unit, the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Unit, or the Theology and Continental Philosophy

[Author Meets Author: The Two Truths in Buddhist, Potentially co-sponsored with the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit, the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit, and the Buddhism Unit](#)

This roundtable invites contributions to a roundtable discussion focused on challenging the categories deployed by Buddhist Studies scholars. Each contributor must consider an English-language category currently or historically used for the study of Buddhist data. The category may be the translation of a doxastic term, a term of art in Buddhist studies discourses, a critical category of religious studies, an English philosophical term, or from another form of scholarly analysis. Contributors must critically examine their engagement with their chosen category by

making an arguments for and an argument against the academic validity of that category. By doing so, the roundtable session will open a space to articulate the challenges scholars face in their work of producing English-language scholarship on Buddhist data.

[Translation Panel: Akalaṅka's Aṣṭaśatī and its Non-Jain Interlocutors, Potentially Co-sponsored by the Jaina Studies Unit, the Buddhist Philosophy Unit, the Hindu Philosophy Unit, and the Yogācāra Unit](#)

Traditionally on the margins of discourses in South Asian religions, the Jain philosophy of non-one-sidedness (anekāntavāda) provides a unique space for inter-doctrinal debates from a minority perspective. This opens new challenges and corresponding rewards when producing English-language scholarship on these texts, especially as it requires broad expertise in South Asian philosophies. This panel will present the draft translation produced by an international research team of scholars in Jain studies of one particularly important passage of Akalaṅkadeva's Aṣṭaśatī, a rich commentary on one of the foundational Sanskrit texts of the Jain philosophy of non-one-sidedness: Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā. The passage addresses the pitfalls of an absolute rejection of non-existence, raising problems for conceptions of how things appear in consciousness and of how auditory cognition arises. The audience will have a chance to read and discuss the translation, and formal responses will be offered that can address the various non-Jain interlocutors imagined by Akalaṅka. We invite proposals from prospective respondents with expertise in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, Advaita Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Dharmakīrti, and Yogācāra.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion (GCPR) Unit seeks to globalize and otherwise diversify the contents, categories, and methods of philosophy of religion, by critically reflecting on current practices of the field, by developing conceptual frameworks for cross-cultural philosophizing, and by exploring innovative methods for cross-pollination between religio-philosophical traditions.

GCPR is "global" and "critical" in distinctive ways—global, in facilitating panels and sessions that are always populated by scholars representing different religio-philosophical traditions; critical, in interrogating the vocabularies and methodologies used to carry out such cross-cultural, inter-religious philosophizing. Our two key goals follow from this mission: first, to offer and reflect on new categories of inquiry for cross-cultural, inter-religious philosophy of religion; second, to explore and implement new methods for philosophizing about religion cross-culturally and inter-religiously. This, in turn, involves experimenting with session formats that are designed to foster conversations that go beyond "description" or "presentation" to interactive philosophizing about religion, including the pre-circulation of papers, designing sessions that cultivate engagement between panelists, and empowering moderators to lead

conversations into “deeper” hermeneutic, phenomenological, comparative, and evaluative topics and issues.

## Chairs

- [Marie–Helene Gorisse, University of Birmingham](#)  
[mhgorisse@gmail.com](mailto:mhgorisse@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Nathan R. B. Loewen, University of Alabama](#)  
[nrloewen@ua.edu](mailto:nrloewen@ua.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Hindu Philosophy Unit

### Meeting

In–Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Hindu Philosophy unit of the American Academy of Religion is pleased to invite proposals for the following sessions to be held at this year’s Annual Meeting:

- Philosophical Roundtable

This format brings together several participants to discuss either a single argument or a closely related series of arguments from a single author. This year we will discuss Nyāya arguments for the existence of God (or *īśvara*), focusing on Jayanta Bhaṭṭa’s formulation of the *īśvarānumāna* in the *Nyāyamañjarī* (āhnika 3; see the critical edition of Kataoka [2005]). The goal is not to have traditional presentations but to create a space for lively and rigorous discussion. In lieu of traditional paper proposals, therefore, we invite prospective participants to write a short philosophical analysis of Jayanta’s argument.

One might, for example, criticize the inference, or defend it against objections, or simply assess its strengths and weaknesses. Proposals might also consider Jayanta’s argument in light of later formulations and critiques of the inference (see, e.g., Patil, *Against a Hindu God* [2009]).

- Traditional Papers Session

For this session we are looking for individual paper proposals rather than full panel proposals. We are open to a wide range of topics related to Hindu philosophy. Possible topics include but are by no means limited to: epistemology, philosophy of language, aesthetics, philosophy and literature, philosophical theology, discourses of ultimate reality, philosophy and pedagogy, lived philosophy, modern Indian philosophy, and philosophy in vernacular texts.

- [Co-sponsored Session on Philosophy of Materiality.](#)

We also seek papers for a possible co-sponsored session with the Tantric Studies unit on Loriliai Biernacki's recent book *The Matter of Wonder: Abhinavagupta's Panentheism and the New Materialism* (OUP 2023) and on Hindu philosophies of materiality more broadly.

## Statement of Purpose

This unit aims to bring together scholars working on Hindu philosophy broadly construed, including not only the classical schools of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, etc., but a wide range of intellectual traditions from the Vedic period to the present day. These traditions are vast and varied, engaging with questions of epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, aesthetics, theodicy, ritual theory, ethics, and political philosophy, not to mention areas that have, arguably, no direct parallel in Western thought. Our goals are (1) to advance research in Hindu philosophical traditions, encouraging new approaches and new topics within the field; (2) to explore interactions and influences between Hindu philosophy and other traditions of South Asian philosophy (Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Islamic, etc.); and (3) to contribute to the study of cross-cultural philosophy at the AAR.

## Chairs

- [Michael Allen, University of Virginia](#)  
[msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Parimal G. Patil, Harvard University](#)  
[ppatil@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ppatil@fas.harvard.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## [Hinduism Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Hinduism Unit invites contributions on the following topics suggested at the 2023 Annual Meeting as well as on other topics consistent with the Unit's Statement of Purpose. Proposals of complete paper sessions and roundtable sessions are especially welcome, as are proposals that specify creative and efficient uses of the 90-minute and 120-minute sessions that will make up the entirety of the Unit's programming for the 2024 Annual Meeting. For further information about potential sessions on the topics already suggested, please e-mail the points of contact for each topic listed below:

## New Books in Hindu Studies

Contact: Jamal Jones ([jones23@wisc.edu](mailto:jones23@wisc.edu))

Description: This panel features first monographs in Hindu studies with the aim of both exposing scholars in the field to new theoretical interventions, and of providing concrete ideas about how to incorporate those interventions into scholars' own pedagogies. Given the range of new books in Hindu studies, preference will be given to first monographs.

To nominate a book for consideration (either your own or someone else's), please email Jamal Jones ([jones23@wisc.edu](mailto:jones23@wisc.edu)).

## [Telling and Selling: The Contemporary Popular Literature of Hinduism \(Co-sponsored with the Religion and Popular Culture Unit\)](#)

Contact: Nell Hawley ([nhawley@vassar.edu](mailto:nhawley@vassar.edu)) and Tracy Pintchman ([tpintch@luc.edu](mailto:tpintch@luc.edu)) Description: Walk into an airport bookstore in South Asia or North America and you'll find the narrative worlds of Hinduism packaged between the covers of paperback after paperback. This panel asks: How are Hindu stories currently being told in popular literature? How are they being sold to mass-market readers? How do present-day patterns of "telling and selling" shift to accommodate different languages, genres, and imagined readers? We welcome papers that address the presentation of Hindu myths, narratives, figures, and ideas in contemporary popular literature produced in various regions, languages (including English), and genres (adult, YA series, children's books, comics, etc.).

## [A Cultural History of Hinduism](#)

A Cultural History of Hinduism is a six-volume study of Hinduism engaging 55 scholars from our field that will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in April 2024 (it is in press now). For a description please see <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/cultural-history-of-hinduism-9781350024434>

Contact: Karen Pechilis ([kpechili@drew.edu](mailto:kpechili@drew.edu))

Description: This roundtable panel brings together a group of volume editors, contributors, and critics to discuss strategies and challenges in writing today about Hinduism in its multireligious contexts past and present. Any academic in the field not involved in the CHH project who would like to serve as critic (who may focus on a specific area rather than the entire series).

## Fieldwork Entanglements in Today's India

Contact: Emilia Bachrach ([ebachrac@oberlin.edu](mailto:ebachrac@oberlin.edu))

Description: This roundtable panel invites ethnographers (and those working with related methodologies) working in India (but also in relationship to India, based elsewhere, including in the US) to reflect on recent shifts they have experienced in the research process, especially vis-à-vis increased efforts by the BJP government (namely, since 2014) to quiet voices in (seeming) opposition to Hindu Nationalist narratives about India's history and religious landscapes. Questions we invite potential panelists to consider include, but are not limited to, how ethnographers' social positions (e.g., perceived caste, race, national, and gender identities) have been received differently in recent years by interlocutors (and/or state officials involved in granting visas and research permissions) and how researchers have had to rethink methodologies in order to protect themselves, but also their conservation partners, particularly those in marginalized social positions. Roundtable contributors will have an option to have their papers/comments presented anonymously by Hinduism Unit committee members or others.

## Outside the Epics: Retelling Hindu Narratives

Contact: Sohini Pillai ([Sohini.Pillai@kzoo.edu](mailto:Sohini.Pillai@kzoo.edu))

Description: In the past thirty-five years, there have been a plethora of scholarly studies of retellings of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata epic narrative traditions. But what about retellings of Hindu stories other than the Ramayana and the Mahabharata such as the puranas or hagiographies of devotional poets? This panel aims to explore both premodern and modern retellings of Hindu narratives in a range of different languages and genres (including literature, film, and television).

## Hinduism Beyond South Asia and North America

Contact: Aarti Patel ([abp6177@psu.edu](mailto:abp6177@psu.edu))

Description: Whether from legacies of indentured servitude or large-scale migration patterns, Hindu diasporas have taken root all over the world. Scholars have explored how Hindus living outside South Asia, particularly in North America, simultaneously maintain and adapt their traditions and practices through community formation and temple-building. But this balancing act of maintenance and adaptation may look different in varying geographic and historical contexts. This panel invites papers that explore Hinduism or Hindu traditions in the diasporas beyond North America.



Topics might include:

- Pilgrimage
- Festivals
- Use(s) of technology
- Languages
- Community

Where is South Asia? Religion, Margins, and Migration

Contact: Gaurika Mehta ([gm2680@columbia.edu](mailto:gm2680@columbia.edu))

Description: For this roundtable, we hope to bring together scholars of South Asian diasporic religions to explore the following questions: Where is South Asia? What and who counts as South Asian (and what happens to stories and groups that don't "count")? How do questions of geography, and centers and margins, shape the study of South Asian diaspora religions? What does the study of South Asian diasporas reveal about religion, caste, race, and/or gender? How do religious ideas and politics travel (in both directions) between the South Asian subcontinent and its global diasporic edges?

Hinduism and Ecology

Contact: Katie Chandler ([Katharine.chandler@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:Katharine.chandler@mail.mcgill.ca)) and Vijaya Nagarajan ([vijayanagarajanusf@gmail.com](mailto:vijayanagarajanusf@gmail.com))

Description: This panel wishes to illuminate possible bridges between various research areas of Hinduism and a rapidly changing global environment. We would consider questions such as: how do religious landscapes change? How do individuals and/or communities transform religious landscapes? How do religious landscapes in turn transform people? In what ways might a changing environment impact religious structures and practices? Exploring the diverse range of topics related to religion and ecology in Hinduism, this panel seeks to explore the intimate relationships between religiosity and landscapes, and how a changing landscape and climate impacts religious practices.

[Religion, South Asians, and the 2024 Elections \(potential cosponsors Hinduism, SARI, North American Hinduism\)](#)

Contact: Prea Persaud ([preakpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:preakpersaud@gmail.com)) or Shana Sippy ([shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu))

Description: In both India and the US, 2024 promises to be a critical year for elections. It remains to be seen whether both the ruling BJP party and the Democratic Biden/Harris ticket will remain in power. No matter what happens, it is clear that religion will play a crucial role in setting the tone and the stakes of the various issues, agendas, and debates that occur among the vying parties. In the US, with two prominent South Asian Republican candidates for President—Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley— running for office, as well as Vice President Kamala Harris, we are seeing discourses about South Asian religion and identity take new forms. And, in India, Hindutva rhetoric and marginalization of religious minorities means that religion remains a core concern for anyone thinking about India’s future. This panel seeks to explore how various players and parties are mobilizing religion in the 2024 elections, examining various contexts and iterations in the US and India.

#### The Position of Dharmasāstra in Hinduism

Contact: Sreedhar Chintalapaty, ([sreedharc@gmail.com](mailto:sreedharc@gmail.com))

Description: Understanding the dharmaśāstra's remit is an essential prerequisite to correctly interpreting its contents. The widely prevalent misconception, even among academia, that its remit includes all Hindus has led to confusion and undeserved vilification of Hinduism, as vividly illustrated by the now annual ritual of Manusmṛti Dahana. In this Roundtable/Paper Session, we will examine what the Dharmasāstra says about its own position within Hinduism, analyze some of its aspects in this light to evaluate if it is indeed culpable for the social ills laid at its door, and consider its relevance to addressing modern social challenges.

#### Lived experiences of Hindus

Contact: Sriram Subramanian ([sriram.subramanian@hua.edu](mailto:sriram.subramanian@hua.edu))

Description: What are the lived experiences of a Hindu – rituals, beliefs, prayers, traditions, philosophy, and more? This panel highlights the diverse aspects of lived experiences of being a Hindu from a first-person perspective and brings out the continuity among seemingly different aspects of Hinduism.

### Statement of Purpose

This Unit was established in 1997 with the mission of providing a forum within the AAR for the academic study of Hinduism. The Unit seeks to foster research on all periods, geographies, and registers of Hindu texts and practices through the presentation of critical analysis and interpretative strategies based on textual, sociohistorical, ethnographic, philosophical, theological, and theoretical frameworks. We are particularly interested in forging connections

between Hindu studies and other areas of religious studies, and we welcome proposals from scholars in the field that can provide such connections.

## **Chairs**

- [Varun Khanna, Swarthmore College](#)  
[vrkhanna@gmail.com](mailto:vrkhanna@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Shana Sippy, Centre College](#)  
[shana@sippys.net](mailto:shana@sippys.net)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## **History of Christianity Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The History of Christianity Unit invites papers that offer new interpretations of and findings in Christian history. We especially welcome chronological diversity with a special call to pre-modern issues. We stay open to full panel proposals on new approaches (e.g., material culture) and locations for pre-modern Christianities. While we are open to other panel proposals and roundtable sessions, we are especially interested in the following:

- Slavery in the Early Christian Tradition
- Incarceration in Early Christianity
- 60 years since the Civil Rights Act
- Anti-Judaism and Semitism and Christian Exegesis
- Democracy and Violence
- Southern California
- Medieval-Reformation era Christianity and Violence in Europe: 500 years after the Peasants War in 1524
- Queer Christian Movements (especially those outside of mainline Christian Movements)

### **Statement of Purpose**

The mission of this Unit is to deepen and broaden the study of the Christian past by presenting innovative and engaging research on the history, culture, and development of Christianity from its origins to the present, while at the same time promoting interdisciplinary dialogue among the fields of history, religious studies, ritual studies, art history, anthropology, and historical

theology. We have a strong commitment to providing a showcase for the work of both younger and established scholars in the field.

## **Chairs**

- [Lloyd Barba, Amherst College](#)  
[lbarba@amherst.edu](mailto:lbarba@amherst.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Roy Fisher, Loyola Marymount University](#)  
[roy.fisher@lmu.edu](mailto:roy.fisher@lmu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

This Unit welcomes papers on any aspect of the relationship between religion and human enhancement through technology or on transhumanism. We seek perspectives from a variety of religious traditions and encourage relational, feminist, queer, postmodern, and postcolonial analyses. Original research is a priority. Papers may identify and critically evaluate any implicit religious beliefs, practices, and values that might underlie the development and use of human enhancement technologies or the key claims, goals, values, and assumptions of transhumanism. For example, papers might explore the relationship between enhancement and core doctrines or practices of religious traditions, asking how religion might challenge a culture of enhancement or how the growing use of enhancement technology might challenge or reshape the religions of the future. Papers may provide critical and constructive assessments of an envisioned future that places confidence in nanotechnology, cognitive science, moral

bio-enhancements, genetics, robotics, and information technology to achieve enhanced human capacities or extend the human lifespan. Our Unit also welcomes proposals on: Religious transhumanisms and transhumanisms in relation to: global South perspectives, surveillance technologies, ethnographic and anthropological methods, climate change, animal liberation.

We are also encouraging papers or panel sessions proposed on the following topics:

- Politics, social justice questions around access, and power dynamics between elite and grassroots transhumanists; and 2) Definitional work on engagement between transhumanisms and posthumanisms.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the June meeting sessions, in addition to our regular call for papers, we invite global reflections on and precursors to transhumanism, particularly for emerging scholars and those working outside the US.

## Statement of Purpose

“Transhumanism” refers to intellectual and cultural movements that advocate the use of a variety of emerging technologies to enhance human persons. The convergence of these technologies may make it possible to take control of human evolution, providing for “desirable” physical, moral, affective, and cognitive enhancements and the amelioration of aspects of the human condition regarded as undesirable. These enhancements include the radical extension of healthy human life, uploading consciousness / brain patterns, advanced prosthetics, and genetic modifications. If these enhancements become widely available, they would arguably have a more radical impact than any other development in human history — one need only reflect briefly on the economic, political, and social implications of some of the extreme enhancement possibilities. The implications for religion and the religious dimensions of human enhancement technologies are enormous and are addressed in our Unit. We are interested in encouraging and providing a forum for a broad array of diverse scholarly input.

## Chairs

- [Jacob Boss, Indiana University, Bloomington](#)  
[jaboss@indiana.edu](mailto:jaboss@indiana.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Stephen Garner, Laidlaw College](#)  
[sgarner@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:sgarner@laidlaw.ac.nz)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Indian and Chinese Religions in Dialogue Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Call for Panel and Paper Proposals 2024:

We welcome papers and panels focused on but not limited to:

- Land, Sacred Ground and Architecture in India and China, contact Zhiru Ng, [skln4747@pomona.edu](mailto:skln4747@pomona.edu)
- Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margins in India and China, to connect to the 2023 Presidential Theme, contact co-chairs [aviv@gwu.edu](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu) or [karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk)
- Breath/Prana/Qi in India and China, contact Eyal Aviv, [aviv@gwu.edu](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu)
- Samkhya in Contemporary Manifestations in India and China, contact Karen O'Brien-Kop, [karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk)
- Bodies and Reproductive Technologies in India and China, contact Ruth Westoby, [235558@soas.ac.uk](mailto:235558@soas.ac.uk)
- New Books Roundtable focused on connected themes in India and China, contact co-chairs [aviv@gwu.edu](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu) or [karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk)

This Research Unit draws together scholars who study the religions of India and China in discrete, dialogic or comparative frames. Given the increasing global importance of China and India in the contemporary world, this unit serves as an important forum for sustained discussion of their religio-cultural relationship in historical and modern contexts. Our panels can connect scholars working on diverse traditions, regions, and eras who otherwise might not have the opportunity to learn from each other. We also encourage a range of disciplinary approaches and innovative panel formats. Interested members are encouraged to join our (low volume) email list by contacting the co-chairs.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit draws together scholars who study the religions of India and China in discrete or comparative frames. Given the increasing global importance of China and India in the contemporary world, this unit serves as an important forum for sustained discussion of their religio-cultural relationship in historical and modern contexts. Our panels can connect scholars working on diverse traditions, regions, and eras who otherwise might not have the opportunity to learn from each other. Interested members are encouraged to join our (low volume) email list by contacting the co-chairs.

## Chairs

- [Eyal Aviv, George Washington University](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu)  
[aviv@gwu.edu](mailto:aviv@gwu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Karen O'Brien-Kop, King's College London](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk)  
[karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:karen.obrien-kop@kcl.ac.uk)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

For the AAR 2024 in San Diego, we particularly welcome Indigenous paper and panel proposals relating to any of the following topics:

#### Violence against Nature and Other-than-Human Relatives

#### Co-sponsored session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, Religion and Ecology Unit, and Native Traditions of the Americas Unit

The examination of Indigenous communal initiatives to undermine any violence against the Lands, waters, and other-than-human beings. Accordingly, and violent responses to non-violent Land and water protection initiatives, with consideration to how Indigenous religious traditions can or have influenced global and dominant discourses related to the rights of Nature and the environment.

We invite papers that explore how rights language can function as a vehicle for protecting non-human entities ranging from animals to ecosystems; views of Nature, including climate change, water protectors, and the intersections between religion and contemporary movements such as the Rights of Nature Movement and the Non-human Rights Project; and the intersections of Indigenous religions Nature.

#### African and Indigenous Women Centering Peace from the Margins

#### Co-sponsored session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit and Womens' Caucus

African and Indigenous women, in their varied life experiences, continue to tactfully navigate violence in its multilayered form. They have not only fought from their peripheries but also continue to advocate for nonviolence. Naming these forms of violence embedded structurally and systematically in cultures and religions characterizes the quest of African and Indigenous women be they feminists, theologians, religious or lay. Intersectional approaches and methodologies have been utilized to tease out peaceful and nonviolent strategies that counter multi-varied forms and ills of violence affecting women on the "margins." Distinct strategies unearthed continue to fuel and sustain women's zeal for peace and nonviolence amongst all-Earth communities.

The purpose of the biographies panel of the women's caucus is to raise the visibility of scholars, leaders and activists on the margins of imperial and kyriarchal institutions and

decenter these institutions with knowledge models that face the challenges of today's world. To this end, the panel invites proposals on distinct African and Indigenous women's (seers, prophetesses, theologians, and other categories) strategies of naming, navigating, and advocating for peace and nonviolence amongst all-Earth communities. Proposals on this theme might consider the following areas: Freedom fighters, Environmental Justice, Reproductive Bodily Autonomy, Women Ordination and leadership, Inclusive sexual identities, Philosophical epistemologies, Education and Scientific interventions, Animal health, among others.

### Sustaining Environmental Change I

#### Co-sponsored session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit, African Diaspora Religions, and Religion and Ecology

This panel asks: in the face of disaster, firestorms, floods, turbulent weather systems, and globalized systems of environmental racism, how do we make sense of climate change, survival of ourselves and the planet, and environmental justice in relation to African/Diaspora cosmology and cultural and spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices? Environmental Activist Wangari Maathai in her 2004 Nobel Prize Acceptance Lecture in Oslo states: "Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its life support system... We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wombs and, in the process, heal our own. Indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder." The Yoruba concept of Àṣẹ champions the power of rocks, trees, wind, thunder, waterfalls, and lightning as things, as cipher or orixá constitute the indigenous ecologies that support our lives and culture. Currently, the earth is in an apparent radical transition, resisting and responding to human impact in a myriad of tumultuous ways. Maathai points to Yoruba indigenous culture's cosmological care for the ecology, which, like many indigenous communities, was disrupted through development projects and colonial encounters. Yet, it is clear that, if we do not collectively alter our ways of being by supporting the futurity of ecology and sustainability the continuation of human and planetary existence, we will evidence greater loss of life, our planetary home, and culture.

### Redefining Communities, Borders, and Rights

#### Co-sponsored session: Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit and Human Rights Unit

We invite proposals that explore redefinitions of communities, borders, religion, and rights, including examinations of how human rights are bound up with colonial borders, and/or how borders and boundaries set by colonial practices rely on violent enforcement toward marginalized and particularly Indigenous communities.



## Breaking Stereotypes through Indigenous Media

Indigenous representation in media ranged between 0 and 0.6% before 2020, with creative roles showing no representation. However, a booming interest on Indigenous media makers are challenging this trend in global media towards a more compelling and accurate portrayal of Indigenous life. We invite papers exploring how Indigenous storytelling challenges stereotypes in the media industry today.

## Land Back Now!

We invite papers for a session highlighting the concerns of Indigenous rights, the preservation of Indigenous languages and traditions, food sovereignty, repatriation, White supremacist blood and soil ideologies, and any other topics around the restoration of ownership to traditional Indigenous communities. We especially encourage papers that explore the broad perspective of the movement regarding restitution, decoloniality, and protection of traditions, lands, ecosystems, and relations.

## Indigenous futurism and settler futures moving beyond violence

We invite papers considering Indigenous futurism and settler futures and how uncovering past violence—such as trauma, religious responses to residential schools, and reparations—can lead towards a more just future.

Method of Submission: PAPERS

## Statement of Purpose

The Indigenous Religious Traditions Unit welcomes any theoretical, methodological, and conceptual proposals in the study of Indigenous religious traditions the world over. We are concerned with the interface of Indigenous religious traditions and modernity, colonial and postcolonial conditions, and local and global forces that shape the practice of Indigenous traditions and their categorizations. Though particularly interested in interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Indigenous religions, we are primarily grounded in the “history of religions” approach as it concerns the analysis of Indigenous traditions. We also emphasize Indigenous Methodologies among other Humanities and Social Sciences approaches. We strive for increasingly global perspectives with representation of Indigenous Peoples and traditions from all continents. Similarly, we aspire to include other, more-innovative and less conventional

modes of scholarship enhancing our inclusion of creative, embodied, virtual, digital, and public-facing work.

## Chairs

- [Yuria Celidwen, University of California, Berkeley](#)  
[celidwen@hotmail.com](mailto:celidwen@hotmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Seth Schermerhorn, Hamilton College](#)  
[jscherme@hamilton.edu](mailto:jscherme@hamilton.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Unit seeks to gather scholars, researchers, and spiritual care providers who seek to explore the work of chaplaincy in both traditional and emerging settings. We welcome papers from a variety of perspectives, from quantitative research to theological reflection. In 2024 we are particularly interested in:

- Graduate and clinical training for chaplaincy: how are chaplains prepared (or not) to contribute expertise to their interdisciplinary settings? Are they expected to do too many things, consequently, without enough depth of training in any of them? Should and/or how do educators train those wishing to serve in emergent spaces, where spiritual needs exist, but paths to sustainable livelihood and professional standards do not yet exist? What should be the outcomes of graduate and clinical education for chaplaincy?
- Scholarship: What recent and current research enhances our understanding of what recipients of spiritual care want and value from chaplains? How is the work of chaplains perceived where they work, and how do chaplains distinguish their work from other forms of ministry? In what disciplines are or should chaplains be studied, and how are chaplains participating in the creation of evidence-based practice or other standards and assessments of spiritual care?
- Transforming suffering: How are chaplains responding to the impacts of climate crises, widespread grief and trauma, and inequity and injustice that is systemic and in our institutions? How are chaplains specializing in their work to meet the needs of specific populations (pediatric, incarcerated, unhoused, Hospice, psychological and substance use disorders, etc.) or challenges to the human and more-than-human

world (eco-chaplaincy, social justice/movement chaplaincy, animal chaplaincy, prophetic chaplaincy, etc.)? How are chaplains-in-training and professionals supported in their own spiritual formation and maturation process of integration of personal spirituality with professional development? What must chaplains do to sustain their own spirituality in their work, and what does thriving as a chaplain look like given the intense emotional demands of the work?

- The Presidential Theme, “Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin,” as it relates to chaplaincy and spiritual care: We are interested in any related areas, such as whether and how the role of “chaplains” is co-opted for political agendas or to collude with institutional power that entails a violence; how chaplains uniquely serve marginalized peoples, advocate for non-harming, and interrogate uses of power; and perspectives of chaplains from minority religious or other minority or marginalized identities?

We remain open to other papers or roundtable proposals on chaplaincy in all its forms and settings as well.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same as above.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Chaplaincy is becoming more and more central to the religious/spiritual experiences of individuals and communities in the world. Shifts in religious leadership, religious/spiritual affiliation, and theological education are all occurring at a rapid pace; this unit helps shape AAR as the primary academic home of these discussions. This unit is not only academic in nature; its work is consonant with the AAR’s commitment to the public application of scholarship taking place within the Academy. This unit gathers researchers, educators, and broad-minded practitioners to break down the barriers between these siloed communities and draws them into a common conversation on how best to meet individuals’ and communities’ spiritual needs today. Doing so requires: • translating the research needed to support the work of accompanying individuals through growth, change, and struggle; • investigating how chaplaincy provision is shaped by the people it is offered to and the institutions within which it is provided; • asking how chaplains can be more effectively present in settings currently lacking spiritual care providers for those in need and how those chaplains can respond most effectively to the increasingly diverse religious landscape. The mission of Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care is to improve how chaplains are trained, how they work with diverse individuals (including those with no religious or spiritual backgrounds), and how chaplaincy and spiritual care coheres as a professional field.

## Chairs

- [Aaron Klink, Duke University](#)  
[aaron.klink@duke.edu](mailto:aaron.klink@duke.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Leigh Miller, Maitripa College](#)  
[program@maitripa.org](mailto:program@maitripa.org)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## International Development and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Roundtable: What comes after the SDGs? Faith actors and the post-2030 discussions

In 2015 the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the earlier Millennium Development Goals, which ran from 2000–2015. The time frame for the SDGs is also 15 years, and discussions about the post-2030 global development framework that will replace them are beginning and will intensify over the next few years in the run up to 2030. While the MDGs were decided unilaterally within the UN, in the lead up to 2015, for the SDGs there was a consultation process, involving states, civil society and the private sector. This informed the UN's decision about the shape of the new goals. However, although civil society actors were included in the consultation process this was not very wide ranging and did not engage intentionally with faith actors as distinct group within civil society. Where faith actors were involved, this was incidental and reflected their engagement in development and humanitarian action more broadly.

In the run up to the post-2030 discussions, this roundtable invites academics, faith actors and those working with faith-based organisations to reflect upon the following questions:

- To what extent and in what ways were faith actors involved in the consultation to set the SDGs?
- What has been the experience of faith actors engaging with the SDG framework?
- Should the involvement of faith actors in the post-2030 discussions be better facilitated than it was for the SDG consultation process? If so, how do you think this could be achieved?
- Are there aspects of the SDGs framework that could have been designed better with greater input from faith actors?

Paper panel: Methodological discussions in religions and development: combining quantitative and qualitative research

Qualitative approaches have methodologically dominated research in religions and development. Qualitative methods are well suited to the depth needed in examining the complex interactions between religious beliefs and practices and humanitarian and development work. Nevertheless, this has led to some critiques of the field as lacking a balance of methodological approaches and the observation that “quantitative evidence is particularly hard to come by” (Marshall 2021, “Impressions and Implications,” 21). Quantitative methods present a complicated range of issues for religions and development. There have been a limited number of randomized control trials in the field but a wider number of knowledge, attitudes, and practices-style surveys that mostly identify the influence of religious beliefs on various development topics. The practical and ethical implications of quantitative methods (such as their expense or issues with maintaining a control group in community contexts) make them unfeasible in many cases. Yet there are many ways in which analysis of existing data sets, for example, or mixed methods approaches, could advance the state of the evidence in religions and development. This panel seeks papers that a) use mixed methods or quantitative approaches to examine topics relevant to religions and development, b) explain the development of tools to employ in quantitative and mixed methods research, or c) discuss methodology in religions and development research, including analysis and review of methods used by researchers in the field.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same as above.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Since its establishment as an academic discipline in the 1960's the field of International Development Studies (IDS) has evolved from a fragmented topic, contained within the many silos of different academic departments, into an interdisciplinary field that draws on knowledge from across the humanities and social sciences. Despite this growing trend, until recently, religious and theological studies have found it a challenge to contribute to this growing conversation. The International Development and Religion Unit was established at the AAR in 2009 as one avenue through which religious and theological studies could engage in this emerging constructive dialogue with development studies. The primary objective of our Unit is to use the AAR's interdisciplinary and international reach as a focal point to gather scholars from across the humanities and social sciences, including those outside the AAR, who are engaged in the study of the space and place of religion in the context of economic, political and socio-cultural development in the global south. We wish to support theoretically robust and

practically oriented research that interrogates the post/de/colonial, theological, religious and missionary assumptions and mentalities of the global confluence of international development and religion in the developing world, including, but not limited to the investigations of current faith-based NGO's and their projects in the field, practitioner-based research and reflection from the field and the encounter between private and public religion(s) in the developing world.

## **Chairs**

- [Christopher Duncanson-Hales, University of Sudbury](#)  
[theolog3n1@gmail.com](mailto:theolog3n1@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Olivia Wilkinson, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities](#)  
[oliviajwilkinson@gmail.com](mailto:oliviajwilkinson@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Dangers of Interreligious Engagement and Interfaith Dialogue in a Shifting Landscape

We invite paper proposals, panel proposals, or alternative formats to explore the following theme:

While interreligious dialogue and engagement has many benefits, it also carries risks for the individuals involved. The volatility of the current political climate and quickly shifting social landscapes magnify the dangers—and some participants are more vulnerable than others depending on the intersections of their identities. Social media has been deployed to intimidate or punish participants through demonization and doxing. Social justice causes both unite and divide faith communities. “Cancel culture” leads to silencing and self-censorship, and the academy is particularly fraught in this regard. Other risks include the loss of personal relationships, alienation within one’s own community, and apprehension over identification. How do we understand and navigate these risks that those involved in interfaith engagement experience, including the intersectional complexities? What are the broader implications for Interreligious Studies?

Interactive Workshop

Based on the success of our previous interactive workshops, we invite brief presentations (10 minutes) designed to stimulate substantive conversation on critical issues in Interreligious and Interfaith Studies and engagement. Please submit it as a paper proposal and indicate in your text that you intend it for the workshop.

We will address 4–5 of the following topics:

- Syllabus Design and Exchange: Share your own syllabus and/or those of others teaching in the field to examine various approaches.
- Recent Publications in the Field: Discuss your own work or review significant new contributions
- Engaging the Arts
- Graduate Student Education in Interreligious Studies
- Interfaith is Everywhere: Discuss interreligious encounter as it unfolds in the workplace, prisons, schools, or the public square
- Building Interreligious Studies on Campus: Examine curricular, co-curricular, interdisciplinary, community partnership and/or other elements; strategies for developing a culture of active engagement, etc.
- New Modes of Interreligious Engagement
- The Different Questions We Might Be Asking: If interspirituality (multiple religious belonging) or dharmic traditions were centered in Interreligious Studies, what might be different about the field?

Presentations unfold simultaneously at separate tables, with attendees selecting the conversations in which they would like to participate.

[Co-sponsored with Religion in Europe:  
Rising tides of Islamophobia & Antisemitism across Europe and North America](#)

Antisemitism and Islamophobia have been rising dramatically across Europe and North America. While there are distinct underlying social structures, political dynamics, and cultural phenomena that have fueled the emergence and evolution of antisemitism and Islamophobia, especially from country to country, they are often intertwined in certain ways and echoed across contexts. In light of these troubling trends, we seek papers that explore the complex distinctions between and/or intertwinings of antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe or North America, or papers that offer a deeper perspective of either antisemitism or Islamophobia in comparative light between Europe and North America. We also welcome papers that problematize or contest these terms (antisemitism and Islamophobia), their conceptual formulations, their applicability, and their usefulness in certain contexts due to residual colonialism and ongoing

intersections/confrontations with white supremacy. We encourage attention to how global events affect the rise of and relationship between antisemitism and Islamophobia and/or interreligious relations in either contemporary or historical contexts.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

### The Impact of Social Media on Interreligious Engagement

We invite paper proposals, panel proposals, or alternative formats to explore the impact of social media on interreligious dialogue and other modes of engagement. This theme has several possible foci, including:

- How does polarization on TikTok, X, Facebook and other platforms thwart the impact of interfaith initiatives?
- Does social media hamper relationship-building and understanding? What is the impact on fostering nuance in dialogue when participants simultaneously wage a war of propositions on Facebook?
- What new modalities or opportunities does social media enable for interreligious dialogue and engagement?
- How is mediatization altering the understanding of interfaith dialogue itself?
- How might social media help to reframe assumptions about 'religion' and the encounter of diverse lifestances?
- How is social media shaping the interreligious landscape? What are the implications for the field of Interreligious Studies?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit creates space for critical interdisciplinary engagement with interfaith and interreligious studies, examining the many modes of response to the reality of religious pluralism (theological, philosophical, historical, scriptural, ethical, praxiological, and institutional). We seek to: • Foster rigorous analysis to establish the contours of this emerging field. • Explore connections with diverse disciplines as they grapple with encounter of persons and traditions in our multi-faith contexts. • Advance cutting-edge institutional and pedagogical innovation at the intersection of the academy and civic engagement.

Underrepresented scholars, practitioners, and activists are especially encouraged to submit proposals. The unit is committed to equity and inclusion; panel proposals should reflect religious, racial, and gender diversity to be considered.

## Chairs

- [Rachel Mikva, Chicago Theological Seminary  
rmikva@ctschicago.edu](mailto:rmikva@ctschicago.edu)



- 1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Feryal Salem, American Islamic College](mailto:fsalem@aicusa.edu)  
[fsalem@aicusa.edu](mailto:fsalem@aicusa.edu)
- 1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Islam, Gender, Women Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Muslim Feminism, Decoloniality, and Tradition

Building on the success of our 2023 IGW session, the 2024 IGW session will be a non-traditional position paper session that aims to engender a conversation about the current state of the field of women and gender in Islamic studies.

We envision a discussion of the interactions and connections between the following three themes:

- the study and practice of Muslim and Islamic feminisms,
- decolonial approaches as they intersect with Islam and gender,
- the role of “tradition” and authority in the study of Islam and gender

We invite proposals for (short) position papers (for 8–10 minute presentations) that offer formulations of and reflections on one or more of the three themes above. These position papers should not present new research or summaries of existing work, but rather focus on patterns, developments, challenges and questions to facilitate discussion.

We seek position papers that address any of the intersections of Muslim feminism, decoloniality, the study of Islam, tradition, history, and interpretive possibilities.

Some questions that may assist in developing the focus of your position paper are: How do decoloniality and Critical Muslim Studies include considerations of gender? What is the relation between tradition and decoloniality? How are notions of Islamic tradition constructed, challenged, or deconstructed in the work of contemporary Muslim scholars in different contexts and in other decolonial scholarship? How does the critique of the tradition in Muslim feminist

studies relate to decoloniality? How does a decolonial turn toward 'tradition' also privilege patriarchy?

In keeping with our commitment to non-traditional programming, those selected for this session will be asked to offer a short (max. 10 minute) presentation of their position paper (which will be pre-circulated). The position paper presentations will be followed by a facilitated roundtable discussion amongst all attendees of the session. For this session, IGW is not accepting proposals for standard conference papers or for prearranged paper panels. Rather, we solicit position papers on the themes of the CFP that will serve as a basis for discussion and reflection on the current state of the field.

Please be aware of timeline:

October 15: Panelists submit a full draft of their position paper

November 1: Position papers will be posted in the annual meeting app (accessible to registered participants)

#### [Feminist Pedagogy in Islamic Studies \(Co-sponsored session with Study of Islam Unit\)](#)

For a co-sponsored paper session with the Study of Islam program unit, we invite submissions that center on (1) tangible teaching methods, (2) assignments, (3) classroom activities, (4) curriculum design that foster a feminist pedagogical approach to the Islamic Studies classroom. We envision a session in which presenters share a specific pedagogical tool and discuss its application in the classroom, rather than presenting a traditional paper on feminist pedagogy in Islamic studies, followed by group discussions, thereby meeting our expectation of non-traditional session formats. Submissions should emphasize hands-on approaches, activities, and assignments that engage students in critical thinking and reflection while also paying attention to scholarship on teaching and learning. Proposal should explicitly demonstrate how your submission aligns with feminist pedagogical principles in Islamic Studies and contributes to creating an inclusive and empowering learning environment.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Islam, Gender, Women (IGW) Unit uses non-traditional programming to address meta-questions of the study of gender and women in relation to Islam and Muslims, to support the mentoring and development of its scholars, and to create resources and scholarly networks to advance the field. The name IGW signals that the study of gender and women is an essential subfield of the larger study of Islam and Muslims while shifting attention away from the "woman question in Islam" and toward the study of gender. Our unit examines the relational formation

and subversion of genders, while still taking into account “women” as they are interpellated by complex social and symbolic systems.

IGW brings together scholars at all career stages, including those working outside the academy. It supports scholarly reflexivity in a collaborative and collegial setting, discussing methods/approaches and the professional dimensions of research and teaching in the field. It fosters collective consideration of the aims, evolution, and lacunae of the field as a way to nurture new lines of inquiry. Our non-traditional programming, such as workshops and mentoring/networking sessions, aims to strengthen rather than compete with the work of related program units, prevent the segregation of scholarship on gender and women into one unit, encourage sustained “mainstream” engagement with questions of gender and women, and expand opportunities for collaboration and conversation with and among other units.

## Chairs

- [Juliane Hammer, University of North Carolina At Chapel Hill](#)  
[jhammer@email.unc.edu](mailto:jhammer@email.unc.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Saadia Yacoob, Williams College](#)  
[saadia.yacoob@williams.edu](mailto:saadia.yacoob@williams.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Islamic Mysticism Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Islamic Mysticism Group solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting. All proposals related to Islamic mysticism, as described in the Mission Statement are welcome. This Unit encourages proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable discussions in all areas related to Islamic Mysticism, including but not limited to contemporary and classical Sufism, Isma‘ili and broader Shi‘i mysticism, the esoteric and occult arts, aspects of Islamic philosophy and mystical hermeneutics. Proposals must engage with existing scholarship, show theoretical sophistication, and offer original research.

Pre-arranged sessions are encouraged. Remember that pre-arranged sessions must show diversity of gender to be considered. We also greatly encourage other forms of diversity, especially race, ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank. Authors of accepted proposals are

expected to attend the annual in-person meeting and will be barred from future programs if they fail to show, special and emergency circumstances aside.

This year we are encouraging papers related to (1) power, state, and authority; (2) music and art; (3) healing and medicine; and (4) lived practices that might include rituals, material culture, or studies on emotion. Nevertheless, as always, all papers related to Islamic Mysticism as defined above are welcome.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Islamic Mysticism Group solicits paper and panel proposals for the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting (online). All proposals related to Islamic mysticism, as described in the Mission Statement are welcome. This Unit encourages proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable discussions in all areas related to Islamic Mysticism, including but not limited to contemporary and classical Sufism, Isma'ili and broader Shi'ite mysticism, the esoteric and occult arts, aspects of Islamic philosophy and mystical hermeneutics. Proposals must engage with existing scholarship, show theoretical sophistication, and offer original research.

Pre-arranged sessions are encouraged. Remember that pre-arranged sessions must show diversity of gender to be considered. We also greatly encourage other forms of diversity, especially race, ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank. Authors of accepted proposals are expected to attend the online meeting and will be barred from future programs if they fail to show.

This year we are encouraging papers related to (1) power, state, and authority; (2) music and art; (3) healing and medicine; and (4) lived practices that might include rituals, material culture, or studies on emotion. Nevertheless, as always, all papers related to Islamic Mysticism as defined above are welcome.

## Statement of Purpose

Islamic mysticism is a broad rubric, one that allows us to engage in areas such as Sufism, Shi'ite esoteric thought, some aspects of Islamic philosophy, and allegorical interpretations of the Qur'an. The study of Islamic mysticism also allows our members to engage Islamic materials from many different parts of the world including, but not limited to, Persianate regions, the Arab world, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and North America.

## Chairs

- [M. Shobhana Xavier, Queens University, Kingston](mailto:merin.shobhana@gmail.com)  
[merin.shobhana@gmail.com](mailto:merin.shobhana@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Cyrus Zargar, University of Central Florida](mailto:cyzargar@gmail.com)  
[cyzargar@gmail.com](mailto:cyzargar@gmail.com)

## Jain Studies Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Jain Studies Unit welcomes suggestions for panel ideas to be included in the AAR 2024 Call for Papers. If you would like to add your idea to the CFP, or if you have any questions, please send a short provisional title of your topic to one (or both) of the Jain Studies co-chairs, Gregory Clines ([gclines@trinity.edu](mailto:gclines@trinity.edu)) and/or Ana Bajzelj ([abajzelj@ucr.edu](mailto:abajzelj@ucr.edu)). We especially welcome suggestions for panels to be co-sponsored with other units and for panels that address the 2024 Annual Meeting's Presidential Theme: "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin." Finally, the Jain Studies Unit encourages proposals to include voices that are diverse in terms of race, caste, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic status, geographic region, professional rank, and institutional affiliation.

Please note that the Jain Studies Unit only accepts proposals for complete panels, roundtables, book discussions, etc. and does not accept individual papers. This is true for both the online Summer Session and the in-person annual meeting.

The following are proposed panel titles with contact information as of Feb. 5, 2024. If interested, please contact the listed person(s) directly. Additional panel proposals are welcomed. The Jain Studies unit exclusively uses the AAR PAPERS system for all submissions.

- Between Tradition and Modernity: 20th and 21st Century Jain Mendicant Leaders (Lynna Dhanani, [lrddhanani@ucdavis.edu](mailto:lrddhanani@ucdavis.edu))
- Jainism and Medicine (Eric Villalobos, [villalobos@emory.edu](mailto:villalobos@emory.edu))
- [Omniscience in Jainism/South Asian Religions \(for possible co-sponsorship with Hindu Philosophy Unit\)](#) (Marie-Hélène Gorisse, [gorisse@bham.ac.uk](mailto:gorisse@bham.ac.uk))
- Jainism and Consumption in the Diaspora (Jonathan Dickstein, [jhdickstein@arihantainstitute.org](mailto:jhdickstein@arihantainstitute.org))
- [Spiritual Warriors: Violence and Nonviolence in Jain and Sikh Traditions \(for possible co-sponsorship with Sikh Studies Unit\)](#) (Nirinjan Khalsa, [Nirinjan.Khalsa@lmu.edu](mailto:Nirinjan.Khalsa@lmu.edu); Gregory Clines, [gclines@trinity.edu](mailto:gclines@trinity.edu))
- Exploring the Yaśastilaka (Sasha Restifo, [arestifo@fiu.edu](mailto:arestifo@fiu.edu))

- [Jain Text Translation Workshop \(for possible co-sponsorship with Buddhist Philosophy Unit, Hindu Philosophy Unit, and/or Yogācāra Unit\)](#) (Anil Mundra, [ammundra@gmail.com](mailto:ammundra@gmail.com))
- Jain Studies and the Impact of the Work of Alan Babb (M. Whitney Kelting, [kelting@northeastern.edu](mailto:kelting@northeastern.edu))
- Jains and Relations to the State (David St. John, [david.c.stjohn@email.ucr.edu](mailto:david.c.stjohn@email.ucr.edu))
- [Anthropological Perspectives: Reflections on Jainism from the Field \(for possible co-sponsorship with Anthropology of Religion Unit\)](#) (Miki Chase, [mochase@wisc.edu](mailto:mochase@wisc.edu)).
- Jain Political Imagination (Caley Smith, [caley.smith@gcsu.edu](mailto:caley.smith@gcsu.edu))

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Jain Studies Unit welcomes proposals for the AAR's Annual Meeting June Sessions Online pilot program. This online-only conference will run from June 25–27, 2024, and panels will be either 60 or 90 minutes long. Panels can either be proposed for the Summer Session or the in-person annual meeting, but the same panel cannot be considered for both. The proposal deadline for both the Summer Session and the in-person meeting are the same. Please contact Gregory Clines ([gclines@trinity.edu](mailto:gclines@trinity.edu)) or Ana Bajzelj ([abajzelj@ucr.edu](mailto:abajzelj@ucr.edu)) for more information. The Jain Studies Unit encourages proposals to include voices that are diverse in terms of race, caste, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic status, geographic region, professional rank, and institutional affiliation.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit began in 2009 in recognition of the burgeoning state of the field and its relative neglect in the AAR. Originating in India in the first millennium BCE, Jainism — historically as dominant a South Asian religious tradition as Buddhism and Hinduism and, in the light of current demographics, a disproportionately powerful presence in the cultural and economic life of India — is a world religion now extending far beyond South Asia to East Asia, Europe, North America, Africa, and Australia. Given the increasing focus of scholarly attention on Jainism both in India and around the globe, this Unit provides a venue in North America for scholars of Jainism to meet regularly and exchange ideas.

## Chairs

- [Ana Bajzelj, University of California, Riverside](#)  
[abajzelj@ucr.edu](mailto:abajzelj@ucr.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Gregory Clines, Trinity University](#)  
[gclines@trinity.edu](mailto:gclines@trinity.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## [Japanese Religions Unit](#)

## Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite papers sessions, individual papers, and roundtables that address all aspects of Japanese religious practice and thought. All time periods are welcome. To facilitate maximal exchange within and beyond Japanese religions, we prefer proposals that include explicit reflection on the study of religion more broadly. This year's presidential theme is "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin." Proposals need not be limited to this theme, but they should reflect a robust engagement with scholarship on religion beyond the Japanese context.

Below are topics proposed by our members this year. Please contact the person listed if you would like to collaborate on one of these topics:

#### The Assassination of Abe Shinzo and Its Aftermaths

The assassination of Abe Shinzō in the summer of 2022 is one of the most important events in the political history of 21st-century Japanese religions. This papers session seeks to explore the implications of this event in line with the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme: Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin. Possible paper topics include: popular representations of Abe and his assassin as martyrs; the media coverage of marginal religions post-Abe; possible changes to the legal framework governing religions; and the social construction of the "cult problem" and the "shūkyō nisei" problem in the Japanese public sphere. (Contact: Adam Lyons, [adam.lyons@umontreal.ca](mailto:adam.lyons@umontreal.ca))

#### Violence and the Problem of Evil in Japanese Religions

This paper sessions seeks to explore the problem of evil as expressed across a variety of Japanese religious traditions throughout its history. In recognition of the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme: Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, we especially invite explorations of the negotiation of evil as it pertains to the margin. How is salvation articulated, whether through text, image, or practice, in the face of violence and evil acts? This paper session invites scholars of all ranks including graduate students working across historic and methodological contexts. (Contact: Eric Haruki Swanson, [eric.swanson@lmu.edu](mailto:eric.swanson@lmu.edu))

#### The State and Future of the Study of Premodern Japanese Religions

This roundtable seeks to examine the place of the premodern in study of Japanese religions, with an emphasis on its future trajectory. We invite scholars from all ranks including graduate students to share short reflections on the shifts and current state of the field and to engage in an open discussion regarding the relevance of the study of the premodern in the academy today. (Contact: Eric Haruki Swanson, [eric.swanson@lmu.edu](mailto:eric.swanson@lmu.edu))

Contributing at the margins? Social welfare roles of religious organizations in Japan. Socio-historical and constitutional factors, coupled with a predominant focus on state-led social welfare initiatives, have positioned Japanese religions on the periphery of the formal welfare structures. This context has shaped the roles and contributions of religious organizations in Japan, compelling them to operate at the margins of societal and governmental frameworks. Drawing on empirical research and case studies, this session questions such marginality by providing insights into the dynamic and multifaceted roles played by Japanese religious institutions contributing to social welfare, disaster relief, and various other community-centric social contribution activities. The goal is to critically assess the impact of religious organizations on community development and quality of life, also evaluating the effectiveness of their initiatives, the challenges faced, and the status of, or the potential for, collaboration with governmental and non-governmental entities. (Contact: Paola Cavaliere, [pcavaliere18@gmail.com](mailto:pcavaliere18@gmail.com))

We welcome proposals on other topics as well. Creative formats (films, organized discussion, pre-circulated papers/texts, workshop, etc.) are encouraged, as are co-sponsored programs with other units of the AAR or associated societies. For instance, recent co-sponsorship partners have included Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit; Esotericism Unit; Bioethics and Religion Unit; and the Hagiography Society. We encourage proposers to think broadly about ways they can engage their work on Japanese religion with current questions in the field, and with scholars working on religion in regions beyond Japan.

In submitting proposals, please follow the AAR guidelines carefully. First-timers are encouraged to contact the co-chairs for additional advice (Jessica Starling at [jstarling@lclark.edu](mailto:jstarling@lclark.edu) and Takashi Miura at [tmiura@arizona.edu](mailto:tmiura@arizona.edu)).

Our Unit is allotted two two-hour sessions. Co-sponsorship adds an additional 90-minute session.

Our Unit is committed to diversity and inclusion. We strongly encourage considering balance in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliation, as well as balance between



graduate students, junior scholars, and senior scholars. Showing little or no regard for such diversity will have an adverse effect on the likelihood that your proposal will be accepted.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is a forum for scholars of different disciplines — including textual, historical, anthropological, sociological, ritual, artistic, and other areas of study using different approaches — to present their research findings on various theories and forms of Japanese religious life in the past and in the contemporary setting, within Japan and other areas of the world.

## Chairs

- [Takashi Miura, University of Arizona](#)  
[tmiura@email.arizona.edu](mailto:tmiura@email.arizona.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jessica Starling, Lewis and Clark College](#)  
[jessie.starling@gmail.com](mailto:jessie.starling@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Session One: “Kierkegaard and the Spiritualities of the Religiously Unaffiliated”

The unaffiliated, also termed Nones, are those who when asked about their religious identity or institutional affiliation check the box “none of the above.” Within this broad category exists the subgroup of the “Spiritual But Not Religious” who often make a sharp distinction between “spirituality” and “religion.” The lived spiritualities of Nones are characterized by a rejection of labeling, an openness to diversity, a high valuation of relationships, an understanding of the spiritual as taking place within life’s mundane spheres, a sense of being a “seeker,” and a prioritization of personal experience over tradition and external forms of authority. This session invites papers that put the spiritualities of those who can be classified as Nones into conversation with Kierkegaard’s writings on themes related to Christendom, the institutional church, the role of doctrine and tradition, the significance of the subjectivity of the single individual, and Religiousness A and Religiousness B. Proposals seeking to explore how Kierkegaard’s writings might offer both support for and critique of SBNR spiritualities are welcome. Proposals that explore the possibility of extra-institutional forms of Christianity in light of themes from Kierkegaard’s writings will also be appreciated.

## Session Two: “Kierkegaard, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the Traditions of Universal Salvation”

This is a joint session with the “Biblical Exegesis from Eastern Orthodox Perspectives” unit of the SBL. Søren Kierkegaard sometimes gestured toward the universally efficacious power of God’s love even while he warned about the ultimate consequences of divine judgement. This joint session of the AAR and the SBL will explore Kierkegaard’s nuanced and unique treatment of the issue of universal salvation. Papers will explore various trajectories of Christian universalism, some of which formed the background of Kierkegaard’s thought. Attention will be given to the roots of universalism in certain features of the New Testament, its blossoming in the thought of patristic theologians like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, and its re-emergence in the nineteenth century. Special attention will be given to echoes of these theological voices in

Kierkegaard’s work, as well as to their perpetuation in contemporary varieties of universalism.

Some speakers will be invited, while others will be chosen from an open call for papers.

## Session Three: “Kierkegaard and the Construction of Masculinities”

This is a joint session with the “Men, Masculinities, and Religions” unit of the AAR. This session invites papers exploring themes related to masculinity in Kierkegaard’s writings, including how depictions of masculinity vary among his pseudonyms and the authorial voices in his signed works, as well as the understanding of masculinity implied by his authorship as a whole. Proposals exploring the general construction of masculinities in nineteenth century northern Europe will be welcomed to provide an overview of the intellectual and cultural background of Kierkegaard’s writings. Proposals will also be appreciated concerning the ways that Kierkegaard’s constructions of masculinity and spirituality may inform, critique, expand, or reinforce conceptions of masculinity in contemporary culture.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to explore the significance of the religious thought and ethics of Kierkegaard for contemporary culture in its various aspects — social, political, ecclesiastical, theological, philosophical, and aesthetic.

## Chairs

- [Lee Barrett, Lancaster Theological Seminary](mailto:lbarrett@lancasterseminary.edu)  
[lbarrett@lancasterseminary.edu](mailto:lbarrett@lancasterseminary.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Nigel Hatton, University of California, Merced](#)

[nhatton@ucmerced.edu](mailto:nhatton@ucmerced.edu)

1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Korean Religions Unit

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Korean Religions Unit welcomes proposals for paper sessions, roundtable sessions, and individual papers. Proposals in all areas of Korean Religions will be considered. This year, we especially invite submissions to the subtopics proposed by interested AAR members, as listed below. If you would like to contribute to one of the panel proposals below, please contact the organizer(s) directly, and submit your proposal at least two weeks prior to the AAR submission deadline which will be on February 29, 2024, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Global Korean Buddhism: Transnational and Trans-denominational Change

Organizer: Jonathan Feuer ([jonathan.feuer@yale.edu](mailto:jonathan.feuer@yale.edu))

Historically, Buddhism on the Korean peninsula was deeply intertwined with the greater East Asian Buddhist tradition, so much so that identifying a “Korean” Buddhism is a problematic task. Since the late 19th century, however, nation-centered histories have distinguished “Korean” Buddhism from other forms of Buddhism, for better or worse. In reality, Korean Buddhism is not monolithic or insular, and, in recent years, the footprint of Korean Buddhist organizations has grown around the world. Buddhist teachings have been adapted to the dynamic, transnational religious landscape of the 20th and 21st centuries. What does Korean Buddhism’s place in the world Buddhist community reveal about the religion? How has the “Koreanness” of Korean Buddhism been retained, reformulated, or challenged when the religion leaves the Korean peninsula? We would especially like to include (but are not limited to) papers that address Buddhist denominations other than the Chogyŏ Order, such as the Ch’ŏnt’ae and T’aego Orders, or more innovative Buddhist groups, such as Wŏn Buddhism.

Marginal Religion in Korea

Organizer: John Grisafi ([john.grisafi@yale.edu](mailto:john.grisafi@yale.edu))

“Marginal religion” can refer to any religious movement, tradition, or community—or subset within a religion—that is considered outside of the mainstream or otherwise occupies a precarious status within society or within its religious milieu. The concept includes minority religions, new religious movements (NRMs), foreign religions and immigrant religious communities, minoritized populations within major religions, and other forms of marginalization of or within religion, yet offers a theoretical and methodological lens to understand marginalization and religion in a way that is inclusive of but beyond the scope of these terms. How are religions marginalized in the diverse and complex religious landscape of South Korea? What role does the state play? Is all religion marginalized by the state in North Korea? Are foreign populations in Korea marginalized due to religion? We seek papers that address varying examples of marginal religion in Korea past and present, including but not limited to the examples above, tying in with the 2024 annual meeting’s theme of “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margins,” to offer novel insights and to generate conversation on the issue and the concept and its importance for Korean religions.

#### [Self-Cultivation in Korean Religions and Beyond](#)

Organizer: Victoria Ten ([yoneun@gmail.com](mailto:yoneun@gmail.com))

The concept and exercise of cultivating the self, whether on the level of emotion and cognition, body and action, community or cosmos, can take divergent forms and direct toward dissimilar goals. These theories and practices often lie at the heart of East Asian religions but are not limited to religious domains. In Korea, mind–body practices based on the cultivation of ki (氣 life energy) are promoted under the name of ki suryŏn (氣修練). Similar practices worldwide are often considered a part of New Age culture. Recently, ideas have emerged within the scholarly community for conceptualizing various forms of self-cultivation, and the calls for establishing it as a separate field of study, not necessarily subsumed under the rubrics of religion, mysticism, medicine, sports, or arts. To promote such developments, case-studies of self-cultivation are required, comparing different religious concepts and practices of the past and the present. We invite paper proposals on self-cultivation broadly conceived, following traditions perceived as old, newly-invented, or non-traditional in Korea and other places. We hope that in time, such research will help generate methodological and other tools for future evolution of self-cultivation as a concept and discipline.

Any other papers that address the relationship between society, culture, and religion as broadly construed can be submitted directly through the AAR portal. Other inquiries can be directed to Sean Kim [ckim@ucmo.edu](mailto:ckim@ucmo.edu), or Liora Sarfati [lsarfati@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:lsarfati@tauex.tau.ac.il). In submitting proposals, please follow the AAR guidelines carefully.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a forum for the scholarly exchange of ideas on the religions of Korea. It addresses all aspects of religions and religious experiences of Korea — past and present and

traditional and modern. The Unit investigates Korean religions in all its diversity, including social, cultural, historical, political, and philosophical, giving full weight to the complexity of religious phenomena in Korea. The Unit encourages conversations that compare aspects of Korean religions with those of other religious traditions, as well as theoretical conversations about religion that are grounded in Korean religions. In order to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of Korean religions, the Unit welcomes scholars from both in and outside of Korean religions and fosters a dialogue among scholars from different religious traditions as well as different disciplinary approaches to religions.

## Chairs

- [Chong Bum \(Sean\) Kim, University of Central Missouri](mailto:ckim@ucmo.edu)  
[ckim@ucmo.edu](mailto:ckim@ucmo.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Liora Sarfati, Tel Aviv University](mailto:lsarfati@taux.tau.ac.il)  
[lsarfati@taux.tau.ac.il](mailto:lsarfati@taux.tau.ac.il)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Borderlands, Liminal Spaces, and Beyond: Intersecting Narratives of Gender and Sexual Violence, Migration, and Theological–Ethical Reflections

We invite papers that seek to explore the rich and complex narratives that emerge from borderlands and liminal spaces. This session aims to delve into the intersections of violence, particularly against women, and the theological–ethical dimensions that underpin these experiences. We invite an exploration of the connections between forms of gendered violence, and encourage submissions that focus on recovering and redefining marginalized identities, sacred spaces, and engage in spiritual healing and anti–oppression work.

Topics of Interest Include (but are not limited to):

- The Borderlands as a Theological–Ethical Space: How do borderlands serve as sites for theological reflection and ethical discourse? How do they challenge and reshape traditional religious practices and beliefs?
- Liminal Spaces and Identity Formation: In what ways do liminal spaces contribute to the construction of new alliances and identities? How do they facilitate the decolonization of the mind and the rejection of colonial/modern gender systems?

- Migration and Embodiment: How do migration narratives intersect with the embodiment of knowledge and the materiality of transcendence? What role do religious communities play in caring for migrants? How do we address the sexual assault that has become commonplace in the migrant's journey?
- Decolonial Feminist Integral Ecology: How can we cultivate a decolonial feminist integral ecology in response to global ecological crises? What does this mean for our understanding of land, home, and the interconnectedness of life?
- Coalitionary Politics and Solidarity: How can we foster a politics of solidarity that recognizes the interdependence of race, gender, sexuality, and class? What can we learn from the coalitionary politics of U.S. women of color and their decolonizing practices?
- Personhood and citizenship: What are the theo-ethical dimensions of gender and sexual violence in the shaping of the individual and communities? What are the practices of care and ways communities respond to feminicides, sexual exploitation, and gender oppression?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit examines, through systematic study and reflection, the social locations, religious beliefs, and practices of the rich and diverse multicultural backgrounds of Latinas/os in the United States and Canada. The Unit recognizes that this is an interdisciplinary enterprise in view of the cultural and religious roots and sources of Latinos/as, including heritages from Europe, indigenous nations of the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The traditions emerging out of the mixture of these cultures throughout the Americas continue to undergo further development and innovation in the North American context, producing the distinct phenomena of Latino/a theologies and religions. It is this rich and deep religious/theological-cultural-social-political complex that is the focus of this Unit.

## Chairs

- [Ángel Gallardo, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary](mailto:agallardo@austinseminary.edu)  
[agallardo@austinseminary.edu](mailto:agallardo@austinseminary.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Law, Religion, and Culture Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

As always, the Law, Religion, and Culture Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable panel proposals, including author-meets-critics sessions, on any aspect of the cultural, historical, critical, and comparative study of the intersections of law and religion globally. This year we are particularly interested in work that pursues:

Conflicts of national laws, including questions of statelessness, law of war, emerging or soft law on climate change, and attention to the Global South. We would welcome proposals related to the following topics:

- [For possible co-sponsorship with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit](#): on issues of statelessness and lack of citizenship documentation, the violence of states (including their legal bureaucracies and processes thereof) as well as the understanding of statehood as a means of survival. The tensions between utopian or even religious visions of the unstately and practical aspirations (among those most subject to violence) for the protections of the state will hopefully be addressed.
- [For possible co-sponsorship with the Religion in Europe Unit](#): on issues of “free speech,” broadly and globally defined (including controversies thereof, rhetorical use of the idea in politics, legislation and activism under that rubric, etc.).
- Issues of education and educating the public, as related to the teaching of race, history, and values.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Law, Religion, and Culture Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable panel proposals, including author-meets-critics sessions, on any aspect of the cultural, historical, critical, and comparative study of the intersections of law and religion globally. For this inaugural June session, we are particularly interested in work focusing on:

- Questions of law, privacy, and technology, given the rise of AI and matters like veil bans and facial recognition technology
- Rights’ discourse
- The bureaucracy and paperwork that shapes religion and law
- The carceral state

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is interested in the cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and comparative studies of the interrelationships of law and religion. The terms “law” and “religion” are broadly conceptualized and our interests have extended to include ancient and contemporary contexts and a wide variety of critical approaches. We hope to instigate consideration of religion and law issues at the AAR beyond issues concerning religious freedom and the United States Constitution.

## Chairs

- [Spencer Dew, Ohio State University](#)

[spencerdew@gmail.com](mailto:spencerdew@gmail.com)

1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

- [Leslie Ribovich, Transylvania University](mailto:lribovich@transy.edu)

[lribovich@transy.edu](mailto:lribovich@transy.edu)

1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Lesbian–Feminisms and Religion Unit**

### **Meeting**

In–Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Hidden histories and occluded biographies

The Lesbian–Feminisms and Religion Unit invites papers on trans, queer, lesbian, feminists who have been ignored, suppressed, or radically misunderstood in the histories of religious activism, leadership, and representation. We are also interested in the ways that religious institutions and their archives have engaged or occluded interpretations of desire and deviance in gender, sexuality, religion, and their many intersections. Taking inspiration from Monique Moultrie’s *Hidden Histories: Faith and Black Lesbian Leadership* (2023) and Shannen Dee Williams’s *The Hidden History of Black Catholic Nuns* (2022), we are especially interested in papers that attend to how these hidden histories meet up with histories of white supremacy, racism, and colonialism. Underrepresented scholars, practitioners, and activists are especially encouraged to submit.

### **For a co-sponsored call with the Study of Judaism Unit:**

Jewish lesbian, feminist, queer, and/or trans theories, theologies, and activism, for a co-sponsored session with the Study of Judaism Unit

### **Statement of Purpose**

For over 30 years this unit has been committed to lesbian–feminism in the study of religion. Whether pursued through religious studies, social–scientific, historical, or theological methods during the approach to the academic study of religion, lesbian–feminist scholarship challenges hegemonic discourse within gay, lesbian, and queer movements that function to privilege queer theory as capable of eclipsing theories and methodologies that are explicitly feminist in the face of entrenched patriarchy and self–consciously lesbian in the face of persistent maleness and heteronormativity. We are especially committed to scholars and scholarship that advance people



of color, persons with disabilities, decoloniality, and economic justice. This is accomplished with diverse and timely themes, and by providing a theoretical space for probing and further developing the openings and opportunities afforded by changing sociopolitical and theoretical contexts.

## Chairs

- [Sarah Bloesch, University of North Carolina At Chapel Hill](mailto:sbloesch@smu.edu)  
[sbloesch@smu.edu](mailto:sbloesch@smu.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Wendy Mallette, University of Oklahoma](mailto:wendy.mallette@ou.edu)  
[wendy.mallette@ou.edu](mailto:wendy.mallette@ou.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Liberation Theologies Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Global Solidarities and the Margins

The Liberation Theologies Program Unit invites proposals that examine this year's presidential theme, "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margins" through the lens of global solidarities and the margins. We invite proposals that engage questions such as: How do the technologies and industries of violence impact diverse practices of solidarity and liberation? What does it look like to commit to the liberation of others and the environment? How are marginalized groups engaging in intersectional acts of solidarity?

Proposals on this theme might consider the following:

- Imperial Violence Beyond the Eurocentric Lens
- Structural Violence in the Everyday (the ways that our daily living are occasions of/for violence)
- Successes and Failures of Intersectional Practice
- The Creation of the Margins
- Global Technologies of Violence and Bias in Technologies of Violence
- Whose Violence/Whose Nonviolence
- Border Crossings and the Violence of/in the borders

- Difference between Nonviolence and Peacemaking
- Ecological Violence and Slow Violence
- Violence, Property, and Radical Environmentalism
- The Cost of Paradise
- The Political Production of the Peripheries
- The Margins as a site of Liberation
- The unit will be hosting a session during the June 2024 AAR Virtual Meeting. This call for proposals is for both Virtual–June 2024 and San Diego–November 2024.

#### Co-Sponsored Sessions for November 2024

##### [The Legacies of Enrique Dussel, Jorge Pixley, and Franz Hinkelammert](#)

The SBL's Latino/a/e and Latin American Biblical Interpretation and Poverty in the Biblical World program units, together with the AAR's Liberation Theologies and Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society program units, will host a session that honors three leading figures of liberation theology who passed away last year: Enrique Dussel, George/Jorge Pixley, and Franz Hinkelammert. We invite proposals that engage their intellectual legacies, especially by considering their impact on contemporary religious thought and biblical interpretation; the relevance of their ideas for addressing current social and economic crises; intersections between theology, philosophy, and biblical studies in their work; comparative analyses of their contributions and methodologies; and interpretations of scriptural texts that employ their thought to examine the texts' economic and political dimensions and implications.

##### [Theologies of Liberation in the Middle East](#)

This session co-sponsored with the Middle Eastern Christianity Group explores how a growing number of Christian theologians in the Middle East have deployed liberation theology as a means of understanding their fraught political, social, and economic contexts across the region. We invite contributions addressing the strengths and difficulties in such theological engagement and engaging specific social, political, and economic contexts in the region. Proposals from scholars and theologians of/from the Middle East are especially encouraged.

##### [Roundtable discussion on Mary Jo Iozzio's newest book, \*Disability Ethics and Preferential Justice\*](#)

Co-sponsored session with Religion and Disability Studies: A review panel on the book *Disability Ethics and Preferential Justice: A Catholic Perspective* by Mary Jo Iozzio. Panelists will critically engage the book's merits as a primer on disability ethics and an example of mature Catholic reflection on disability and liberation, as well as its potential impact on other

theologies of disability and liberation. This session is pre-arranged and closed, and we will not be accepting proposals for it.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same as above.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit asks “What does liberation theology mean in and for the twenty-first century?” We encourage crossover dialogue — between contexts and between disciplines — and reflection on the implications of liberationist discourse for the transformation of theology as a whole, both methodologically and theologically.

## **Chairs**

- [Filipe Maia, Boston University](#)  
[fmaia@bu.edu](mailto:fmaia@bu.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [K. Christine Pae, Denison University](#)  
[paec@denison.edu](mailto:paec@denison.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit welcomes any paper, panel, or roundtable proposals engaging scholarship on Martin Luther, Lutheran Theology and Ethics, and Global Lutheran Perspectives and Traditions.

For the 2024 American Academy of Religion Meeting in San Diego, our Unit especially welcomes paper, panel, and roundtable proposals engaging any of the following themes:

### **Open Call**

Our 2024 Call for Papers firstly welcomes an Open Call for paper proposals, roundtable or panel proposals related to the research interests of this unit. Our unit's interests and topics range

widely—important recurring themes, doctrinal loci, ongoing historical movements and contexts, crucial figures in Lutheran history and tradition, intersectional and ethical analysis, books or research projects of interest to the wider academic community, critiques, research horizons, global contexts, and emergent traditions. The Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit considers any papers or panel proposals related to the research interests of this Unit. We welcome proposals from scholars who wish to share their current research. In panel or roundtable proposals, the Unit strongly encourages organizers be attentive to gender and racial diversity.

### Settler Colonialism, Land, and Global Lutheranism

Our Unit calls for papers, roundtable, or panel sessions that think about Global Lutheranism's entanglement with Settler Colonialism.

- Lutheranism and Indigenous Contexts
- Lutheranism and the violent legacy of residential schools
- Missiology
- Lutheran theological justifications for or challenges to settler colonialism
- Lutheranism in particular global contexts of settler colonialism
- Native and Indigenous Theologies

### Lutheran Interfaith, Interreligious, and Comparative Theologies

In his *Circling the Elephant* (Fordham, 2020), theologian John Thatamanil asks of his reader, “Might we begin to think of religious diversity as a promise rather than a problem?” This call takes up this invitation and line of thought for Lutheran theologies and Global Lutheran Traditions, in particular. We call for papers, panels, or roundtable session proposals that ask into the promise of how Lutheran theologies engage and think alongside their religious and non-religious neighbors. How might Lutheran approaches frame and engage Religious Difference? What are the features of a Lutheran Comparative Theology? What resources, intersectional challenges, or possibilities do Global Lutheran Traditions possess for engaging in interreligious theological thinking and practice? How does Lutheran theology and particular loci therein creatively transform in dialogue with other religious or non-religious traditions? Where does Lutheran interfaith work happen in everyday life and to what ends? How can interreligious theology seek to address Antisemitism and Islamophobia? How can such work engage in addressing common ethical challenges and systems of oppression, such as climate injustice, racism, sexism, etc.?

## Violence, Nonviolence, and the Other

We call for papers, panels, or roundtable session proposals that address the 2024 Presidential Theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Other.” We welcome proposals engaging recent scholarship on Martin Luther’s relationship to violence, nonviolence, political resistance, and other related themes:

- Historical writings of Martin Luther related to violence, nonviolence, and political resistance (E.g., *On Temporal Authority; Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved; Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*)
- Scholarship related to Martin Luther’s responses to the German Peasants’ War/The Peasant’s Revolt of 1524–25 and this history’s contemporary import
- Lutheran theological interpretations of violence, and how they challenge traditional theological loci in Lutheran thought
- Global Lutheran Traditions’ or figures’ involvement in violence, nonviolence, and/or political resistance
- How do Global Lutheran Traditions relate to pacifism and the perceived marginalization of Christian pacifism.
- Global Lutheran Traditions and relations to Peace Church Traditions, including Lutheran–Mennonite Ecumenical Dialogue related to the Presidential Theme
- Other topics or relevant texts

### [For a potential co-sponsorship with the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Unit](#)

Bonhoeffer scholarship has a long history of engagement with questions related to 2024 AAR President Jin Y. Park’s conference theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” We are pleased to welcome proposals that offer new constructive explorations of these themes in relation to Bonhoeffer’s theological, practical, and ethical legacy, especially as these might engage the above themes of Bonhoeffer’s prison theology, education, or political theology. We look for papers that think of Bonhoeffer’s legacy in Global Lutheranism, theological context, influences, and contemporary constructive proposals.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

**The State of Lutheran Thought and Scholarship:** For the June virtual meeting, our Unit plans to organize a pre-arranged session of editors and authors of important recent books in Lutheran theology and scholarship on Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions. This session seeks to give an account of the current state of scholarship on current Lutheran thought. What does it mean to write scholarship on Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions today? What are common emergent themes and concerns? What unique contributions or ethical difference does Lutheran analysis make? What are the horizons of Lutheran thought and why?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to provide an avenue for a comprehensive conversation on both Lutheran history and thought in the global context. In so doing, it is able to draw on an immensely rich tradition that goes far beyond Lutheran parochial interests as it includes the relationship to other Christian traditions as well as cultures in the global South.

## Chairs

- [Jacob Erickson, Trinity College, Dublin](#)  
[jacobjackson@gmail.com](mailto:jacobjackson@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Marit Trelstad, Pacific Lutheran University](#)  
[trelstma@plu.edu](mailto:trelstma@plu.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Men, Masculinities, and Religion seeks panel proposals and experimental panels that use short, or creative presentation formats. We are particularly interested in roundtables, and brief remarks and provocations that open up conversation between panelists and audience members, and/or presentations that creatively use and present objects, media, art, music, sounds etc. We encourage proposals of full panels/roundtables and paper proposals on the following topics:

Religion, Violence, and 21st Century Warmaking

The Men, Masculinities, and Religion unit invites proposals related to global masculinities and violence. Potential topics include:

- Buddhist masculinities and violence
- Masculinity & Zionism
- Muslim nationalisms
- sexual violence and masculinities that reflect on the experiences and histories of perpetrators and victims
- Masculinities and war
- Masculinities and fascism

- Practices of healing that address histories of violence
- Media, representations of war, and contemporary religious violence

### Masculinities, Religion, and Media

We seek proposals for a roundtable on media and masculinities that explore the circulation and production of (gendered) religious identities, communities, rituals, narratives. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Religious masculinities on social media (influencers, social media platforms, subcultural communities etc.)
- Religious masculinities and music (What sounds, songs, and artists might open up conversations about gender, religion, and music?)
- Religion, racialization, and masculinities on TV/in film
- Religious masculinities on reality TV
- Celebrity Masculinities & religion in the making of public personas
- “Heroes,” “Villains,” & Masculinity

### New Books on Religion, Men, and Masculinities:

The Men, Masculinities, and Religion unit invite full panel proposals that respond to new books related to gender, masculinities, and religion. Panels may center on a single book or put multiple new books in conversation and feature authors and respondents. Panels may creatively combine books across subfields and disciplines to spark conversations on methodology.

### [Kierkegaard and the Construction of Masculinities](#)

#### [Potential Co-sponsored session with the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit:](#)

The Men, Masculinities, and Religion unit and Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Unit invite proposals for a co-sponsored panel. This joint session invites papers exploring themes related to masculinity in Kierkegaard's writings, including how depictions of masculinity vary among his pseudonyms and the authorial voices in his signed works, as well as the understanding of masculinity implied by his authorship as a whole. Proposals exploring the general construction of masculinities in nineteenth century northern Europe will be welcomed to provide an overview of the intellectual and cultural background of Kierkegaard's writings. Proposals will also be appreciated concerning the ways that Kierkegaard's constructions of masculinity and spirituality may inform, critique, expand, or reinforce conceptions of masculinity in present times.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides a forum within which scholars study the phenomenon of masculine gender – as identity, practice, discourse, and structure – building on scholarship in masculinity, gender, and queer studies, and using the range of methodologies found in the broad field of religious studies. This Unit engages in the critical study of men and the performance of masculinities in culturally and religiously specific settings and traditions.

## Chairs

- [Sarah Imhoff, Indiana University, Bloomington](mailto:seimhoff@indiana.edu)  
[seimhoff@indiana.edu](mailto:seimhoff@indiana.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada, Kalamazoo College](mailto:amaldona@kzoo.edu)  
[amaldona@kzoo.edu](mailto:amaldona@kzoo.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Middle Eastern Christianity Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit welcomes proposals on the following topics from all academic fields of study (sociology, ethnography, history, theology, literary theory, ritual studies, etc.) as they are applied to Middle Eastern Christians in any of their communities throughout history, whether in their native lands, or as immigrants throughout the world.

Successful proposals must present a clear thesis, explain the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research, and identify a specific body of evidence that the research will interpret. Please make good use of the allowed word count to submit a well developed proposal. The Middle Eastern Christianity Unit encourages and promotes the inclusion of all scholarly voices and invites proposals from scholars of all ethnic/national backgrounds, genders, professional ranks, disciplinary perspectives, and life circumstances.

### Liberation Theologies of the Middle East (co-sponsored with the Liberation Theologies Unit)

A growing number of Christian theologians in the Middle East have deployed liberation theology as a means of understanding their fraught political, social, and economic contexts across the



region. We invite contributions addressing the strengths and difficulties in such theological engagement and engaging specific social, political, and economic contexts in the region. Proposals from scholars and theologians of/from the Middle East are especially encouraged. This will be the second of two sessions the Middle Eastern Christianity Unit is sponsoring this year focusing on Middle Eastern theologies, the first being held virtually in June. Panelists are encouraged, but not required, to attend the virtual session to attend especially to the theological work being produced by Middle Eastern-based scholars for whom travel to the US in November may be difficult.

#### How do we teach about the Middle East?

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit invites proposals for a round-table discussion answering the question: How do we, as scholars of religion, teach about the Middle East? This question recalls the deep historical roots of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions in the region and the contemporary diversity of those communities. This question is also pressing in light of the Israel–Hamas war and the requests for information that many of us are receiving from other scholars, students, and members of our broader communities. What pedagogical approaches should we consider for courses focusing specifically on the Middle East, for courses that can only touch briefly on the region, or for other venues in which we may be asked to teach about the Middle East? What resources are available – including textbooks, audio/visual sources, and digital tools – for teaching and understanding the region and its religious communities?

#### Middle Eastern Christianity and the Politics of Archeology

The Middle Eastern Christianity unit invites paper proposals on Middle Eastern Christianity and the politics of archaeology in the region. The panel aims to explore the multifaceted dynamics of violence and destructive acts on material culture, particularly in the context of manuscripts, the manuscript trade, and cultural heritage management. We encourage submissions that delve into historical, sociopolitical, and theological perspectives, offering critical insights into how these elements intersect with the preservation and destruction of cultural heritage.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

#### Theologies of Liberation and Contextual Theologies from the Middle East

A growing number of Christian theologians in the Middle East have deployed liberation theology, contextual theology, and other theologies of liberation as a means of understanding their fraught political, social, and economic contexts across the region. We invite contributions from such theologians based in the Middle East to share their engagements with theology to

challenge and reconsider current conditions of oppression and injustice. Proposals addressing the strengths and difficulties in such theological engagement and engaging specific social, political, and economic contexts in the region are especially encouraged. This is the first of two sessions the Middle Eastern Christianity Unit is sponsoring this year focusing on Middle Eastern theologies, the second being held at the in-person conference in November.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is devoted to the study of developments within Coptic, Armenian, Chaldean/Assyrian, Syrian, Maronite, and other relevant communities living inside the Middle East or in lands of immigration. The Unit promotes scholarship on themes from the early Christian period to the present, encompassing various approaches and subjects. Its aim is to establish an interdisciplinary platform for fostering scholarly approaches to Middle Eastern Christianity, and to provide opportunities for scholars to discuss their work in relation to the overall field of the study of religion.

## Chairs

- [Mourad Takawi, University of the Incarnate Word](#)  
[mtakawi@gmail.com](mailto:mtakawi@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Deanna Womack, Emory University](#)  
[deanna.f.womack@emory.edu](mailto:deanna.f.womack@emory.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This unit invites individual paper, paper session, and roundtable proposals that engage with the concepts of “moral injury.” Religious scholars, theologians, philosophers, and other humanities scholars have created a substantial body of interdisciplinary literature in the past two decades around moral injury and this unit continues to develop and explore that corpus as well as to encourage and facilitate its growth in new areas, from new perspectives, and through new approaches.

Papers and proposals that explore moral injury in contemporary conflicts, through analyses of particular theological, philosophical, or clinical works, or through the lens of current or recent situations are always welcome.

For the 2024 in-person meeting in San Diego, we are guided by the presidential theme “Violence, Nonviolence and the Margins,” and are thus especially interested in paper and/or panel proposals around three major clusters.

- As California attempts to reform its infamous San Quentin prison and its statewide system, the effort exposes several aspects of morally injurious experiences that are particular – but perhaps not unique – to systems of incarceration. These may include:
  - The intersections of identities and roles that impact our experience of MI
  - The ways in which systems and structures devour and subsume individual agency in morally injurious ways
  - The militarization of prison policies and the link between veterans and corrections officers
  - The concept of ‘receptive,’ or ‘betrayal-type’ moral injury and structural systems and injustices
- Judith Herman’s 2023 book *Truth and Repair: How Trauma Survivors Envision Justice* raises critical questions about what recovery from moral injury, both individually and communally, might look like. We welcome proposals that engage this work through the lens of moral injury, but also those that explore larger themes of social healing from moral injury such as:
  - Reparations for historic wrongs – particularly in the context of slavery and the genocide of indigenous populations – as paths towards justice after moral injury
  - The role of truth and reconciliation commissions in illuminating and naming wrongs
  - Examining attempts at restorative or transformative forms of justice that became morally injurious themselves
- Moral Injury highlights the difficulty of navigating the dilemmas that arise when we attempt to enact justice, affect recovery, or even care directly for others. Often, for example, those who seek to care for moral injuries have to work for or contend with an institution that may also be a source of MI itself. Thus we invite papers that explore these dilemmas, such as:
  - The idea of complicity in working in religious institutions, academies, militaries, prisons, law enforcement organizations, etc.

- The tensions that can arise between academic explorations and the experience of practitioners
- The difficult parsing of agency, responsibility, guilt, accountability, blame and justice in situations of moral injury

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the 2024 online-only meeting in June, we are particularly interested in paper and/or panel proposals in the area of moral injury and chaplaincy. Chaplains – serving in military, healthcare, social work, prisons and other contexts – have long been the ‘first responders’ to morally injurious situations. As such, we invite proposals that explore chaplaincy in categories that might include:

- The boundaries between clinical and religious discourse in engaging MI

Reflections on lessons we’ve learned since adopting the term

- The moral trauma of the duty to care for the moral agony of others
- The navigation of morally fraught scenarios that arise in particular contexts of chaplaincy
- The role racism plays in the experience of moral injury

## Statement of Purpose

The Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Unit engages interdisciplinary study on moral injury, an emerging concept which attempts to engage the impact of making difficult moral choices under extreme conditions, experiencing morally anguishing events or duties, witnessing immoral acts, or behaving in ways that profoundly challenge moral conscience and identity and the values that support them. In examining how understandings of recovery from moral injury might illuminate post-conflict situations in many areas of the world, this unit will interrogate how educating a wider public about moral injury might challenge the role of religion in supporting war and the militarization of international and intra-national conflicts, the effects of war on combatants in post-conflict societies, and more effective means for social support in recovery from moral injury. Contributions are welcome engaging:

- Diverse religious, cultural, and social systems and their sacred texts
- Neuroscientific approaches to ritual, moral formation, and the moral emotions
- Proposed methods for recovery, such as ritual, pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, arts, community life, narrative, and interreligious cooperation
- The roles of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, race, and other forms of oppression in relation to personal agency and theories of ethics.

## Chairs

- [Brian Powers, Durham University](#)  
[brian.s.powers@dur.ac.uk](mailto:brian.s.powers@dur.ac.uk)

1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

- [Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, Guilford College](mailto:jlydon@post.harvard.edu)  
[jlydon@post.harvard.edu](mailto:jlydon@post.harvard.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Mormon Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Mormon Studies Unit welcomes papers and/or panels on a variety of themes and topics relating to the Mormon tradition, broadly defined. The proposals should analyze the material in terms of the academic study of religion. For the 2024 conference, we propose a few themes:

- **Mormonism and Activism**–We seek proposals that explore the history and practices of various social, political and religious activism in Mormon contexts.
- **Mormonism and Sexuality**–We seek proposals that examine Mormonism and sexuality from a historical, ethnographic, or sociological lens.
- **Mormonism and Borderlands**–In recognition of being near the US/Mexico border for the San Diego conference, we seek proposals and examine Mormonism's role in borderlands, physical and metaphorical.

Open Call: Other papers or panels dealing with aspects of Mormonism not mentioned in the previous call will also be considered. Papers may be selected for their relevance to themes which emerge among other submissions.

Panel proposals welcome.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Mormon Studies Unit welcomes papers and/or panels on a variety of themes and topics relating to the Mormon tradition, broadly defined. The proposals should analyze the material in terms of the academic study of religion. For the online session, we propose a few themes:

**Global Mormonism**– We seek proposals that examine Mormonism in global context, as well as those that explore the methodologies and frameworks for such a project.

**Mormonism and Indigeneity**– We seek proposals that consider the interrelationship between Mormonism and Indigeneity in a variety of contexts.

Panel proposals welcome.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit will examine the range of topics, disciplines, and methodologies that can be brought into dialogue with Mormonism as studied in an academic environment. It is interested in exploring strategies for teaching about Mormonism, both as the main focus of a class or as a unit within a survey course. It seeks to identify the best resources available for teaching and understanding the tradition and provide encouragement for scholars to fill gaps in what is currently available. The Unit encourages significant comparative studies and interdisciplinary cross-fertilization and hopes to explore intersections between Mormonism and ethics, theology, philosophy, ecclesiology, missiology, spirituality, arts and literature, sociology, scripture, and liberation studies.

## Chairs

- [Sara Patterson, Hanover College](mailto:patterson@hanover.edu)  
[patterson@hanover.edu](mailto:patterson@hanover.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Jana Riess, Religion News Service](mailto:riess.jana@gmail.com)  
[riess.jana@gmail.com](mailto:riess.jana@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Music and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Music and Religion section is perpetually interested in panels that combine performance and scholarly reflection, and/or book panel discussions that help to advance the field. These ideas can be incorporated into any of the other ideas below.

- Music as a tool of religious violence and/or music as a tool of religious healing
- Indigenous religious musics from around the World
- Religious Music at the Borderlands and/or Religious Music and Immigration
- Musical representations of religion in children's media (e.g. Disney films)
- Music in American Buddhism (esp. related to Buddhist Churches of America)
- Anniversary-themed presentations surrounding musical works and music scene

[We are also soliciting submissions for a session to be cosponsored by the Music and Religion and the Sikh Studies units:](#)

This panel focuses on the role of words and music in Sikh activism. It seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of musical agency as a catalyst for social change within the Sikh community and the Sikh tradition. Papers are invited at the intersection of language, music and activism to include, but not limited to historical perspectives, linguistic and musical analysis, socio-cultural impact and interdisciplinary approaches including musicology, linguistics, sociology, and other disciplines.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

[We are also soliciting submissions for a session to be offered during the pilot AAR Zoom session in June cosponsored by the Music and Religion and the Contemporary Pagan Studies units:](#)

With the continuing re-alignment of nationalistic and ethnic identities in the globalizing early 21st century, the Contemporary Pagan Studies unit and Music and Religion unit seek proposals for a joint session on musical Paganisms and their relationships to various nationalisms, ethnic identities and/or imagined communities. We encourage proposals that address pre-colonial ideologies and textual traditions, heritage construction, figurations of an "other," appropriations of national iconography and folk song in a variety of cultural contexts. This session is proposed for the pilot AAR Zoom session in June 2024. Accepted proposals should if possible propose tracks for a streaming playlist to be listened and engaged by all panelists before the session.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The discipline of religious studies has expanded beyond linguistic rationality to include the importance of musical phenomena in the development of religious communities and religious consciousness. Meanwhile, theological aesthetics is moving beyond the textual to include music as a resource in its own right for constructive and transformative meaning-making. Music, religiously speaking, is no mere adjunct to the study of sacred space, ritual, visual art, liturgy, or philosophical aesthetics; rather, it is a distinct field in its own right — with its own particular content, methods, and norms. By placing the relationship between music and religion at the center of our endeavor, this Unit seeks to serve scholars who operate out of this ubiquitous, but ironically unrepresented, realm of academic pursuit within the guild.

## **Chairs**

- [Joshua Busman, University of North Carolina, Pembroke](#)  
[joshua.busman@uncp.edu](mailto:joshua.busman@uncp.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Alisha Jones, University of Cambridge](#)

## **Mysticism Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

“The Things We Do Not Talk About”: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism

Originally published in 2001, Jeffrey J. Kripal’s Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism opened doors into the hidden lives of scholars of comparative mysticism. By way of his own “secret talks” – vulnerable, first-person reflections, interwoven between historical case studies – Kripal demonstrated a methodology with the potential to redefine insider-outsider debates through rigorous, transparent, and participatory self-reflexivity. This panel invites papers that challenge the norms of objectivity and subjectivity in scholarship, extend first-person narratives into academic discourse, and interrogate the borders and boundaries between self and other, human and more-than-human, and the intimate intersections of eros and the body as sites of mystical transformation and transgression.

### Trauma and Transcendence

The field of trauma studies serves as an inter-disciplinary framework for interpreting mystical phenomena that center the person, affect, psycho-spiritual models of development (and its interruption) and one that questions the boundaries and limitations of self and mystical knowing. Attending to this framework, we invite papers that explore the multiple intersections between mysticism, the body, the imagination, penetration and porousness, divine wounding, ecstasy, and transcendence. These can include articulations of trauma as part of the mystical path within specific traditions, understandings of trauma as a gateway to mystical states, and the utilization of mysticism as a way to heal sickness and trauma.

### Violence, Non-Violence, and Mystic Narratives

Engaging with this year’s conference theme, “Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin,” this panel interrogates representations of violence and bodily mortification in mystical writing and art. We invite papers that consider what happens when we refuse to separate the injury, pain,



and mortification found in mystical texts from the concept or category of violence. While attending to the spiritualization and narrativization of bodily pain, we ask how violence is imagined and described by the art and literature produced in traditions and communities understood as mystical. Furthermore, how do we understand the difference between representations of violence and embodied experiences of violence, especially in mystical texts that blur the line between representation and reality? We also invite papers that consider how violence and nonviolence affect our understanding of the category of mysticism. And how reconfiguring the nature of violence and nonviolence might shift the relationship between the margin and the center.

[Entangled Histories: Mysticism, Esotericism, and Hybridity](#)  
[\[Co-Sponsored by Mysticism Unit and Esotericism Unit\]](#)

The late 19th- and early 20th centuries saw a boom in what might today be considered “spiritual but not religious” movements. Spiritualism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, to name only a few, synthesized – often uncritically – post-Protestant Christianity with imported traditions from Central and South Asian yoga and tantric traditions, along with a vast array of symbolic and mythological themes drawing from Gnosticism to medieval alchemy to astrology. How might contemporary scholars locate much less “define” the boundaries between “mysticism” and “esotericism” – and, are these terms even useful in organizing and categorizing these areas? This panel invites papers that address issues of hybridization in mysticism and esotericism, particularly from outside of European traditions, as well as challenge methodological and definitional assumptions, particularly a too rigid separation of “the esoteric” from “the mystic.”

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit began as a Consultation within the AAR in 1987 and achieved formal Unit status in 1989. While its early focus was primarily Christianity and Western religions — and the study of experience and textual interpretation within those areas — the Unit has grown and changed over time, paralleling the change and growth in the AAR itself. Today, our conversations cut across boundaries that characterize many of the Program Units within the AAR — boundaries of discipline, tradition, temporality, and region. Members of our Unit use different methodologies and work across a variety of disciplines, among which are the psychology of religion, sociology of religion, history of religions, hermeneutics and textual analysis, biographical analysis, feminist studies, queer and trans studies, film studies, philosophy of religion, mysticism and science, art criticism, postmodern theory, cultural studies, and anthropology of consciousness, among others. This interdisciplinarity has importance not only to our work as scholars, but also to our work as teachers and public educators. We post our current call, past sessions, a selection of past papers, as well as links in the field of mysticism to our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aarmysticism/>.

## **Chairs**

- [C. Libby, Pennsylvania State University](#)  
[cml83@psu.edu](mailto:cml83@psu.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [David Odorisio, Pacifica Graduate Institute](#)  
[dmodorisio@gmail.com](mailto:dmodorisio@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Native Traditions in the Americas Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite individual paper and group proposals on any aspect of Native Traditions in the Americas (North, Central and South). In particular, we invite papers on the following topics:

In light of this year's theme "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin" we invite proposals for papers or panels that consider how Native people have responded to and engaged in historical and contemporary forms of violence (and nonviolence), and how Native traditions have endured, resisted, adapted, or been represented despite these violences. This might include:

- [For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Popular Culture Group:](#)  
Explorations of popular media representations of Native traditions amid violent conditions, such as those seen in *The Killers of the Flower Moon*, *Reservations Dogs*, and other media. This session could also challenge stereotypes about Native traditions, including harmful stereotypes about the violence of the people and traditions, as well as the harm done by "positive" representations, such as "the ecological Indian."
- [For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Ecology group:](#) Examination of work within Native communities to combat the violence against the land, waters, and plant and animal beings, and violent responses to non-violent land and water protection, with consideration to how Native religious traditions can or have influenced global and dominant discourses related to nature and the environment.
- Reflections on the role of religious and spiritual resources within American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian student success and retention in higher education, including considerations of what it means to decolonize such institutions, particularly in light of the historically violent role that western education has played in Indigenous communities.
- Examinations of the colonial justifications of violence and the role of religion in this violence from the perspectives of Native people. This could include the exploration

- of parallels between the experiences of colonial violence among Native people of the Americas and those faced by other Indigenous people around the world, and how religious traditions help communities endure and resist colonization.
- Indigenous legal battles throughout the Americas for civil rights, treaty rights, and tribal sovereignty—and how these contests have been and continue to be shaped by religious sensibilities, motivations, and power.
- Perspectives on religion and violence at the US–Mexico border, the border in San Diego, or other border areas in the Americas, as experienced by largely Native and Indigenous populations.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit sees its mission as the promotion of the study of Native American religious traditions and thereby the enrichment of the academic study of religion generally, by engaging in discourse about culturally-centered theories and encouraging multiple dialogues at the margins of Western and non-Western cultures and scholarship. The Unit is committed to fostering dialogue involving Native and non-Native voices in the study of North, Central, and South American Native religious traditions and to engaging religious studies scholarship in robust conversation with scholarship on other facets of Native cultures and societies.

## Chairs

- [Felicia Lopez, University of California, Merced](#)  
[feerhapsody@gmail.com](mailto:feerhapsody@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Andrea McComb Sanchez, University of Arizona](#)  
[amccomb@email.arizona.edu](mailto:amccomb@email.arizona.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## New Religious Movements Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the 2024 annual conference we invite papers on any research pertaining to NRMs. We particularly seek papers on new religions in San Diego and southern California; NRMs and violence; NRMs and peacemaking; NRMs and implicit religion; UFO religions; theosophical and metaphysical movements; consumerism; NRMs and the law; and NRMs and politics.

We also invite prearranged panel and paper proposals for a possible co-sponsored session with Religion, Media, and Culture that engage questions of digitality in new religious movements, or contrast the origins, practice, and study of digital vs. “traditional” NRMs, or NRMs “online” vs. “offline.” How does digitality shape new religious movements?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit supports and encourages research on all aspects of the study of New Religious Movements. Presenters in our sessions study new, and alternative religions, past and present, from a variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives. Our sessions and additional meetings are intended to create opportunities for dialogue among academics who share a passion for understanding NRMs, and to make known to a broader audience the importance of such movements for understanding issues of religious difference, community building and maintenance, ritual and doctrinal innovation, and other aspects of religious life. As scholars of minority, alternative, and new religions, we are deeply aware of the challenges facing those on America’s religious margins. We know the immense human toll such intolerance causes. Our scholarship also demonstrates the violence and tragedy that can result when federal and state agencies fail to recognize the humanity of marginalized religious groups. We are resolved to make space for difference both within the academy and beyond.

## Chairs

- [W. Michael Ashcraft, Truman State University](mailto:washcraf@truman.edu)  
[washcraf@truman.edu](mailto:washcraf@truman.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jeremy Rapport, College of Wooster](mailto:jrapport@wooster.edu)  
[jrapport@wooster.edu](mailto:jrapport@wooster.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Nineteenth Century Theology Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

In 2024, we will have three sessions:

A co-sponsored session with the Schleiermacher Unit: An invited roundtable discussion

This roundtable discussion will consider the themes and approaches of the recent volume, *The Oxford History of Modern German Theology, Volume 1: 1781–1848*, edited by Grant Kaplan and Kevin M. Vander Schel. This volume is the first in a three-volume critical history of modern German theology from 1781 to 2000, edited by Johannes Zachhuber, David Lincicum, and Judith Wolfe. It provides the most comprehensive English language overview to date of the central debates, intellectual movements, and historical events that have shaped modern German theology from the late 1700s to the 1848 revolutions. Additionally, it pays attention to topics often neglected in earlier overviews of this period, such as the position of Judaism in modern German society, the intersection of race and religion, and the influence of social history on nineteenth-century theological debates.

This session will feature invited panelists who will critically discuss the methodologies, themes, and contributions of the volume.

#### Kant and Nineteenth-Century Theology

2024 will mark the 300th anniversary of Immanuel Kant's birth. To commemorate this anniversary, the Nineteenth Century Theology Unit is organizing a session that explores Immanuel Kant's legacy and influence on modern theology in the long 19th century. Kant was a ground-breaking figure whose critique of rationalist metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics and the quest for a new foundation of "science" (Wissenschaft) bridged the gap between the 18th and 19th centuries. His reflections were enthusiastically adopted but also fiercely rejected by nineteenth-century theologians. The work of Kant still inspires debates worldwide to this day, for example, in relation to recent research on the intersection of philosophy and theology and its role in the emergence of modern theology in the early 19th century. The proposed session aims to take the research of nineteenth-century academic theology to the next level by exploring the intersection between Kant's work as well as post-Kantian idealism and the theologies it influenced. We welcome proposals for papers that examine this area of study and explore the intriguing influence of Kant on nineteenth-century theology, broadly understood, by offering fresh perspectives. They can cover theologians from different confessional backgrounds and theological schools or traditions. They can also touch upon current debates in theology and philosophy.

This session will showcase a panel of invited experts, who will engage in a scholarly discourse around the influence of Kant's philosophy on 19th-century modern theology.

For our other session, we are looking for paper proposals on the following theme:

#### Political Theology and the Nineteenth Century

Interest in the area of political theology has grown enormously over the past several decades, spanning fields ranging from theology and religious studies to philosophy, political theory, and intellectual history. While some work in this area has followed Carl Schmitt in understanding key political concepts as secularized theological concepts, other work has instead sought to think theologically about politics and to draw on theological resources for contemporary political reflection. In these discussions, central concerns have included the conceptualization of categories such as sovereignty, democracy, and equality, often in connection with concerns about social location (especially race, gender, and class), as well the role of categories often associated with religion, including ritual and the miraculous.

This session invites papers that either draw on nineteenth century thinkers and movements to shed light on these recent debates, or to offer new perspectives on how questions now associated with political theology were being formulated in the nineteenth century.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

### **Nineteenth-Century Dutch Theology and Modernity**

The last two decades have witnessed a renaissance of 19th-century Dutch theology studies, with growing interest in the ideas and works of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck and the recent publication of Arie L. Molendij's *Protestant Theology and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century Netherlands* (OUP 2022). Dutch theology, particularly that associated with Kuyper and Bavinck, engaged with contemporary theological and philosophical perspectives and modern society at large. This session examines how this strand of Dutch theology has engaged with German idealism and Schleiermacher's theology, as well as its engagement with social issues such as the Jews and political topics.

An invited panel of experts will share their knowledge on this topic.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Our Unit focuses on major themes, thinkers, and movements in nineteenth century religious thought and theology — from the French Revolution to World War I — and on the relation of religious thought to its historical, political, and cultural contexts. Each year the Unit selects two or three focused topics and predistributes papers before the AAR sessions.

## **Chairs**

- [Annette G. Aubert, Westminster Theological Seminary](mailto:aaubert@wts.edu)  
[aaubert@wts.edu](mailto:aaubert@wts.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Sheila Briggs, University of Southern California](mailto:sbriggs@usc.edu)  
[sbriggs@usc.edu](mailto:sbriggs@usc.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## North American Hinduism Unit

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

While we accept paper proposals, we strongly encourage full panel (paper or roundtable) proposals with a coherent theme. In addition to the CFPs below, we welcome other full panel proposals. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact Rupa Pillai ([rupillai@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:rupillai@sas.upenn.edu)) or Dheepa Sundaram ([dheepa.sundaram@du.edu](mailto:dheepa.sundaram@du.edu)). We encourage people to contact the Chairs advance of submitting proposals if you have any questions or need assistance. We also welcome the possibility of co-sponsored sessions.

"Emerging Voices" panel session—Contact: Rupa Pillai ([rupillai@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:rupillai@sas.upenn.edu)) or Dheepa Sundaram ([dheepa.sundaram@du.edu](mailto:dheepa.sundaram@du.edu))

We invite outstanding emerging scholars of North American and Diaspora Hinduism to present their work at a paper session at the forthcoming AAR. The primary goal of the "Emerging Voices Roundtable" is to showcase the work of emerging scholars and to create space for emerging voices (in terms of sexuality, gender, or race) through their intersections with North American Hinduism. We aim to learn from these new scholars not only in terms of the content of their research but also to provide a national platform for career development and networking. Panelists will also be paired with a more senior scholar to mentor them in advance of the AAR. If you are PhD student or recent graduate and working on a topic related to North American Hinduism, please reach out to Dheepa Sundaram or Rupa Pillai for more information on this panel.

Hinduphobia in North American Contexts—Contact: Salaja Krishnamurti ([sailaja.krishnamurti@queensu.ca](mailto:sailaja.krishnamurti@queensu.ca))

The recent emergence of the term "Hinduphobia" in social media and public policy has gone largely unnoticed by mainstream Western society. It is a term that appears to function as part of a spectrum of well-established terms for structural forms of racism linked to historical material practices of discrimination such as Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, and anti-semitism. However, while there certainly are many hypothetical and real examples of discrimination against Hindus by virtue of their religion in parts of the world, the attempt to include "Hinduphobia" into the lexicon of terminology arguably masks the much more immediate political and social reality that the claim silences legitimate criticism of India. In this roundtable

discussion, panelists will explore several core questions and case studies involving Hinduphobia and its impact in North American, Hindu diasporic, and Indian contexts.

Where is South Asia? Religion, Margins, and Migration—Contact: Gaurika Mehta ([gm2680@columbia.edu](mailto:gm2680@columbia.edu))

For this roundtable, we hope to bring together scholars of South Asian diasporic religions to explore the following questions: Where is South Asia? What and who counts as South Asian (and what happens to stories and groups that don't "count")? How do questions of geography, and centers and margins, shape the study of South Asian diaspora religions? What does the study of South Asian diasporas reveal about religion, caste, race, and/or gender? How do religious ideas and politics travel (in both directions) between the South Asian subcontinent and its global diasporic edges? How have recent interventionist tactics (i.e. assassinations on foreign soil, cancellations of visas, intervention in foreign elections and wars) by the Indian government extended the reach of South Asia in new and troubling ways?

[Religion and 2024 Elections / South Asians and the 2024 Elections \(potential cosponsors Hinduism and SARI\)](#)

Contact: Prea Persaud ([breakpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:breakpersaud@gmail.com)) or Shana Sippy ([shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu))

In both India and the US, 2024 promises to be a critical year for elections. It remains to be seen whether both the ruling BJP party and the Democratic Biden/Harris ticket will remain in power. No matter what happens, it is clear that religion will play a crucial role in setting the tone and the stakes of the various issues, agendas, and debates that occur among the vying parties. In the US, with two prominent South Asian Republican candidates for President—Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley— running for office, as well as Vice President Kamala Harris, we are seeing discourses about South Asian religion and identity take new forms. And, in India, Hindutva rhetoric and marginalization of religious minorities means that religion remains a core concern for anyone thinking about India's future. This panel seeks to explore how various players and parties are mobilizing religion in the 2024 elections, examining various contexts and iterations in the US and India.

Who Speaks for Diasporic Hinduism?—Contact: Prea Persaud ([breakpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:breakpersaud@gmail.com))

The study of diasporic Hinduism has been dominated by a geographical focus of North America. What would our discussion and theories about Hinduism look like if we focused on other communities such as the Caribbean (more than just Trinidad and Guyana!), South Africa, Malaysia, Suriname, Mauritius, Fiji, Bali, Thailand, etc. Whose voices have dominated the field



and what does that tell us about the construction of the field itself? Attention has been rightly focused on growing Hindu nationalism but where might there also be active resistance to this growth?

South Asian Religions at the Border—Contact: Aarti Patel ([abp6177@psu.edu](mailto:abp6177@psu.edu))

According to data, the number of Indian-origin migrants (96,917) who were detained, denied entry, or expelled from the US between October 2022–September 2023 increased five-fold in three years, since 2020. Although prevalent images paint all South Asian immigrants to the US as socio-economically privileged model minorities, this does not reflect the whole picture. Indeed, as scholars of South Asian religion, this reality is something to which we must attend. As always, when people migrate, religion is one of the many things they carry with them. We seek to assemble a panel of scholars to present papers that explore the challenges that South Asians are facing at the border and beyond and the role that religion seems to play in their responses to migration.

Con-spirituality, Orientalism and Fascism, Yogis, Cottage Industry Gurus—Contact: Shreena Gandhi ([shreenaniketa@gmail.com](mailto:shreenaniketa@gmail.com))

The BJP and Hindus in the US have been making a concerted effort over the last 20 years to tie the practice of yoga exclusively to Hinduism. Concurrently, these two overlapping but distinct groups are also engaging in Islamophobic and casteist rhetoric, politics and actions that are bringing the fascist goals of Hindutva closer to fruition. Given this, what are the connections between the seemingly innocuous claims of cottage industry gurus, yogis and Hindus “simply wanting to reclaim their religion or decolonize their religion,” and the violence of fascism?

Financial and Litigious History of Hindu Orgs. in North America—Contact: Dheepa Sundaram ([dheepa.sundaram@du.edu](mailto:dheepa.sundaram@du.edu))

This panel session explores how Hindu organizations have sought to shape how Hinduism is articulated, taught, and understood within North America. We seek papers that explore the history of Hindu organizations and Hindu organizing in North America, how Hindu organizations have leveraged legal frameworks, the political engagement of Hindu organizations, the relationship between Hindu organizations and media figures and outlets, Hindu organizations and donor relationships, history of Hindu organization fundraising tactics, and other related topics.

## Statement of Purpose

## Overview:

This Unit was established in 2006 for the purpose of drawing greater scholarly attention to Hinduisms outside of South Asia. Though it will focus on North America, the Unit also welcomes relevant research on Hinduisms in other non-Indian contexts. The Unit has three main goals: • To study and describe Hinduisms in North America and related diaspora contexts • To develop a more sophisticated understanding of what distinguishes these Hinduisms from those in South Asia • To nurture thoughtful debate on the methodologies unique to and appropriate for their study.

## Call for Proposals:

The Steering Committee composes the Call for Proposals for NAH sessions for the AAR Annual Meeting; Steering Committee chairs facilitate proposals for the emerging scholars panel, all other proposals in the CFP are overseen by a point person, Steering Committee reviews, shapes and accepts proposals for submitted sessions; reviews and reports on sessions; and communicates with the NAH constituency.

## Composition:

The Steering Committee is made up of 7 members, two of whom are elected or determined by consensus by the steering committee to serve as co-chairs. A Steering Committee term is three years, renewable for a second three years if everyone is amenable. The terms are staggered, so that there are continuity and change on the committee. During a total of six possible years, a member might serve a co-chair term, which is three years. A member elected to serve as co-chair has at least one full year's experience on the Steering Committee. The co-chair elections are staggered as well, so that each new co-chair serves with an experienced co-chair.

## Responsibilities:

The co-chairs are responsible for conducting the business meeting of NAH, completing the post-AAR Annual Meeting survey, initiating review of proposals, working with steering committee members and submitters to put together sessions, and moderate communication of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee make decisions on substantive matters. All attend the Annual Meeting. All attend the NAH Business Meeting.

## Succession:

Members of the Steering Committee are replaced by the following procedure: when there is a vacancy, after the Annual Meeting the co-chairs ask the NAH constituency for nominations. From among the nominees, the Steering Committee votes to elect a new member.

## Chairs

- [Rupa Pillai, University of Pennsylvania](#)

[rupillai@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:rupillai@sas.upenn.edu)

1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

- [Dheepa Sundaram, University of Denver](mailto:dheepa.sundaram@du.edu)

[dheepa.sundaram@du.edu](mailto:dheepa.sundaram@du.edu)

1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## **North American Religions Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

This Unit advances the study of religions in North America, broadly conceived (Mexico, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, etc.), as well as the study of historical, social, and structural links between North American religions and those beyond North American boundaries. We are committed to sponsoring sessions that explore fundamental questions that have shaped the field in the past or should shape it in the future.

The Unit sponsors roundtables, debates, workshops, performances, pre-circulated papers, and other creative formats. As always, this program unit also welcomes proposals for keyword panels based on important concepts in the field. We encourage the submission of both individual contributions and complete panels, though we may reconfigure proposed panels to place them on the conference program. For panel proposals, diversity of rank (including graduate student, post-doctorate, contingent faculty, and junior and senior participants), and gender, race, and ethnicity are strongly encouraged. We especially seek proposals from junior and contingent scholars. Presenters in any format should expect to give short presentations that maximize time for audience questions and comments. All presenters should explicitly relate research to ongoing discussions in the field and the wider academy. Please ensure that all submissions are anonymous.

In addition to the above, we seek proposals on the following topics for our 2024 meeting in San Diego:

- In keeping with the presidential theme of Violence, Non-violence, and the Margins, we welcome papers and panels that think about religion and war, religion and both violent and non-violent protest movements, religious responses to trauma, religious

- pacifism, and religion and violence more broadly (including gender based violence, sexual violence, and others)
- We are interested in scholarship that considers the role of the scholar of North American religions in times of crisis. We are interested in proposals addressing scholarship and pedagogy in specific contexts (teaching in Florida or other settings where critical engagement with race, gender, and sexuality are under attack), teaching in the face of broader crisis (the climate crisis, the crisis in reproductive health, attacks on bodily autonomy of a wide range of people). We are interested in the exploration of the risks that scholars take, the cost benefit analysis that they make in deciding when to speak and what to teach, and how people care for themselves in the face of those risks.
  - In recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson–Reed Act) and the conference’s location in San Diego (home of both Friendship Park and a border wall), we invite papers and panels that think about the intersections of immigration and religion, in both contemporary and historical contexts. Our location in California offers a particularly useful opportunity to consider migration in relation to Asia and the Americas.
  - We encourage proposals that mark the anniversaries of other notable events in the religious history of North America, or the anniversaries of major historiographical interventions.
  - We welcome papers and panels outside of the themes above and encourage scholars at all levels to submit work reflecting their ongoing research, whether or not it is reflected in this call.

## Statement of Purpose

Purpose, Practices & Procedures: Purpose of an AAR Program unit: The purpose of program units is twofold: to provide a forum for dialogue and exchange among differing approaches and projects in the field and to provide opportunities for the discussion of work that does not fall within the agendas that find other expressions in the Annual Meeting program. Program units should provide significant time for presenting research in the major subfields of religion. Purpose of the North American Religions Program unit: The North American Religions Program unit exists to sponsor conversations about the field at thematic, theoretical, definitional, experimental or historiographical levels, in order to ask where the study of North American religions is going or should be going. Such conversations embrace the diversity of scholars, disciplines, methods and traditions that make up the field. Routine functions: The Steering Committee composes the Call for Papers for NAR sessions for the AAR Annual Meeting; reviews, shapes and accepts proposals for those sessions; reviews and reports on sessions; and communicates with the NAR constituency. Composition: The Steering Committee is made up of ten members, two of whom are elected by the members to serve as co-chairs. A Steering Committee term is three years, renewable for a second three years if everyone is amenable. The terms are staggered, so that there are continuity and change on the committee. During a total of six possible years, a member might serve a co-chair term, which is three years. A member

elected to serve as co-chair has at least one full year's experience on the Steering Committee. The co-chair elections are staggered as well, so that each new co-chair serves with an experienced co-chair. Responsibilities: The co-chairs take care of the business of NAR and moderate communication of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee make decisions on substantive matters. All attend the Annual Meeting and reserve Friday dinner for Steering Committee socializing, envisioning and business. All attend the NAR Business Meeting. Succession: Members of the Steering Committee are replaced by the following procedure: when there is a vacancy, after the Annual Meeting the co-chairs ask the NAR constituency (via email) for nominations. From among the nominees, the Steering Committee votes to elect a new member. The co-chairs maintain this "NAR Purpose, Practices & Procedures" document, make it available to the Steering Committee and the NAR constituency, and revise it as needed by vote of the Steering Committee.

## Chairs

- [Melissa Borja, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor](mailto:mborja@umich.edu)  
[mborja@umich.edu](mailto:mborja@umich.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Samira Mehta, University of Colorado](mailto:smehta@post.harvard.edu)  
[smehta@post.harvard.edu](mailto:smehta@post.harvard.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Open and Relational Theologies Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

#### Open Call

The Open and Relational Theologies Unit promotes academic research and discourse on open, relational, and process methods and perspectives (including those of open theism, process philosophy, and other relational and personalists traditions). These explorations tend to be constructive in nature, regularly involving theological and philosophical speculation about the nature of God, freedom, power, relationality, materiality, love, and more. Our Unit's inquiries also explore the implications of open-relational methods and perspectives on a wide range of social, scientific, and spiritual topics. We welcome contributions from across religious traditions.

For the 2024 Meeting, the Open & Relational Theologies Unit invites proposals on the following themes:

- Paper and/or panel proposals relating Open and Relational Theologies to the presidential theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” Possible questions: Are open and/or relational theological and philosophical commitments inherently less violent than classical perspectives? How do open and relational commitments provide grounds for challenging hierarchies and the power dynamics of center and margin? What resources does ORT offer for dealing concretely with violence in its various manifestations: physical, institutional, structural, intellectual, etc.? How does open and relational discourse recreate its own center–margin dynamic? In what ways might open and relational scholars more robustly engage traditionally marginalized voices and perspectives?
- [Roundtable participants on the theme of pedagogy and power for a discussion co-sponsored with the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit.](#) Rather than presenting formal papers, panelists will engage in an extended discussion with fellow panelists and attendees. They will discuss how their theoretical interests and commitments—to an open and relational standpoint or pragmatism and empiricism—inform their teaching practice and understanding of power. Proposals should explain interest in participating in the roundtable and share concrete examples of the creative ways you have adapted your pedagogy based on your commitment to the principles of your discipline. We especially welcome reflection on how you contend with power as part of teaching religion, as well as pedagogical practices that address issues related to marginality in the classroom.

#### Pre-arranged Roundtable

The ORT Unit will also sponsor an invited roundtable session on “Omnipotence or Amnipotence.” Open and relational theologies have been wary of omnipotence as a divine attribute. Some embrace it after qualifying its meaning; others reject it. In this session, diverse voices explore omnipotence alongside Thomas Jay Oord's alternative: “amnipotence.”

#### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

[We invite papers for a possible co-sponsored session between Open & Relational Theologies and the Ritual Studies Unit](#) on the practice of an open table in Christian Eucharist. We seek papers that examine a wide range of communion practices, with a particular interest in papers that connect to the presidential theme's emphasis on marginality and/or that consider open communion practices through the lens of ritual theory.

#### Statement of Purpose

The Open and Relational Theologies Unit promotes academic research and discourse on open, relational, and process methods and perspectives (including those of open theism, process philosophy, and other relational and personalists traditions). These explorations tend to be

constructive in nature, regularly involving theological and philosophical speculation about the nature of God, freedom, power, relationality, materiality, love, and more. Our Unit's inquiries also explore the implications of open-relational methods and perspectives on a wide range of social, scientific, and spiritual topics. We welcome contributions from across religious traditions.

The ORT Unit is committed to diversity and inclusion. In order to maximize the diversity of our panels, our proposal review process stipulates that proposer names be anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection. Further, a successful pre-arranged session or panel proposal must incorporate gender and racial-ethnic diversity; diversity of theoretical method and rank are also highly encouraged.

## Chairs

- [Janna Gonwa, Gannon University](#)  
[jannakelly1@gmail.com](mailto:jannakelly1@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Jon Paul Sydnor, Emmanuel College, Boston](#)  
[jonpaulsydnor@gmail.com](mailto:jonpaulsydnor@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Unit of the American Academy of Religion seeks papers and panels for the 2024 meeting in San Diego on the following topics:

- Pentecostals/Charismatics and civil rights
- Pentecostals/Charismatics and labor movements
- Pentecostals/Charismatics and the 2024 election
- Book panels on significant books which expand or challenge the current narratives of Pentecostal/Charismatic history
- Panels or papers which align with the theme of the 2024 meetings

For panels, the unit requests diverse representation in presenters, research subjects, topics, and methodologies.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Pentecostal–Charismatic Movements Unit of the American Academy of Religion seeks proposals for workshops centered on Pentecostal Studies for the 2024 June online conference. We are looking to make the June experience an interactive one where scholars interested in attending will find opportunities to work on their own materials. Workshops can address research or teaching or some combination thereof.

## Statement of Purpose

This unit provides a forum for scholarly consideration of global phenomena associated with Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements. This unit provides an arena for a wide array of scholars, disciplinary orientations, and methodological approaches bringing together those working constructively from within these traditions with scholars considering the phenomena from historical, sociological, ethnographic, theological, and other perspectives. The unit intentionally seeks to encourage a global and pluralist perspective.

## Chairs

- [Andrea Johnson, California State University, Dominguez Hills](mailto:anjohnson@csudh.edu)  
[anjohnson@csudh.edu](mailto:anjohnson@csudh.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Erica Ramirez, Auburn Seminary](mailto:erica.ramirez@gmail.com)  
[erica.ramirez@gmail.com](mailto:erica.ramirez@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Philosophy of Religion Unit

### Meeting

In–Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

In order to foster rich, innovative, and challenging intellectual conversations, the Philosophy of Religion Unit is committed to inclusion. Our Unit expects pre–arranged sessions or panel proposals to incorporate diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and rank.

The steering committee invites proposals on (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Theorizing beyond Discourse–Music as Method: How is music related to philosophical thought and expression in ways that are non–discursive? We especially invite proposals on pre–modern contexts and on religious traditions beyond Christianity, though all proposals are welcomed and will be given full consideration.



- Philosophical projects about nonhuman animals
- New work in Analytic Philosophy of Religion
- New interpretations of Kant, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his birth
- [Ancestors](#)—including reverence for ancestors, communication with ancestors, and conceptions of ancestral afterlives—are central to peoples' lived experiences of religions worldwide. And yet this topic receives little to no attention within the philosophy of religion. The Global–Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit and Philosophy of Religion Unit invite submissions to a co-sponsored session on this important area of inquiry.
- [Violence as a Category for Philosophical Analysis](#): We invite papers that explore the category of violence in new ways, especially those that do not revolve around or relate to questions of non-violence. Papers might analyze the category of violence in the work of philosophical thinkers, or in theological systems, or in ethical theories of justice, or might explore the role or presence of violence in religious movements or social settings. Co-sponsored with the Political Theology Unit.
- ["Author Meets Critic" session on An Yountae's book, \*The Coloniality of the Secular: Race, Religion, and Poetics of World Making\* \(Duke, 2024\)](#), for a possible co-sponsor with the Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit.
- [Translation Panel](#): Akalaṅka's Aṣṭaśatī and its Non-Jain Interlocutors, for a possible co-sponsor with the Jain studies unit, the Buddhist Philosophy Unit, the Hindu Philosophy Unit, the Global Critical Philosophy of Religion Unit, and the Yogācāra Unit. This panel will be partially pre-arranged and will involve breakout sessions after the presentations. For more information, contact Anil Mundra at [anil.mundra@rutgers.edu](mailto:anil.mundra@rutgers.edu)

In addition to individual papers, we welcome proposals for prearranged sessions (i.e., an entire session with a designated group of presenters) on these and other topics not listed here that will be of interest to philosophers of religion. Proposals have a much greater chance of acceptance if they are written so as to be accessible to philosophers with no expertise on the particular topics or figures dealt with in the proposed paper, and they make very clear the central thesis and main line(s) of argument of the proposed paper.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit analyzes the interface between philosophy and religion, including both philosophical positions and arguments within various specific religious traditions and more generalized philosophical theories about religion. We include in our purview not only traditional topics of Western philosophy of religion but also those arising from non-Western traditions and regions and from the study of religion more broadly. We are also interested in the intersection of philosophy and diverse other methodologies and modes of inquiry.

## Chairs

- [Stephen Bush, Brown University](mailto:stephen_bush@brown.edu)  
[stephen\\_bush@brown.edu](mailto:stephen_bush@brown.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Lori K. Pearson, Carleton College](mailto:lpearson@carleton.edu)  
[lpearson@carleton.edu](mailto:lpearson@carleton.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

#### **Nature and the Platonic Tradition**

The Platonic tradition has, throughout history, offered a radically alternative understanding of the relationship between humans and nature and between humans and non-human animals. This panel invites papers that explore historical and contemporary instances of the Platonic conceptualization of nature. We encourage contributions that explore this tradition's contemporary application for reconceptualizing our collective understanding of nature. Exploration of the relationship between Platonic realism across multiple religious traditions and constructive proposals for inter-religious ecologies are encouraged. Papers may draw upon sources from antiquity to the present, ranging from philosophical, theological, poetic, and artistic.

#### **Platonism and Neoplatonism**

We also highly encourage the submission of papers relating to the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions generally, in both historical and constructive contexts. Papers on the metaphysics of participation are particularly encouraged.

#### **The Recovery of Participatory Metaphysics**

The past several years have witnessed the remarkable recovery of participatory ontologies, a key conceptual element of the Platonic tradition. This recovery has occurred in many contexts, including Anglican, Evangelical, Reformed, and Roman Catholic circles. Participation constitutes a radically non-dualistic way of conceptualizing the relationship between God and creation,

transcendence and immanence, the One in the many. It represents a theological and philosophical resource with a pedigree over 2,000 years old. Its implications range from the theological (soteriology and Christology), the philosophical (dualism, materialism), and the practical (aesthetics, environmental ethics). This invited panel will explore the motivations and implications of this recovery and is convened on the publication of *Participation in the Divine* (eds. Hedley, Toland). Participants: Hans Boersma (Nashotah House Seminary), Andrew Davison (University of Cambridge), Yonghua Ge (Trinity Western University).

AAR's Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & SBL's Mysticism, Esotericism and Gnosticism in Antiquity Unit (Joint Panel)

#### Theosis and the Bounds of Being

Theosis is a consummate expression of transcendence in the mystical, Gnostic, Platonic, and Esoteric traditions from antiquity to the present. As such, borders, limits, and edges characterize it, and the overcoming of these. It challenges the delimitations of knowledge, cosmos, and contemplation and strains at the very boundaries of experience. Theosis challenges epistemological limitations, bending and breaking ways of knowing, and complicates the boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as expressed in the statement of Athanasius that 'the Son of God became man, that we might become god'. This joint panel encourages submissions exploring the boundaries that characterize theosis, where they are, whether they exist, what they may be, how they function, and how they constrain, restrict, enable, and inspire.

AAR's Platonism and Neoplatonism Unit & AAR's Islamic Mysticism Unit (Joint Panel)

#### Shī'ite Platonisms

Shī'ite Muslim belief and practice is thoroughly imbued with Platonic and Neoplatonic thought from late-antiquity to the modern era. Topics such as contemplation, theurgy, and spiritual union with the Prophet Muhammad's family are topics that remain important cornerstones for how Shī'ites conceptualise and practice their beliefs. This panel invites papers that consider questions on the nature, scope, audience, and context of Shī'ite Muslim texts in dialogue with Platonic and Neoplatonic works from the Greco-Arabic translation movement. We encourage papers exploring how translations of the *Dialogues* of Plato, the ontology of Plotinus, and the theurgical practices of Iamblichus and Proclus became part of Shī'ite mystical thought after the ninth century. Additionally, the panel welcomes submissions considering how ideas in original Greek works were often misattributed or heavily redacted to conform to the monotheistic worldviews of Muslim and Christian readers.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

### Participatory Metaphysics

The past several years have witnessed the remarkable recovery of participatory ontologies, a key conceptual element of the Platonic tradition. According to some formulations, it constitutes a radically non-dualistic way of conceptualizing the relationship between God and creation, transcendence and immanence, the One in the many. It represents a theological and philosophical resource with an over 2,000 year history. This panel welcomes submissions that consider the metaphysics of participation in the thought of religions, individuals, and movements from antiquity to the present.

### Platonism and Neoplatonism

We also highly encourage the submission of papers relating to the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions generally, in both historical and constructive contexts.

## Statement of Purpose

This unit is committed to the ongoing study of Platonic traditions in connection with the history and philosophy of religions, from antiquity to the present. In this context we seek to feature the research of new and established scholars working in the field. We provide an avenue for the dissemination of new historical scholarship, as well as scholarship that draws upon the tradition as a resource to engage important contemporary questions. Many panelists publish their research through the many avenues that arise out of the unit's collaborative endeavours.

## Chairs

- [Alexander Hampton, University of Toronto](mailto:hampton.alex@gmail.com)  
[hampton.alex@gmail.com](mailto:hampton.alex@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Douglas Hedley, University of Cambridge](mailto:rdh26@cam.ac.uk)  
[rdh26@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rdh26@cam.ac.uk)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Political Theology Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Political Theology Unit is seeking proposals related to the following topics.

- The 2024 U.S. Presidential election: political theological frameworks for understanding the changing dynamics at play over the last 8 years
- [Political Extremism/Radicalism and Conversion for a possible co-sponsored session with Conversion Unit](#): How do we see political extremism and/or radicalization in the US, the Middle East, or elsewhere differently through the lens of spiritual or religious conversion? How do we see religious conversion differently through the lens of political radicalization? As polarizing processes intensify around the world, we are interested in papers that examine the nexus of the political and the religious through an investigation of radicalization/extremism in diverse historical and geographical contexts.
- Questions related to violence
  - [Violence as a Category for Philosophical Analysis](#): We invite papers that explore the category of violence in new ways, especially those that do not revolve around or relate to questions of non-violence. Papers might analyze the category of violence in the work of philosophical thinkers, or in theological systems, or in ethical theories of justice, or might explore the role or presence of violence in religious movements or social settings. For a possible co-sponsored session with Philosophy of Religion.
  - [How might theodicies serve to mask and marginalize structural violence?](#) (either tacitly or explicitly) "Theodicy" here works as a category for arguments that defend religious or metaphysical claims from contradictions based on events of the actual world. We seek proposals that articulate a theodicy, and then critically analyze how it functions to justify structural conditions such as inequalities, civil violence, xenophobia, political structures, or disparities of health, education, etc. Proposals may work with typical sources (e.g. texts, scriptures) or less-conventional sources (e.g. oral traditions, social media, laws, etc.). For a possible co-sponsored session with Global Critical Philosophies
  - Nuancing the relation of violence to religion and non-violence, moral, and/or pedagogical traditions: Can violence be "faithful"? Is just war theory still normative? Anabaptist traditions and the "force" of quietism; Nonviolent social movements and the "force" of rivalry; nuancing the relationship between violence and "harm," especially in social and pedagogical settings.

## Statement of Purpose

The Political Theology Unit examines the interaction between religious and political thought: how do they influence one another, and how should we respond? Political theology emerged as an area of study through the work of scholars such as Carl Schmitt, who examined the origin of political concepts in Christian theology. The area has also drawn upon theological traditions

(Christian, Jewish, and otherwise) in order to reflect constructively upon the way in which politics ought to operate. In recent years, political theology has been taken up by scholars in various disciplines, including philosophy of religion, Biblical studies, Islamic studies, African American religion, sexuality and religion, and elsewhere. This program unit draws upon these diverse approaches in order to explore the contribution of political theology to the study of religion. The Unit aims to expand the conversation about political theology to highlight minority, feminist, and queer voices and to foreground scholars from Jewish, Muslim, and other religious traditions. The goal of the unit is to provide a forum for a diverse group of scholars to explore what political theology means in their own work, how they see the conversation about political theology developing, and how political theology can enrich the study of religion.

## Chairs

- [Michelle Sanchez, Harvard University](#)  
[msanchez@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:msanchez@hds.harvard.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [An Yountae, California State University, Northridge](#)  
[anyount@gmail.com](mailto:anyount@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Practical Theology Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Roundtable Session: Re-membering the Pioneers: Honoring Feminist and Womanist Practical Theologians

Join us for a thought-provoking panel discussion between the trailblazing and contemporary scholars in feminist and womanist practical theology. Practical (and pastoral) theology promotes passing on faith and/or wisdom from one generation to another. In this session, we aim to weave together narratives from seasoned and contemporary scholars in the area of feminist and womanist theologians.

Through engaging storytelling, we will delve into the experiences and wisdom that have shaped the landscape of theological thought. Our focus on practical theology theories will guide us in exploring the profound impact these pioneers have had on the discipline. What lessons has practical theology learned from their perspectives, and how have these insights influenced the trajectory of our field?

This panel is not only a retrospective; it is an opportunity to amplify new voices. We invite participants to share their interpretations and forward-thinking insights. As we honor the past, we also look to the future, contemplating where practical theology needs to evolve and expand. What challenges and opportunities lie ahead, and how can we collectively contribute to shaping the future of practical theology?

Join us for a rich dialogue that spans generations, acknowledging the roots of feminist and womanist theology while sowing seeds for continued growth and exploration. Together, let's celebrate, reflect, and chart a course for the ongoing journey of practical theology.

#### [Co-sponsored Session with Ecclesial Practices Unit: Creative Research Methodologies in Practical Theology](#)

The intersection of Practical Theology and qualitative research methodologies presents a rich terrain for exploration and discovery. We invite scholars, researchers, and practitioners to contribute to a dynamic session focused on creative qualitative research methodologies, including in contexts of teaching and learning and creative ways of combining/integrating/interpreting theological perspectives with social scientific research methods, in Practical Theology.

Key themes for possible presentations:

- Embodied Approaches: Explore methodologies that engage the researcher's own lived experiences and bodily presence in the field. Visual and Performative Methods: Investigate the use of visual arts, performance, and other creative mediums as tools for theological inquiry
- Digital Religion(s) and Theology: Examine how digital platforms and technologies can be utilized in qualitative research within the context of practical theology.
- Postcolonial Perspectives: Interrogate traditional research paradigms and introduce postcolonial frameworks to enrich the understanding of practical theology.
- Feminist and Womanist Methodologies: Investigate how feminist and womanist theories and methodologies can be integrated into practical theology research, challenging and expanding current approaches.

Abstracts (up to 500 words) should illustrate the research question and best practices, methodology, and anticipated creative contributions. Submissions should embody a creative spirit, as presentations eventually chosen for the session will be asked to demonstrate their methodologies in some way. Presentations will be short, Ted Talk-like introductions of 7–10 minutes.

## Practical Theology and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

From wars to structural violence, from interpersonal to intrapersonal violence, or from institutional to ecological violence, violence in various forms permeates our daily life. This session recognizes engagement with such lived experience as a core aspect of practical theology and calls for papers that explore the frontiers of such engagements. The practical theology unit has been wrestling with the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs) as our on-going inspiration, and this session invites the practical theologians to ponder upon the 16th goal of peace, justice, and strong institutions. We invite papers that explores the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and the building of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions from the perspective of lived religion.

This call for paper is intentionally broad in its scope to provide a space for various voices to be heard.

For example, we are looking for proposals in the field of practical theology that:

- Explore the emotional, psychological, relational, spiritual, and structural processes that generate violence or non-violent resistance to destructive or degenerative functioning of communities and institutions.
- Explore the mechanisms and dynamics that lead to ideologies that divide societies and destruct the social fabric that enhances peaceful coexistence.
- Investigate the role of practical theology and/or the church in advocating for social justice, addressing systemic violence, and promoting transformative practices within communities.
- Investigate the psychological, spiritual, cultural, and structural issues in interpersonal violence in various contexts.
- Explore the relationship between religions/spirituality and the establishment of just institutions, critiquing existing systems, and proposing practical theological frameworks for fostering justice.
- Analyze the role of religion and spirituality in wars and international/intranational conflicts from a practical theological perspective.
- Showcase practical theological methodologies that strategically participate in the justice or peace promoting processes in the given research site, or other innovative praxis that resist violence and create space for peace.
- Explore the intersection of practical theology with homiletics, delving into the ways in which preaching and religious discourse contribute to shaping attitudes, values, and actions within communities. Investigate the transformative potential of homiletics in promoting peace, justice, and resilience against violence.
- Investigate the pedagogical aspects of practical theology, focusing on the educational dimensions that foster social transformation. Analyze how religious education can contribute to building resilient communities, addressing systemic



issues, and cultivating a deeper understanding of justice. Propose innovative pedagogical approaches within the context of practical theology to empower communities towards constructive change.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit engages practical theology and religious practice, reflects critically on religious traditions and practices, and explores issues in particular subdisciplines of practical theology and ministry. The Unit engages this mission in five interrelated public spheres with the following goals: For practical theology — to provide a national and international forum for discussion, communication, publication, and development of the field and its related subdisciplines For theological and religious studies — to foster interdisciplinary critical discourse about religious practice, contextual research and teaching for ministry, and practical theological method and pedagogy For a variety of religious traditions — to enhance inquiry in religious practice and practical theology For academic pedagogy — to advance excellence in teaching and vocational development for faculty in divinity and seminary education generally and for graduate students preparing to teach in such settings specifically For the general public — to promote constructive reflection on social and cultural dynamics and explore the implications of religious confession and practice.

## **Chairs**

- [Marc Lavallee, Barry University](#)  
[mlavallee@portsmouthabbey.org](mailto:mlavallee@portsmouthabbey.org)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Sabrina Müller, Zurich University](#)  
[sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch](mailto:sabrina.mueller@theol.uzh.ch)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

A joint Session with The Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit and The Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit seeks papers on the following theme:

[Cultivating Democratic Practices in and around the Classroom](#)

A common defense of the humanities is that it prepares students for democratic citizenship by teaching skills like critical thinking, self-reflection, open-mindedness, and civil discourse. Relative to these core tenets, at a time where both democracy and higher education appear to be under attack, we invite papers that highlight the practical work educators can do in the classroom to cultivate critical thinking and democratic habits in our students.

Informed by thought leaders such as Dewey, Freire, hooks and others, we invite papers that address how we might enact spaces in our classrooms that help mitigate the challenges posed to both our democracy and our educational institutions.

We welcome papers that frame the classroom as a training ground for democracy and address how educators can equip students to navigate a diversity of thought, integrate new and challenging ideas, and understand themselves to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning. We encourage presentations that “show” rather than “tell” by engaging the audience in demonstrations or participatory activities. Additionally, we are open to critiques and reassessments of the idea of the classroom as a training ground for democracy.

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[For the 2024 Meeting, the Open & Relational Theologies Unit and the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit invite proposals on the following themes:](#)

This co-sponsored roundtable discussion will explore the theme of pedagogy and power. Rather than presenting formal papers, panelists will discuss how their theoretical commitments to or interest in—an open and relational standpoint or pragmatism and empiricism—inform their teaching practice and understanding of power. Proposals should explain interest in participating in the roundtable and share concrete examples of the creative ways you have adapted your pedagogy based on your commitment to the principles of your discipline. We especially welcome reflection on how you contend with power as part of teaching religion, as well as pedagogical practices that address issues related to marginality in the classroom.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The mission of the Pragmatism and Empiricism in Religious Thought Unit is to foster the advancement and understanding of the pragmatic and empiricist traditions in American religious thought, as well as the intersections of those traditions with other methodologies, intellectual figures, artistic movements, communities, and issues. This Unit is concerned with critically interrogating, evaluating, and developing the insights and relevance of the pragmatic and empiricist traditions of American thought, broadly construed, for the study of religion and theology, with attention both to the historical interpretation of ideas and contemporary developments within this critical sphere of philosophical and theological reflection. Recent areas of interest include pragmatism and democracy, the continued relevance of empiricism to the revival of pragmatism, multidisciplinary aspects of the tradition (intersections with other

fields of inquiry), overlaps with cultural criticism and analyses of gender and race, and the application of pragmatic and empiricist analyses to contemporary problems.

## Chairs

- [Xavier Pickett, Cornell University](#)  
[Xavier.Pickett@cornell.edu](mailto:Xavier.Pickett@cornell.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Karen-Louise Rucks-Walker, Quinsigamond Community College](#)  
[walkerkl629@gmail.com](mailto:walkerkl629@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Psychology, Culture, and Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Psychology and Religion with or without God

In recent years the study of psychology, culture, and religion has taken on a more confessional tone, often encompassing a pastoral theological approach. In what ways does—or should—the psychological study of religion assume God? If so, whose God does it assume? What theoretical, material, or clinical difference does make? Alongside this framework exists a cultural landscape increasingly shaped by hierarchical classifications of religion, spirituality, and faith. Given these realities, how might the psychology of religion resist the growing force of Christian supremacy in U.S. cultural contexts?

### Trans Day of Remembrance and Beyond (Potential Co-Sponsor with Queer Studies Unit)

This year's conference follows the Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on November 20, 2024, a day dedicated to honoring the lives of transgender individuals lost to violence. For a potential co-sponsored session with the Queer Studies unit, we invite proposals that build on the TDOR theme, exploring the intersection of psychology, trans and queer studies, and religion for trans and gender nonconforming persons. Possible topics include but are not limited to exploring queer and trans critiques of normative development in the context of psychology and religion; exploring psychological, theoretical, and spiritual insights related to the Trans Day of Remembrance and its impact on communities; interrogating and reimagining normative models of psychospiritual development for trans and gender nonconforming persons and communities; and exploring resources at the intersections of trans lives, queer and trans studies in religion,

and psychology and religion for flourishing in the midst of violence. Proposals may draw on a variety of disciplines and methodologies to deepen our understanding of the psychological dimensions of the TDOR and trans experiences more broadly.

[The Mainstreaming and Marginalization of Healing Modalities: Appropriation and Cultural Violence in the Realm of Healing \(Potential co-sponsorship with Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit\)](#)

Healing modalities that are embedded in indigenous religious traditions, and that have historically been designated as "primitive" or otherwise inferior, have been repackaged for mainstream consumption when their efficacy (and profitability) is clear. Practices like using hallucinogens or THC are now accepted as effective tools in physical and/or psychological healing. But they are generally only seen as legitimate if they are produced by pharmaceutical companies and their use is "supervised by a physician" or a regulatory body. The communities who have known about and used these practices, often for religious purposes, not only get no profit, they move further into the underclass because their practices are "illegal." At the same time, the use of these practices in medical contexts has brought important relief and healing. We welcome proposals that address the issues and conflicts surrounding secularizing and mainstreaming culturally-embedded and religious healing practices.

#### Human Religious Subjectivity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The rapid advancement of AI technologies in education, commerce, science, and beyond has already impacted daily life in ways that are not fully assessable. Efforts to regulate AI reflect its potential for both positive and exploitive contributions. What does the increasing presence of AI mean for the understanding of human subjectivity, agency, and self-esteem in relation to religious or spiritual beliefs and practices? How might AI shape, question, or reinforce cultural norms around race, gender, class, religious identity, or other psychological and spiritual realities? AI raises issues of what it means to be an agentic, knowing subject, or a religious subject in relation to a technological other. Proposals may address these questions or related ones from religious and psychological perspectives.

Submissions on other topics that address the intersection of psychology, culture, and religion are welcome.

#### Statement of Purpose

The PCR unit is comprised of scholars and practitioners in the fields of psychology, religious studies, and cultural analysis. The interests of our members range from Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis to the practice of pastoral counseling, from object relations theory to cultural studies of trauma and healing. Our primary purposes are to foster creative research, encourage the exchange of ideas among the membership, and provide a forum within the AAR for people with shared backgrounds in the interdisciplinary study of psychology, religion, and culture.

Here are ways to connect with the PCR unit \* Please find info on the Annual PCR Call for Papers here: <https://aarweb.org/content/psychology-culture-and-religion-unit> \* Join the PCR listserv by writing to: [psychculturereigion@aarlists.org](mailto:psychculturereigion@aarlists.org) \* You can also join the PCR Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/558617967619873/>

## Chairs

- [Lisa M. Cataldo, Fordham University](#)  
[lisacataldo7@gmail.com](mailto:lisacataldo7@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Eunil David Cho, Boston University](#)  
[eunilcho@bu.edu](mailto:eunilcho@bu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Quaker Studies Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Quaker Studies is accepting proposals on the following topics:

LGBTIA Quakers; Abolitionist movements, Quakers and their allies; Settlement, colonization, boarding schools, and Quakers; Quakers and the voiceless; and Bayard Rustin in history and memory.

[For a panel that would be co-sponsored by the Religion and Human Rights Unit, the Religion and Politics Unit, and the Quaker Studies Unit, we especially invite papers that consider:](#)

- the religious logics of nonviolent protest in the U.S. and beyond
- relationships between nonviolence and colonialism/dispossession: explorations of the ways in which nonviolent resistance might place actors at an advantage or a disadvantage in relation to regimes that have already dispossessed them of resources and/or rights
- the question of what counts as “violence,” and who decides when this label is used.

[For a panel that would be co-sponsored with the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit](#), we also especially invite papers that consider how particular communities (especially, but by no means exclusively, the historical "peace churches" of Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren) enact their philosophies of nonviolence and principles of peacemaking in situations of violent conflict. In particular, we hope to direct attention to how the varieties of commitments to peace create ecclesiologies that equip individuals and communities for civil resistance, intercommunal solidarity, or martyrdom.

## Statement of Purpose

The Quaker Studies Unit seeks to advance critical scholarship on Quakerism and related cultural phenomena. The unit is particularly focused on interdisciplinary analyses of Quakerism in its global contexts and in the breadth of its theological diversity. As the unit understands it, Quaker Studies includes the variety of religious traditions that directly derive from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), as well as the spiritual and social movements and practices that have influenced--or been influenced by--Quakerism.

## Chairs

- [Andrew Taylor, College of St. Scholastica](#)  
[ataylor9@css.edu](mailto:ataylor9@css.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [David Harrington Watt, Haverford College](#)  
[dhwatt@haverford.edu](mailto:dhwatt@haverford.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## [Queer Studies in Religion Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

In addition to an open-call for papers and sessions that engage broadly with themes related to queer and trans studies in religion, as well as papers that address the 2024 presidential theme of "violence, non-violence, and the margin" in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion, we particularly invite paper and session proposals on the following themes and topics:

- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the African Diaspora Religions unit](#), we invite proposals on the power of our archive. The year 2024 marks the close of the United Nation's decades-long proclamation to celebrate people of African descent as representatives of a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and

protected. 2024 also heralds the 150th anniversary of Afro–Puerto Rican, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, whose collection of Black literature, enslaved peoples’ narratives, artwork, queer artifacts, and diasporic materials has become foremost in the study of Black life. Finally, Lydia Cabrera’s iconic work, *El Monte: Notes on the Religions, Magic, and Folklore of the Black and Creole People of Cuba* will turn 70, in 2024; and the first English translation is now available. Throughout African Diaspora history there have been archives that invite deeper exploration. Sometimes hidden in plain sight, including Obeah oaths in the narrative of Tacky’s Rebellion and Jamaica’s Baptist War; juridical, birth, and death records compared against oral histories, historical art and illustration of colonial encounters; stories and evidence of gender and sexual nonconformity subjected to the violences of colonization and shame; and the Colored Conventions Project, or the Early Caribbean Digital Archives. This panel seeks to explore the idea, presence, and importance of archives among us when all too often the archives were oral and aural, normatively shaped, or erased.

- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the Religion and Memory unit](#), we invite papers and proposals on the intersections of queerness, memory, and religion. How do queer and trans religious individuals or communities make memories? How have traditional religious pasts been queered in memory and memorials? What resources do queer and trans studies in religion offer to the study of religion and memory? We are interested in explorations of these intersections across religious traditions, geographic contexts, and time (both contemporary and/or historical).
- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the Comparative Religions unit](#), we invite papers and proposals on the theme of violence against LGBTQ people and communities. In the contemporary context or historically, how have religious traditions and communities legitimated and/or resisted violence against LGBTQ people? How might queer and trans theories and/or theologies contribute to comparative religious ethical analyses of, and solutions to, these issues? We especially welcome proposals that address the raced, socioeconomic, and femme-based dynamics of some of this violence.
- [For a potential co-sponsored session with the Religion and Sexuality unit, and, from the Society of Biblical Literature, Latina/o/e and Latin American Biblical Interpretation](#); Contextual Hermeneutics; Reading, Theory, and the Bible; and Utopian Studies, we invite papers that consider the impact and influence of the work of the late queer performance theorist José Esteban Muñoz on the study of religion and sexuality, especially since 2024 is the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Disidentifications*. Even so, we welcome attention to any facet of Muñoz’s work. We invite papers which engage with a variety of diverse creative genres, religions, and conceptualizations of ‘performance,’ ‘utopia,’ or ‘sense(s) of brown.’
- “There is another step...we have to take another step.” – Nikki Giovanni. For a potential co-sponsored session with the African Diaspora Religions Unit, we invite papers and proposals on the topic of sustaining environmental change. In this applied performative session, we will address and engage catastrophe as a

- conversation with California's shifting ecologies and Diaspora culture and knowledge. A catastrophe signals an event producing a sudden and violent change, producing a subversion of the order or system of things. Since the extraction from our homelands sent Africans to new environs, some chose ontological resistance and quickly "flew home", lest we forget the souls who left Ibo Landing. Leaning into submission was not an option. Making sense of catastrophic situations invites critical engagement (= paradigmatic change), and radical solutions that acknowledge the situation's gravity without succumbing to victimology by harnessing agency as a mode of survival. Given the threats and vagaries of the present, what futures can we imagine? How might a feminist, queer, trans, and/or decolonial lens illuminate the potentiality to be found, created, or transmuted in the face of change? We invite practitioners, artists, and activists to bear witness and help us imagine ways and means of surmounting catastrophe as African descendant peoples.
- [For a co-sponsored session with the Reformed Theology and History unit](#), we invite papers constructively, historically, and/or critically engaging Hanna Reichel's After Method: Queer Grace, Conceptual Design, and the Possibility of Theology for an author-meets-critics panel.
  - [This year's conference follows the Trans Day of Remembrance \(TDOR\) on November 20, 2024, a day dedicated to honoring the lives of transgender individuals lost to violence. For a potential co-sponsored session with the Psychology, Culture, and Religion unit](#), we invite proposals that build on the Trans Day of Remembrance theme, exploring the intersection of psychology, trans and queer studies, and religion for trans and gender nonconforming persons. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: exploring queer and trans critiques of normative development in the context of psychology and religion; exploring psychological, theoretical, and spiritual insights related to the TDOR and its impact on communities; interrogating and reimagining normative models of psychospiritual development for trans and gender nonconforming persons and communities; and exploring resources at the intersections of trans lives, queer and trans studies in religion, and psychology and religion for flourishing in the midst of violence. Proposals may draw on a variety of disciplines and methodologies to deepen our understanding of the psychological dimensions of the TDOR and trans experiences more broadly.
  - We invite proposals for papers or panels exploring contemporary issues–e.g., polyamory, the Sanctuary movement, reproductive justice, pop culture, Christian nationalism – in conversation with queer and trans studies in religion.
  - We invite proposals for papers or panels exploring San Diego's history and present as a site of LGBTQI+ oppression and liberation. In the Journal of San Diego History in 2019, renowned LGBTQI+ historian Lilian Faderman charted the ways in which LGBTQ San Diegans have long been victims of widespread discrimination, but also have been a pivotal force for LGBTQI+ rights, with San Diego being one of the first cities outside NYC to form a Gay Liberation Front group. We invite proposals that explore the role of religion in the city's history and/or present LGBTQI+ rights



movements or that consider that history and/or present from a queer and trans studies in religion lens.

## Statement of Purpose

The core goals of this Unit are as follows: • Foster the application of queer theory and gender theory to the study of religion • Encourage comparative study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in religion • Support the growth of bisexual studies and transgender studies in the field We actively seek to explore the connections between queer theory in religion and complementary or overlapping fields of inquiry, such as postcolonial theory, critical race theory, disability theory, feminist theory, and cultural studies, among others.

## Chairs

- [Elyse Ambrose, University of California, Riverside](mailto:eambrose@drew.edu)  
[eambrose@drew.edu](mailto:eambrose@drew.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Brandy Daniels, University of Portland](mailto:brandydaniels@gmail.com)  
[brandydaniels@gmail.com](mailto:brandydaniels@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Qur'an Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Qur'an Unit welcomes papers on all aspects of the Qur'an, including its text; Late Antique and historical context; literary, aesthetic, and material forms; oral and written transmission; liturgical use, role in the lives of Muslims; tradition of commentary and exegesis; and its influence in the world more broadly. We welcome proposals that represent the full range of how the Qur'an can be approached in terms of academic methods, as well as the full range of ways in which the Qur'an is interpreted and interacted with in Islamic tradition.

For the 2024 annual meeting, we are especially interested in proposals highlighting new or developing areas of research in relation to the Qur'an or that relate to the annual theme of "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin." Additionally, we welcome proposals on ideas of the Qur'an and homeland, the Qur'an as a portable homeland, hospitality or charity, as well as proposals on the Qur'an in the classroom, and/or workshops or roundtable discussions.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to provide a forum for comprehensive scholarly discussion of the Qur'an, its commentaries, and its role in Muslim and world societies through a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. We particularly welcome student-scholars, scholars from all areas of the academy, and scholars of diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to help us achieve our goals of promoting an understanding of the Qur'an.

## Chairs

- [Lauren Osborne, Whitman College](#)  
[osbornle@whitman.edu](mailto:osbornle@whitman.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Samuel Ross, Texas Christian University](#)  
[s.ross@tcu.edu](mailto:s.ross@tcu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Reformed Theology and History Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Reformed Theology and History Unit seeks paper proposals on the following topics:

#### Eschatology

The Reformed Theology and History Unit invites papers on the theme of eschatology. Contributions on one or several of the traditional four last things (death, judgment, heaven, and hell) are welcome, as are papers on the collective hope of the kingdom of God, on the eschatological nature of theology as exemplified in Karl Barth and others, and on the history of various Reformed eschatologies. Preferably, papers should be attentive to the possible misuses of eschatological imaginations in Reformed theology and/or offer a fresh approach to eschatological themes.

#### Reformed Theologians and Pastors in the Public Square

The Reformed theology unit invites paper proposals on Reformed theologians and pastors in the public square especially in light of the passing of the popular Presbyterian minister Timothy J. Keller (1950–2023), whose work inspired the exploration of the interfacing between Reformed 'orthodoxy' and 'modernity' in evangelism and public theology. Proposals that explore the diversity of Reformed theological engagement with public and populist issues in specific local

contexts, critical investigations of historical examples of the use (or misuse) of particular Reformed doctrines for the sake of public engagement, or arguments that reflect on the promise or limits of the relationship between Reformed theology and the public imagination, evangelicalism, secularism, and pluralism are welcome.

### [Hanna Reichel's After Method](#)

[For a co-sponsored session with the Queer Studies in Religion unit](#), we invite papers constructively, historically, and/or critically engaging Hanna Reichel's After Method: Queer Grace, Conceptual Design, and the Possibility of Theology, for an author-meets-critics panel.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit seeks to open up the traditions of Reformed Christianity for critical review and study, attending to their theological and historical patterns of belief, practice, and polity. Our aim is to present panels and paper sessions that balance theological and historical approaches, and that attend from diverse perspectives to single figures and larger cultural movements, with a particular interest in exploring emerging or forgotten elements of Reformed thought and practice. In all of these topics, we hope to demonstrate the vitality, originality, and diversity of Reformed Christianity in its worldwide expression.

### **Chairs**

- [Arnold Huijgen, Protestant Theological University](#)  
[a.huijgen@pthu.nl](mailto:a.huijgen@pthu.nl)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Christina Larsen, Grand Canyon University](#)  
[larsen.cn@gmail.com](mailto:larsen.cn@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## [Religion and Cities Unit](#)

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Religion and Cities Unit welcomes single paper, roundtable, or panel proposals that analyze the interactive relationship between religion and urban environments. For the 2024 AAR conference intends to organize an off-site studio tour to consider architecture and urbanism at the borders.

Inspired by the 2024 Presidential Theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin” we are particularly interested in the following topics:

#### Architecture and Infrastructure

We seek papers and panel proposals that engage critically with spatial constructions of religion, in the hope of advancing scholarly and public understandings of how religious identities, communities, and politics inform the production and use of everyday spaces. Submissions may explore these dynamics within or outside congregational and institutional contexts, and we take special interest in papers that engage with recent scholarship interrogating built space within the study of religion and secularism, including work on architecture, transportation and media infrastructures, public space, urban planning projects. We are particularly interested in papers reflecting research and theoretical interventions based in Europe and the Global South, where classical models for constructing and studying urban life have been developed and contested in former colonial metropolises and in postcolonial “global cities.” Topics of interest may include (but are not limited to): migration and movement in and at the margins of European cities; struggles for housing and the politics of informal labor in South Asian and African cities, emergent lifeways and economic networks, religiously inspired critiques of urban regimes in African and South Asian cities.

#### Scholar–Practitioner Collaborations

We seek papers and panel proposals that consider the theoretical and practical considerations around collaborations between scholars of local religion and practitioners. By “practitioners,” we mean participants in practices and activities associated with local religion, broadly construed, especially leaders within religious communities, non–profits, local government officials, and activist organizations whose work is both informed by scholarship and the subject of study by scholars. Possible questions to explore might include (but are not limited to): How do academic understandings of “rigor” structure dialogue between scholars and practitioners? How do scholar–practitioners negotiate their multiple roles? What ethical questions arise in interactions between scholars and practitioners? Proposals may examine specific instances or case studies of scholar–practitioner collaboration or dialogue along with analysis of theoretical questions or insights that arise through these examples.

[Violence and Nonviolence at the Southern Border](#)  
[Potential Religion and Cities and Religion and Social Sciences Co Sponsored Panel](#)

Connecting to the 2024 conference theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin” and our location in San Diego, we invite papers using social scientific methods/theory to explore religious expressions of and responses to violence and nonviolence in the U.S./Mexico urban borderlands. Papers might explore how religion contests or underwrites physical and symbolic violence at the border, the relationship of religion to the border’s construction of urban social geographies, or the role of religious institutions and faith communities in border cities, to name just a few possible examples.

### Religion and Violence in the City

Since the rise of the modern nation state politics of identity and ideology have exploited religion to spawn conflict that has disrupted populations within cities. Cities have often been the center of these conflicts that have affected urban neighborhoods and communities, dislocating people and disrupting and transforming urban spaces. We are calling for papers and panels that explore how conflict over land, labor, borders or resources have led to rivalries cloaked in religious language; the creation of political religion along the lines of nationalist concerns; the use or misuse of religion in the formation of ideologies and movements within urban contexts. We are also extending the call to include papers or panels that explore urban based religious responses.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

### Emergent Scholarly Practice in Local and Urban Religion (Online Session)

We seek papers that utilize innovative scholarly approaches to local and urban religion. Papers may employ cutting-edge methods that are in-person (eg. ethnography, oral history, archival research); digital (archiving, mapping, and spatial analysis); or publicly-engaged (eg. public humanities, theology, etc). Papers may focus on the city capaciously by interpreting built and social contexts as city space beyond conventional usage, including the local, urban, or public. We encourage approaches that disrupt, problematize, or reimagine the distinctions between research, pedagogy, and activism. For example, papers might explore collaborative knowledge production, community-based research practices, and scholar-practitioner conversations, responsibilities, and ethics.

## Statement of Purpose

This unit engages in critical analysis of ecological relationships between religion and cities. We are interested in exploring the cooperative and conflicting relationships between cities across the globe and their religious communities in the struggle for social justice, especially in

response to racial capitalism and settler colonialism. Our work is interdisciplinary and includes scholars from Religious Studies, History, Anthropology, Social Ethics & Urban Sociology, Architecture & Urban Planning, and Gender Studies.

## **Chairs**

- [Edward Dunar, Albertus Magnus College](#)  
[Edunar@albertus.edu](mailto:Edunar@albertus.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Fatimah Fanusie, Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies](#)  
[fanusie@icjs.org](mailto:fanusie@icjs.org)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Religion and Disability Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Religion and Disability Studies Unit invites proposals that critically examine the relationship between disability and religious thought, practice, or history. We welcome papers on all topics, yet with particular interest in non-Christian perspectives and underrepresented cultural locations. We especially seek proposals on the following:

- The 2024 presidential theme of non/violence and marginality. Suggested topics include the disability rights movement in the 21st Century, the portrayal of nonviolent resistance in the documentary Crip Camp, how violence against the environment adversely impacts person with disabilities, archival violence in religious and institutional settings, and practices of peacemaking among and by the disabled.
- Experiences of persons with disabilities with incarceration and policing.
- The 40th anniversary of the Claggett Statement – a statement built on liberation theology that addresses the realities and desires of Deaf Christians.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Christian Spirituality Unit:](#) Critical analysis of how the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities and/or their communities express prayer in distinctive, constructive, or liberative ways.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit:](#) We invite presentations on disability experiences and Orthodox Christianity. We are especially interested in examinations of how the religious backgrounds, commitments, or influences of persons with disabilities have been impacted by religious commitments, religious institutions, and local parish life. We also welcome proposals that critically examine the relationship between disability and Orthodox theology, thought, practice, and/or history. Papers are particularly welcomed that confront healing narratives, suffering discourse, and religious stigmas around disabilities with an emphasis on the intersection of disability (as an identity and minority) with gender, culture, and Orthodoxy.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Economy Unit:](#) We seek proposals that identify and describe ableist economies and forms of resistance against them. How do religious institutions, practices, and language get used both to support and to undermine such economies? We are especially interested in proposals that take up the notion of attention economies and the ways in which ableist norms define how to "pay" attention, who has a "deficit" of attention, etc.

[A co-sponsorship with the Christian Systematic Theology Unit:](#) A book panel on *The Disabled God Revisited: Trinity, Christology, and Liberation* (T&T Clark, 2023) by Lisa D. Powell. This session is closed, and we won't be accepting proposals for it.

[A co-sponsorship with the Liberation Theologies Unit:](#) A book panel on *Disability Ethics and Preferential Justice: A Catholic Perspective* (Georgetown University Press, 2023) by Mary Jo Iozzio. Panelists will critically engage the book's merits as a primer on disability ethics and an example of mature Catholic reflection on disability and liberation, as well as its potential impact on other theologies of disability and liberation. This session is pre-arranged and closed, and we won't be accepting proposals for it.

[A co-sponsorship with the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee:](#) A roundtable discussion of the absence of brown bodies in conversations about disability and the all-too-common treatment of BIPOC perspectives as an afterthought. This session is closed, and we won't be accepting proposals for it.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

A book panel on *From Inclusion to Justice: Disability, Ministry, and Congregational Leadership* by Erin Raffety (Baylor University Press, 2022). This session is closed, and we won't be accepting proposals for it.

## Statement of Purpose

The Religion and Disability Studies Unit is committed to maintaining the visibility, viability, and value of the experience and politics of disability as they relate to the study and practice of religion. We promote engagement between disability studies theory and the study of religion, examine the role of disability in lived religious experience and theology, and consider the historical and contemporary role of disability in diverse religious traditions, texts, and cultures. As intersectionality becomes an increasingly critical hermeneutic in the academy, we encourage robust dialogue and collaboration with other program units involved with disciplined reflection on religion.

## Chairs

- [Sarah Jean Barton, Duke University](#)  
[sarah.j.barton@duke.edu](mailto:sarah.j.barton@duke.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [David Scott, Independent Scholar](#)  
[dscott@iliff.edu](mailto:dscott@iliff.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Religion and Ecology Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion and Ecology Unit seeks individual paper and complete panel proposals relating to a wide range of themes in religion and ecology, especially proposals that resonate with the 2024 thematic emphasis on “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” Proposals that address environmental justice, (nonviolent and violent) environmental activism, ecofascism, visible and invisible violence, and structural and systemic violence as it relates to climate change, environmental degradation, and mass species extinction. Why is violence against the natural world embedded within the sacrificial structure of capitalism’s socio-economic system? What is the role of nonviolent activism in a system that profits off of, and is bolstered by violence to, the natural world? How does one undermine this violating system? What role does religion play, and what responsibility do scholars of religion have, in deconstructing this system? What is the role of violence and non-violence in dark green resistance? Looking at the work of environmental activist organizations (e.g. Earth First and Extinction Rebellion), what is the



difference between eco-sabotage and eco-terrorism? At what point is eco-violence self defense? What is the boundary between violence and non-violence in this context? What are some religious arguments addressing this?

We are also interested in looking at the ecological impact of war and violence. What is the environmental impact of the violence in Israel, and other conflict zones, or historical conflict zones? Other areas of interest include: the concept of slow violence, which looks at environmental pollution as a different type of violence on a different timescale. We are interested in nonviolent ways to disrupt the violence of modes of production, including slow food and slow thought. We are also interested in the violence inherent in climate change: fire as it relates to the recent volcanic eruptions in Iceland, people being burnt on pavement from global warming, burning oneself as a form of climate protest.

We welcome proposals that critically examine our understanding of ecology at the margins, including religious frameworks that consider nonhuman and animal sentience and sapience, and how the marginalization of these perspectives and frameworks is harmful to maintaining sacred ecological balance.

We also acknowledge the interdisciplinary nature of and multifaceted approaches to research on the connections between religion and ecology. We especially welcome new contributions to religion and ecology intended to develop and push the field in methodology, topics, themes, texts, authors, objectives, and/or audience.

The Religion and Ecology Unit is also pursuing possible co-sponsored sessions with the following Units:

#### [The Native Traditions Unit in the Americas:](#)

Examination of work within Native communities to combat the violence against the land, waters, and plant and animal beings, and violent responses to non-violent land and water protection, with consideration to how Native religious traditions can or have influenced global and dominant discourses related to nature and the environment.

### Religion and Food Unit:

With potential to respond to the overall meeting call, we welcome papers, which consider in/justice and non/violence in human-made food systems linked to particular ecological territory. Examples might address extractivist economies and extractivist logic in various spaces for food, people, and land, relevant to resource conflict and food security in climate weirding, indigenous people and traditional ecological knowledge, variations in animal agriculture, and unjust working conditions among food producers: farmers, migrant workers, etc. We encourage papers offering critical-constructive work to both understand concerns and address them, intellectually and practically, through, for example, enabling religious/ethical efforts to reframe, redirect, restore, replenish, renew, strengthen, or rebuild communities and the living world at the intersection of food, environment, and religion.

### Class and Religion Unit:

We are seeking papers addressing the following themes: Solidarity between labor (productive and reproductive) and the environment, the inclusion of nature as subaltern class, the exploitation of the labor of our nonhuman kin, ecology as a site of solidarity. If in fact, most of us are the 99%, how might we begin to develop a sense of kinship with the natural world rather than seeking inclusion in the value system of the 1%?

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit critically and constructively explores how human-Earth relations are shaped by religions, cultures, and understandings of nature and the environment. We are self-consciously inter- and multi-disciplinary and include methods from a variety of social sciences such as those found in the work of theologians, philosophers, religionists, ethicists, scientists, activist-scholars, sociologists, and anthropologists, among others. We also strive to be a radically inclusive unit and welcome papers that challenge the dominant Eurocentric environmental discourse while envisioning new conceptual frontiers.

## **Chairs**

- [Kimberly Carfore, University of San Francisco](#)  
[kimberly.carfore@gmail.com](mailto:kimberly.carfore@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Joseph Wiebe, University of Alberta, Augustana](#)  
[jwiebe@ualberta.ca](mailto:jwiebe@ualberta.ca)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Religion and Economy Unit

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

This Unit welcomes individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals related to the group's mission. We strongly encourage the submission of pre-arranged paper and roundtable sessions, including and especially sessions with innovative formats and modes of presentation that substantively engage audience members. Proposals for individual papers are most likely to be accepted if proposed in relation to one of the themes listed below, due to the higher probability that they might complement other individual submissions.

Successful proposals not only will reflect theoretical and methodological rigor and clarity but also will engage existing scholarship around the study of religion and economy. A successful pre-arranged session also must incorporate gender and racial/ethnic diversity. Diversity of academic rank, theoretical method, and field also are highly encouraged and more likely to be successful.

Potential themes include but are not limited to the themes listed below, which we present in two categories: ideas proposed by participants in the unit and members of the steering committee, as well as ideas generated in dialogue with other program units. We welcome proposals on these themes, but we also invite proposals on any other themes that contribute to the Unit's work or push it in new directions.

Themes Suggested by Religion and Economy Unit Members/Steering Committee:

- institutional formations and organizational foreclosure in the study of religion and economy
- AI, big data, privacy, and theologies of omniscience
- caste as an analytic for the study of religion
- re-crafting and resisting the self as product amid and against colonial economies and racial capital
- branding and advertising in South Asian religious formations
- mutual aid and alternative ways to organize, share, and remake socio-economic life and religious engagement (ancient and modern)

For Possible Co-Sponsorship:

- [The Religion and Economy Unit and Religion and Memory Unit](#) invite paper or panel proposals on the “costs of memory.” Inspired by the metaphor for things that are painful and costly for victims to remember and articulate, we invite proposals studying religion and the capital costs of remembering and the ways that the economies of religion and memory are tied to power. We invite proposals focusing on examples in any time period or geographic location.
- [The Religion and Economy Unit and Religion and Disability Studies Unit](#) seek proposals that identify and describe ableist economies and forms of resistance against them. How do religious institutions, practices, and language get used both to support and to undermine such economies? We are especially interested in proposals that take up the notion of attention economies and the ways in which ableist norms define how to “pay” attention, who has a “deficit” of attention, etc.
- [The Religion and Economy Unit and Study of Judaism Unit seek proposals that engage religious studies and Jewish economic history in conversation.](#)

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the pilot June session, this Unit welcomes individual papers or pre-arranged paper and roundtable sessions that connect the group's mission to Jin Y. Park's 2024 Presidential Theme (violence, non-violence, and the margin). While we especially invite proposals on this organizing theme, we also welcome proposals on any other themes that contribute to the Unit's larger mission and/or push it in new directions.

We strongly encourage the submission of pre-arranged paper and roundtable sessions, including those that can best take advantage of this session's online format. Successful proposals will not only reflect theoretical and methodological rigor and clarity but will also engage existing scholarship around the study of religion and economy. A successful pre-arranged session also must incorporate gender and racial/ethnic diversity. Diversity of academic rank, theoretical method, and field also are highly encouraged and more likely to be successful.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit sponsors multidisciplinary conversations that explore intersections between religious and economic modes of social life. Religion and Economy cultivates scholarship that asks how economic systems and orientations have developed through fields of thought, practice, and resistance that come into view through attention to the “religious.” Encouraging inquiry that cuts across religious traditions, geographic locations, methods, and historical time periods, this Unit's collaborative explorations not only address and explore capitalist and non-capitalist

economic systems but also consider how broader systems of "exchange" produce social relations among varied actors—from humans to spirits to material objects. By interrogating the concepts of religion and economy, this Unit also encourages scholars to consider the stakes of other concepts with ongoing currency in the study of religion, including secularism, spirituality, affect, desire, ritual, agency, value, and subject formation.

## **Chairs**

- [Rebecca Bartel, San Diego State University](#)  
[rbartel@sdsu.edu](mailto:rbartel@sdsu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Kati Curts, Sewanee: The University of the South](#)  
[kacurts@sewanee.edu](mailto:kacurts@sewanee.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Religion and Food Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

This Group provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We seek papers investigating practices and beliefs related to food, drink, fasting, the production of food, the ethics of production and consumption, or on any aspect of religiously influenced foodways.

As always, we welcome general proposals on the topic of religion and food.

Mindful of the Annual Meeting theme on violence, non-violence, and the margin, we invite papers that consider religion and food within that context, for example sacrifice, harm, healing, and the prevention of harm. Papers addressing our location in California, and more broadly the Pacific and the borderlands, are also topically welcome.

We welcome papers on the topic of transformations in food practices, such as food substitutions or replacements.

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit](#), we welcome papers on the sexual and religious politics of meat, food porn, food as resilience and nourishment in the face of violence and marginalization, and food in relation to embodied humans and an embodied ecological Earth.

[For a possible co-sponsored session with the Religion and Ecology Unit](#): to respond to the overall meeting call, we welcome papers that consider in/justice and non/violence in human-made food systems linked to particular ecological territory. Examples might address extractivist economies and extractivist logic in various spaces for food, people, and land, relevant to resource conflict and food security in climate weirding, indigenous people and traditional ecological knowledge, variations in animal agriculture, and unjust working conditions among food producers: farmers, migrant workers, etc. We encourage papers offering critical-constructive work to both understand concerns and address them, intellectually and practically, through, for example, enabling religious/ethical efforts to reframe, redirect, restore, replenish, renew, strengthen, or rebuild communities and the living world at the intersection of food, environment, and religion.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Religion and Food unit is participating in the online summer annual meeting pilot program. Participants wishing to participate in a session at the online annual meeting in June should apply using the instructions provided by the AAR. We welcome papers on any topic related to our statement of purpose.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in the intersection of religion and food, foodways, and food ethics. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We encourage critical reflection regarding:

- The relationships of religious commitments to food (production, preparation, consumption, and invention)
- Diet and sustainability
- Issues of food (in)justice, which may include food availability or insecurity, commitment to wellness, access to healthy foods, food deserts, etc.
- Environmental/ecological issues, e.g. desertification, flood, fire, and climate related food ethics issues
- Theological, spiritual, and religious interrelationships as expressed in food commitments or confluences
- The cross-cultural applicability of the categories of “religion” and “food” themselves

We seek to develop ongoing investigations into practices and beliefs related to food, drink, fasting, the production of food, the ethics of production and consumption, or on any aspect of religiously influenced foodways.

## **Chairs**

- [Aldea Mulhern, California State University, Fresno](#)  
[aldea@csufresno.edu](mailto:aldea@csufresno.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Benjamin Zeller, Lake Forest College](#)  
[zeller@lakeforest.edu](mailto:zeller@lakeforest.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Religion and Human Rights Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We seek papers that explore the topics of religion and human rights from a breadth of scholarly perspectives. We seek analyses of the way in which particular religious actors and traditions articulate the compatibility or incompatibility of religion and human rights; how human rights serve to complicate or enhance our understanding of categories such as “religion” and “secularity”; and how the intersection of religion and human rights implicates issues of race, gender, law, politics, ecology etc.

Proposals on any topic related to religion and human rights are welcome. In keeping with this year’s presidential theme of Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, we are particularly interested in proposals on the following topics:

[For a possible co-sponsorship with the Quaker Studies Program Unit and the Religion and Politics Program Unit, we invite papers that consider:](#)

- The religious logics of nonviolent protest in the U.S. and beyond;
- Relationships between nonviolence and colonialism/dispossession: explorations of the ways in which nonviolent resistance might place actors at an advantage or a disadvantage in relation to regimes that have already dispossessed them of resources and/or rights;
- Dynamics of enforcement of nonviolent protest: explorations of topics like the use of the labels such as “violence” and “terrorism” to restrict nonviolent protest;

- The question of what counts as “violence,” and who decides when this label is used.

For a possible co-sponsorship with the Religion and Migration Program Unit, we invite proposals focused on the intersection of religion, migration, and violence/nonviolence. Topics may include:

- Borders as sites of violence against marginalized communities, and/or sites of nonviolent resistance;
- Violence and marginalization in cases of forced migration, including “survival migration”;
- Climate change and environmental destruction as a type of violence that forces people to move;
- Consideration of human rights of migrants and refugees, including human rights protection of communities who are marginalized and on the move, and whether the contemporary human rights regime remains meaningful in light of contemporary realities of migration

We invite proposals that explore redefinitions of communities, borders, religion, and rights, including examinations of how human rights are bound up with colonial borders, and/or how borders and boundaries set by colonial practices rely on violent enforcement toward marginalized communities.

Human rights and the use of force: we seek proposals addressing the intersection of human rights ideas and institutions, violence, and the use of force, whether by states or non-state actors. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Can the use of force be justified by human rights claims, especially claims of marginalized communities?
- What are the limits on the use of force under human rights norms, and can these limits ever truly be observed in practice?
- How do religious perspectives inform local, national, and global ideas and policy about the use of force?
- What can institutions like the United Nations, NGOs, and academic bodies do to protect human rights, especially rights of marginalized communities, in the face of civil war and violent repression worldwide? How do these institutions also reify violence and violate rights?
- Do the principles and concepts that are generally referred to under the umbrella of the just war tradition serve to limit violence and protect human rights? How do religious thinkers and communities engage with the idea of just war, and what does this idea mean in contemporary contexts?



We also invite proposals across a spectrum of human rights topics, including proposals that consider practical, political, religious, theological, and philosophical approaches to human rights ideas and practices. In keeping with the presidential theme, we especially welcome proposals on approaches to human rights from within marginalized social and religious traditions/communities.

In recognition of the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we also invite proposals that consider the question of whether the idea of human rights still “work,” the status of grassroots human rights activism, and the question of whether human rights regimes can themselves be violent.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Same as above.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The Religion and Human Rights Unit seeks to enhance both scholarly and public conversation around the intersection of religion and human rights ideas and practices. We solicit papers in any area of religion and human rights studies. Topics we engage include: how particular religious actors and traditions articulate the compatibility or incompatibility of religion and human rights; how human rights serve to complicate or enhance our understanding of categories such as “religion” and “secularity”; how religious and human rights approaches address particular cases and social issues; how grassroots and social movement organizations approach ideas and practice of human rights; and how the intersection of religion and human rights implicates issues of race, gender, law, politics, etc. We recognize that both human rights and religious ideologies can inspire thought and action that benefits the vulnerable and promotes the common good; at the same time, both can serve the interests of power, oppression, and colonialist hegemony. Thus it is vitally important to evaluate and critique both. Participants in the unit approach these topics, and others, from diverse areas of study, methodologies, and perspectives. The unit also prioritizes the public understanding of religion in conversation with human rights ideas. Human rights is a much-discussed topic in the media and political circles, yet much public dialogue assumes that religion and human rights are either straightforwardly congruent with each other, or straightforwardly opposed to each other. The unit welcomes papers that critique, nuance, and enhance public understanding of the intersection of religion and human rights.

## **Chairs**

- [Laura Alexander, University of Nebraska, Omaha](#)

[lealex@unomaha.edu](mailto:lealex@unomaha.edu)

1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

- [Jenna Reinbold, Colgate University](mailto:jreinbold@colgate.edu)

[jreinbold@colgate.edu](mailto:jreinbold@colgate.edu)

1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Religion and Memory Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Religion, Memory, and Activism

The Religion and Memory Unit invites paper, panel, or roundtable proposals on the intersections of religion, memory, and activism. We are interested in explorations of these intersections across religious traditions, geographic contexts, and time (both contemporary and/or historical). How have memories of religious histories inspired activist work? How do memories of religious activism in the past propel religious actors in the present? How have activists sought to change collective religious memory? How have religious activists been remembered within and outside of their communities?

### **The Costs of Memory**

[The Religion and Memory Unit and Religion and Economy Unit](#) invite paper or panel proposals on the “costs of memory.” Inspired by the metaphor for things that are painful and costly for victims to remember and articulate, we invite proposals studying religion and the capital costs of remembering and the ways that the economies of religion and memory are tied to power. We invite proposals focusing on examples in any time period or geographic location.

We also welcome papers, panels, and roundtables on other issues of religion and memory in any time period and any geographic context.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

[Queerness, religion, and memory](#)

[The Religion and Memory Unit and Religion and Queer Studies in Religion](#) invite papers and proposals on the intersections of queerness, memory, and religion. How do queer and trans

religious individuals or communities make memories? What resources do queer and trans studies in religion offer to the study of religion and memory? How have traditional religious pasts been queered in memory and memorials? We are interested in explorations of these intersections across religious traditions, geographic contexts, and time (both contemporary and/or historical).

We also welcome papers, panels, and roundtables on other issues of religion and memory in any time period and any geographic context.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This unit considers memory's role in the making of religions and the ways in which religions make memories. It explores the construction and representation of narratives of the past as memory in relation to religious practices, ideologies, and experiences. We encourage critical reflection on religion in relation to ideas of memory, heritage, and public history. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, methodological practices, and historical eras.

## **Chairs**

- [Christopher Cantwell, Loyola University Chicago](#)  
[ccantwell1@luc.edu](mailto:ccantwell1@luc.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Rachel Gross, San Francisco State University](#)  
[rbgross@sfsu.edu](mailto:rbgross@sfsu.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Religion and Migration Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Religion and Migration Unit seeks individual paper proposals and panel proposals (presider, three presenters, and respondent). The Religion and Migration Unit is committed to diversity and inclusion.

Panel session proposals should incorporate gender diversity within the panel; diversity of race/ethnicity, and rank are also highly encouraged. The 2024 Religion and Migration Unit Call

for Papers for the Annual Meeting to be held in San Diego, CA welcomes proposals on the following themes:

[For Co-Sponsorship with Christian Spirituality Unit:](#)

Theme: "Contemporary Spiritual Practices and their Dis/connections to Social Justice and Collective Healing with respect to Refugees and Migration."

[For Co-Sponsorship with Women's Caucus—International Section:](#)

For a co-sponsored session by the Women's Caucus – International Section and the Religion and Migration Unit, we invite proposals focused on the intersection of religion, migration, and gender. The category of gender is central to any discussion of the causes, characteristics, and consequences of migration, violence, and non-violence. We welcome empirical as well as theoretical papers that explore the involvement of the category of gender into the dynamics of religion and migration, including topics such as:

Gender based violence including sexualized violence, forced migration in past and current wars; the role of religion in limiting or legitimizing gender-based violence against people on the move; the uses and abuses of the category of gender in political debate and public discourse about migration in international and US-American contexts; gender relations in migrant families, division of labor, or social networks; feminist, queer theory and epistemology in the study of religion, gender and migration; how gendered practices are maintained or challenged and deconstructed or reinstalled in migration contexts; "rethinking" of religion and migration to develop solutions to gendered issues that cause 'othering' violence.

[For Co-Sponsorship with the Religion and Human Rights Unit:](#)

We invite proposals focused on the intersection of religion, migration, and violence/nonviolence. Topics may include:

- Borders as sites of violence against marginalized communities, and/or sites of nonviolent resistance
- Violence and marginalization in cases of forced migration, including "survival migration"
- Climate change and environmental destruction as a type of violence that forces people to move

- Consideration of human rights of migrants and refugees as well as human rights protection of communities who are marginalized and on the move, including contemporary challenges to human rights regimes through the realities of migration

Finally, we offer an open call for any other topics dealing with religion and migration, especially proposals that address theoretical and methodological issues at the intersection of migration and religious studies. We are also interested in hosting a book panel, so please feel free to submit panel proposals for recently published books on Migration and Religion (author, panelists, and respondents).

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is a forum in which scholars working on religion and migration from multiple perspectives can interact across methodologies, religious traditions, and regions. We solicit papers addressing the religious practices, experiences, needs, and beliefs of migrating peoples who adapt to new environments and impact their societies of origin and destination. We understand religion and migration broadly, from the religious communities of rural migrants in regional cities to the new understandings of religion that second-generation children construct in order to make sense of their ethnic identities or ethical responses of receiving communities. If you are interested in furthering the discussion on religion and migration, please join the AAR Religion and Migration Group on Facebook.

## Chairs

- [Ulrich Schmiedel, University of Edinburgh](mailto:ulrich.schmiedel@ed.ac.uk)  
[ulrich.schmiedel@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ulrich.schmiedel@ed.ac.uk)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Nanette Spina, University of Georgia](mailto:spinan@uga.edu)  
[spinan@uga.edu](mailto:spinan@uga.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Religion and Politics Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion and Politics Section welcomes papers, full panel and roundtable proposals on any topic related to the intersections of religion and politics. We are particularly interested in papers related to the presidential theme “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.” We invite

proposals on current events such as the US election, the Israel– Hamas conflict, the Russia– Ukraine war, religion and labor unions in the United States and US/China relations.. We also welcome reflections on the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and the politics, prospects, and possibilities of nonviolence as a strategy for social change. Finally, we welcome reflections on contested and evolving definitions of American identity.

For a possible co–sponsorship with the Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit, we invite papers that consider the relationship between Hip Hop, Religion and Politics. As Hip Hop turns 50 (2023); crack cocaine turns 40 (c. 1984); and the 20 year old words of “Rap Snitch Knishes” remains true, the Religion and Politics Unit and the Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit invite paper, panel, or roundtable proposals that address the intersections of hip hop, religion, and politics through an interdisciplinary lens, with proposals that engage in the personal and the private, the sacred and the profane, issues of illegality and artistic expression, and the engagement in criminal enterprises as culturally, legally, politically, and religiously subversive.

[For a possible co–sponsorship with the Religion and Human Rights Unit and the Quaker Studies Program Unit we invite papers that consider:](#)

- The religious logics of nonviolent protest in the U.S. and beyond;
- Relationships between nonviolence and colonialism/dispossession: explorations of the ways in which nonviolent resistance might place actors at an advantage or a disadvantage in relation to regimes that have already dispossessed them of resources and/or rights;
- Dynamics of enforcement of nonviolent protest: explorations of topics such as the use of the labels such as “violence” and “terrorism” to restrict nonviolent protest;
- The question of what counts as “violence,” and who decides when this label is used.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a forum for scholars and professionals interested in the relationships among religion, the state, and political life, both in the United States and around the world. Our members focus on the interaction between religious and political values, movements, and commitments, and the role of religious individuals and communities in bodies politic. This focus includes attention to the ways in which religion and religious actors participate in public discourse, contribute to debates over public values and social policy, and affect — and are affected by — activity in the political sphere. We welcome members doing both normative and descriptive work from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including religious studies, political science, philosophy, social ethics, law (including church–state studies), history (as it relates to contemporary understandings), and theology. We seek to advance scholarly inquiry on religion and politics and we seek also to speak to broad and diverse publics about areas falling under

the Unit's purview. We also maintain a year-round Religion and Politics Google group, which is open to all AAR members here: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/aar-religionandpolitics>

## **Chairs**

- [Scott Culpepper, Dordt University](#)  
[scott.culpepper@dordt.edu](mailto:scott.culpepper@dordt.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Ann Duncan, Goucher College](#)  
[ann.duncan@goucher.edu](mailto:ann.duncan@goucher.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Religion and Popular Culture Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

[For a possible co-sponsored session with the Hinduism Unit:](#) Walk into an airport bookstore in South Asia or North America and you'll find the narrative worlds of Hinduism packaged between the covers of paperback after paperback. This panel asks: How are Hindu stories currently being told in popular literature? How are they being sold to mass-market readers? How do present-day patterns of "telling and selling" shift to accommodate different languages, genres, and imagined readers? We welcome papers that address the presentation of Hindu myths, narratives, figures, and ideas in contemporary popular literature produced in various regions, languages (including English), and genres (adult, YA series, children's books, comics, etc.).

[For a possible co-sponsored session with Native Traditions in the Americas:](#) Explorations of popular media representations of Native traditions amid violent conditions, such as those seen in *The Killers of the Flower Moon*, *Reservations Dogs*, and other media. This session could also challenge stereotypes about Native traditions, including harmful stereotypes about the violence of the people and traditions, as well as the harm done by "positive" representations, such as "the ecological Indian."

[For a possible co-sponsored session with Religion, Media and Culture:](#) What can memes tell us about religions, both digital and otherwise? Fast-moving, polyvocal, and densely referential, memes invite reflection on intertextuality, canonicity, metareferentiality, sincerity, and social authority. We invite papers or prearranged panels that reflect on the role of memes and meme cultures in religious life.

**For a possible co-sponsored session with the SBL Bible and Popular Culture Group:** Amidst considerable public uproar around book bans and other forms of censorship, few stories mention that the American Library Association cites "The Holy Bible" as #52 on the top 100 most banned books since 1990. For this collaboration between the AAR Religion & Popular Culture Unit and the SBL Bible and Popular Culture unit, we invite proposals for papers and pre-arranged sessions on censorship and book banning that traverse the study of religion and studies of biblical or sacred texts. For example, how can we understand efforts to censor "sexual content" in books that strategically ignore such content in the Bible? What can contemporary censorship efforts teach us about broader religious anxieties around heresy, profanity, and the corruption of youth?

**Romance and Dating:** From dating apps to reality television, marriage pacts to direct messages, popular cultures are revolutionizing the way we imagine romance and find love. How do these new practices and technologies chafe against, entrench, or reanimate religious norms and values? We solicit papers and pre-arranged sessions that explore the religious and popular cultures of contemporary romance and dating.

**Archives:** What constitutes an "archive" for the scholar of religion and popular culture? For this session on research and methodology, we solicit papers and pre-arranged panels that explore what it means to compile and study archives of religion and popular culture. We are particularly interested in works that consider the challenges and opportunities presented by digital archives.

**Popular Cultures as Sites of Grieving and Grief:** From the COVID-19 pandemic to the climate crisis, to the violences of poverty and war, the present is defined by unthinkable loss. We invite papers and pre-arranged sessions that examine how varied forms of popular culture express and reflect collective grieving and/ or individual grief.

**Conspiracies since Watergate:** Conspiracies– real and imagined– are nothing new. We invite papers and pre-arranged sessions that explore religious and political conspiracy theories (and actual conspiracies) from a historical perspective.



**Therapeutic Cultures:** Self-help literatures, personal development programs, motivational speakers, and the ubiquitous idiom of “self care” sit squarely at the intersection of religious and popular cultures. We invite papers and pre-arranged sessions on popular therapeutic cultures past and present, in the U.S. and beyond.

### **Riots or Revolutions? Religious Frames of Black Violence and Non-Violence in 21st Century**

**Politics:** To engage the AAR’s presidential theme and with the 2024 American Presidential election upon us, we invite reflections on the role that Black violence and non-violence have in American imaginations. We are especially interested in papers that discuss what Black violence and non-violence means for various religio-political constituencies, how they are mediated and regulated, and how they are used in the current political environments as interpretive frameworks by Black and non-Black agents.

[The Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit, The Religion and Popular Culture Unit, The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit, and The Buddhism in the West Unit](#) invite paper, panel, or roundtable proposals that address, through an interdisciplinary lens, these intersections of hip hop, religion, politics and visual culture in its myriad manifestations. Among other possibilities, we are interested in proposals that engage this momentous work as a nascent music genre and/or a series of music videos, as it has rippled across three decades of Hip Hop and The Five Percent Nation of Islam, and as it continues to influence visual, popular, and religious culture today.

**Open Call:** We solicit research-based papers and pre-arranged panels on any topic related to the study of religion and popular culture, from any region or time period.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

For the virtual meeting in June, we solicit papers and pre-arranged panels that take advantage of the digital, video-based format. We are interested in presentations on any topic related to the study of religion and popular culture that take the form of mini-documentaries, or rely heavily on clips, music and other media. We are not interested in papers or sessions that mimic the in-person format for a digital audience.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit is dedicated to the scholarly exploration of religious expression in a variety of cultural settings. We encourage a multidisciplinary display of scholarship in our sessions and are committed to taking popular culture seriously as an arena of religious and theological reflection and practice.

## Chairs

- [Eden Consenstein, Princeton University](#)  
[Edenc@unc.edu](mailto:Edenc@unc.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [David Feltmate, Auburn University, Montgomery](#)  
[dfeltmat@aum.edu](mailto:dfeltmat@aum.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The “Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives” (RPS) Unit focuses on the global relationship between religion and education (RE) across diverse historical, geographical, cultural, political, and pedagogical settings.

For the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), we are seeking papers that deeply examine the intricate intersection of religion, education, and violence worldwide within the framework of the 2024 AAR Presidential theme “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin.”

Scholars, researchers, and practitioners are encouraged to submit papers that explore the multifaceted dimensions of these themes, investigating their implications, challenges, and transformative educational potentials at both local and global levels. We specifically welcome papers addressing various educational contexts and methodologies and encourage multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary perspectives.

Themes to explore could be:

Exploring Controversial Themes and Antiviolence Pedagogies in RE

This track dives into the complex relationship between religion, violence, and pedagogical strategies within RE. It seeks to navigate sensitive topics while advocating for anti violence pedagogies within global educational frameworks.

Examples of Key Focus Areas are:

- Teaching Controversial Topics: Religion and Violence in RE. Develop innovative teaching strategies addressing the interplay between religion and violence, emphasizing critical thinking and respectful dialogue.
- Global Perspectives on Teaching Religion and Antiviolence Pedagogies in RE. Analyze diverse global approaches to teaching religion, emphasizing language, human rights, and decolonization theories in shaping antiviolence pedagogies within religious education contexts.

#### Navigating Free Speech, Religious Discourse, and Hate Speech in RE

This segment critically analyzes the intricate interplay between free speech, religious discourse, hate speech, and their impact on characterizing violence against religious groups within RE.

Examples of Key Focus Areas are:

- Characterization of Violence Against Christians. Explore narratives shaping violence against Christians in diverse religious, cultural, and societal contexts, examining their implications in educational settings.
- Discourses on Religion, Antisemitism, and Islamophobia. Investigate intersections of religious discourse with narratives on antisemitism, Islamophobia, and hate speech. Analyze their impact on fostering or challenging violence against Jewish and Muslim communities.
- Free Speech and Its Limits. Delve into the complex dynamics between free speech, hate speech, and religious discourses in RE. Explore how boundaries intersect with discussions on violence against religious groups and their freedoms.

#### Understanding Violence and Symbolism in Religious Education

This segment delves into the multifaceted aspects of violence, both overt and symbolic, and their impacts within educational frameworks, specifically in the context of RE.

Examples of Key Focus Areas are:

- Manifestations and Intersections of Violence in RE. Explore the varied forms of violence, from physical acts to symbolic gestures, within educational settings. Analyze how this violence intersects with the teaching of religion and its impact on pedagogical approaches in different school systems.
- Violence, Marginality, and Theorization of Religion in RE. Discuss how violence within educational systems impacts the perception, teaching, and theorization of religion, potentially leading to marginalization. Explore its influence on the conceptualization of religious concepts and practices within RE.

We also welcome proposals beyond these themes, particularly pre-arranged sessions spotlighting global perspectives on RE. We value sessions that embrace diversity across genders, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and a spectrum of fields, methodologies, and scholarly levels.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

### **State of the Art on Religion and Education: A Roundtable Discussion**

For this 2024 AAR virtual session we seek contributions able to depict the contemporary landscape of religion and education (RE) globally. We invite scholars, educators, and practitioners to contribute to this dialogue, examining the diverse aspects of curriculum, pedagogy, and the portrayal of 'religion' in educational contexts worldwide.

Specifically, we encourage participants to explore the nuances of current curricular structures, pedagogical approaches, and contents in teaching 'religion,' considering the historical, cultural, and social influences that shape these aspects both locally and globally. We also invite discussions on innovations, challenges, and best practices that are influencing and shaping educational frameworks in different contexts.

The format includes 10-minute presentations highlighting the portrayal of religion and its integration into educational systems across different countries. Following these presentations, participants in this virtual session will engage in a broader panel discussion aimed at synthesizing insights, exchanging diverse perspectives, and generating analyses on global trends and challenges within RE.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Program Unit promotes the global and comparative study of "religion education" in public schools around the world. By encouraging interdisciplinary research on the ethical, legal, political, pedagogical, and theological issues that arise with the study of religion in elementary and secondary schools, we seek to deepen our understanding of alternative approaches to religion as an academic subject. We also hope to find new ways of responding to the increasing religious diversity in schools and societies and to study the relationship between religious education and citizenship education in pluralistic democratic societies.

## Chairs

- [Angela Bernardo, Sapienza University of Rome](#)  
[angela.bernardo@uniroma1.it](mailto:angela.bernardo@uniroma1.it)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Kate Soules, Boston College](#)  
[Ksoules@religionanded.com](mailto:Ksoules@religionanded.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Religion and Science Fiction Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Individual papers and panel sessions are invited on the following themes:

- We seek proposals for 10-minute teaching demonstrations using speculative fiction for undergraduates illustrating themes/problems/theories/concepts in the study of religion. How can a story, novel, graphic novel, video game, or other popular media about robots, vampires, magical rings, the secular apocalypse, climate catastrophe, etc., teach students about supernatural entities, transcendence, charismatic leaders, NRMs, religious experience, ethics, scripture.
- Mysticism and related forms of transcendent experiences in speculative fictions. We seek proposals that consider forms of absorption, integration, ecstasy, and techniques for inducing these states. We are especially interested in proposals on mysticism in speculative fictions inspired by non-Christian/"western" traditions and methods. How might fictional mystical experiences enrich the scholarly study of these techniques and experiences in "real" human religion?
- Papers related to the 2024 Annual Meeting on Violence, especially but not limited to how "violence is directly related to the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives." In the context of speculative fiction, the displacement of

human others by fictional others (robots, vampires, AI, aliens, etc.) can assist in revealing the dynamics of violence, thus allowing us to find new interpretations and meanings in the process of defamiliarization.

- Proposals that challenge religious studies scholarship through SF theory and criticism (e.g., Fredric Jameson, Darko Suvin, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Sherryl Vint, etc.).

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit challenges the study of religion through the infinite possibilities for world-making, "god"-imagining, community-forming, and human/species-becoming posed by speculative fiction (SF). Science fiction, fantasy, horror, slipstream, weird fictions, futurisms, and related genre movements in literary and visual media address basic questions and predicaments traditionally posed and answered by "religion." Through engagement with SF narratives the work of this Unit intends to provoke comparison, exchange with, and mutation in the study of religion.

## Chairs

- [Emanuelle Burton, University of Illinois, Chicago](#)  
[emanuelle.burton@gmail.com](mailto:emanuelle.burton@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Rudy V. Busto, University of California, Santa Barbara](#)  
[rude@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:rude@religion.ucsb.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Religion and Sexuality Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Religion and Sexuality unit. We invite proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals in all areas of the study of religion and sexuality. We are interested in work which engages diverse contexts, geographies, religions and communities. Proposals should reflect sound engagement with existing scholarship along with innovative theoretical and/or methodological proposals around the study of religion and sexuality. We encourage the submission of coherent pre-arranged sessions, which could include roundtables, pedagogic sessions, or other creative presentation formats.

This year we especially encourage individual and paper sessions that address the following topics along with the 2024 Presidential Theme of "Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin."

- Religion and Sexual Surveillance: e.g. In terms of technological surveillance such as Covenant Eyes (software created by evangelical Christians monitoring porn usage online); or in terms of other contextual, political, epistemological, or disciplinary senses of 'surveillance'.
- Sexuality and Citizenship: Considering conservative policing and policy debates, including those concerning trans, intersex, gender non-conforming persons; creative theologies or philosophies of citizenship drawn from a wide variety of geographies and religious traditions.
- Religion and Sexual Literacy: Considering how knowledge about sex and sexuality is transferred, taught, and framed in religious and educational settings; including work focused on sacred text, ritual, culture(s), social institutions, creative arts, and curriculum.
- Race, religion and sexuality: Including historical, contemporary and creative framings in relation to sexual politics and social justice; theoretical and conceptual innovations when considering these intersections.

[Also, in co-sponsorship with Latina/o/e and Latin American Biblical Interpretation](#): We invite papers that consider the impact and influence of the work of the late queer performance theorist José Esteban Muñoz on the study of religion and sexuality. We invite papers which engage with a variety of diverse creative genres, religions, and conceptualisations of 'performance,' 'utopia,' or 'sense(s) of brown'. 2024 is the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Disidentifications* through we welcome attention to any facet of Muñoz's work.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit examines religion and sexuality, broadly conceptualized, and focuses on questions of why and how sex matters for particular religious persons, communities, or traditions. We welcome collaboration with other Program Units doing work in some area of sexuality. Distinguishing this Unit from other Program Units are an emphasis on empirical research and analysis and an intentionally multidisciplinary and comparative religious focus. We especially encourage interdisciplinary approaches, interest in gender (broadly defined), and strong attention to methodological issues. This unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity; pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, context, and scholarly rank as appropriate.

## **Chairs**

- [Sara Moslener, Central Michigan University](#)  
[mosle1sj@cmich.edu](mailto:mosle1sj@cmich.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Megan Robertson, University of Leeds](#)  
[m.a.robertson@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.robertson@leeds.ac.uk)

## **Religion and the Social Sciences Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Religion and Social Sciences Unit (RSS) supports scholarship at the intersection of the social sciences and religious or theological studies. Topic areas include the study of religious and theological questions through specific social scientific methodologies, the integration of theological and social scientific approaches to the study of religious communities and practices, and comparative assessments of current issues by humanities-based and social scientific methods.

As always, we welcome proposals related to these topics, and encourage creative formats such as flash sessions, roundtables, discussion-based sessions, etc.

For the 2024 meeting in San Diego, we are especially interested in paper, papers session, and roundtable proposals that offer social scientific methodological and/or theoretical analyses in regard to:

#### **Race, Religion, and Electoral Violence and Nonviolence**

Considering the 2024 annual meeting theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin,” and the timing of the meeting just after what is likely to be the most contentious U.S. presidential election in memorable history, we invite papers that use social scientific methods and theory to analyze the role of race and religion in U.S. electoral violence, as well as nonviolent responses to anti-democratic measures such as voter suppression and intimidation and baseless delegitimization of election results. We also invite proposals that use social scientific analysis to examine the role of faith leaders and communities in addressing election-related anxiety and trauma.

#### **Religion and Unspeakable Violence**

How do we research violences that are rendered politically unspeakable? The extraordinary violence in Israel and Gaza that began on October 7th, 2023 has brought this question into sharp relief. How do social scientists study and analyze violence in cases where all terms and



interpretive frameworks seem only to multiply ethnic, religious, and political violence? How do freedom of speech issues, academic contingency, and cancel culture stymie the ability to produce social scientific research and scholarship on instances of unspeakable violence? Proposals are welcome that address these and related questions, in regard to any instance of unspeakable violence, in Israel and Gaza or elsewhere.

### [Religion and Violence in the U.S. Urban Borderlands, co-sponsored with the Religion and Cities Unit](#)

Connecting to the 2024 annual meeting theme, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin” and our location in San Diego, we invite papers using social scientific methods/theory to explore religious expressions of and responses to violence and nonviolence in the U.S./Mexico urban borderlands. Papers might explore how religion contests or underwrites physical and symbolic violence at the border, the relationship of religion to the border’s construction of urban social geographies, or the role of religious institutions and faith communities in border cities, to name just a few possible examples.

### The Myth of Religious Violence

Reflecting on William Cavanaugh’s 2009 book *The Myth of Religious Violence*, we invite papers that explore (and debate) the relationship between religion and violence. Papers may explore how ideas of religion as inherently violent or of religious people being predisposed to promoting violence manifest in societies; how notions of secular and sacred inform debates about political violence and construct nationalisms; ways in which the trope of religious violence is used to marginalize specific groups and/or mobilize communities and legitimate state violence; and religion’s role in lived experiences of victimization, hate-crimes, discrimination, and war.

### Religion, Spirituality, Nonviolence, and Utopia

What role does religion and spirituality play in imagining and pursuing better worlds? We invite papers that bring social theory, methods, and analysis to questions of nonviolence and utopia. Papers may explore how religion and spirituality inform nonviolent or abolitionist political practices; how religion and spirituality shape utopian social ideals and movements; and how nonviolent ethics and theologies are lived by religious individuals and groups, including those who identify as non-religious or spiritual.

## The Constructive Value of the Social Sciences

We invite papers that reflect on the constructive value of social scientific methodologies: the conditions under which social science research on religion can be applied to issues of moral concern in ways that contribute to the common good; the possibility of making ethical claims and interventions through empirical research; navigating the tensions of descriptive and normative; and practical examples of applied social science research on religion that have contributed constructively to broader communities or publics.

## Statement of Purpose

The Religion and Social Sciences Unit (RSS) supports scholarship at the intersection of the social sciences and religious or theological studies. Topic areas include the study of religious and theological questions through specific social scientific methodologies, the integration of theological and social scientific approaches to the study of religious communities and practices, and comparative assessments of current issues by humanities-based and social scientific methods.

## Chairs

- [Rachel Schneider, Rice University](#)  
[rsv2@rice.edu](mailto:rsv2@rice.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Sara Williams, Fairfield University](#)  
[sawilliams212@gmail.com](mailto:sawilliams212@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Religion in Europe Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This Unit analyzes religion in both Eastern and Western Europe or related to Europe (broadly defined) in any historical or contemporary period. We encourage interdisciplinary, interreligious, and comparative approaches, and we particularly welcome submissions from members of underrepresented groups in the Academy.

Violence and Protest from the Margins

We seek papers that examine the intersections of religion, violence, and dissent in Europe, responding to the AAR Presidential call to understand violence in relation to "the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives." Papers that are historical in nature (2024 marks 500 years since the outbreak of the German Peasants War) are welcome, as are papers examining contemporary religious dissent and protest in Europe. We are interested in papers considering a variety of religious communities and traditions, and we likewise welcome multiple disciplinary perspectives.

[Rising tides of Islamophobia & Antisemitism across Europe and US \(for a possible co-sponsorship with Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit\):](#)

Antisemitism and Islamophobia have been rising dramatically across Europe and North America. While there are distinct underlying social structures, political dynamics, and cultural phenomena that have fueled the emergence and evolution of antisemitism and Islamophobia, especially from country to country, they are often intertwined in certain ways and echoed across contexts. In light of these troubling trends, we seek papers that explore the complex distinctions between and/or intertwinings of antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe or North America, or papers that offer a deeper perspective of either antisemitism or Islamophobia in comparative light between Europe and North America. We also welcome papers that problematize or contest these terms (antisemitism and Islamophobia), their conceptual formulations, their applicability, and their usefulness in certain contexts due to residual colonialism and ongoing intersections/confrontations with white supremacy. We encourage attention to how global events affect the rise of and relationship between antisemitism and Islamophobia and/or interreligious relations in either contemporary or historical contexts.

[Free Speech \(for a possible co-sponsorship with Law, Religion, and Culture Unit\)](#)

We seek papers that consider legal regimes and discursive practices related to "free speech" around "religion" (both terms variously defined and contested by states, practitioners, and others in the public sphere). We aim to include papers on both US and European contexts in order to highlight diverse approaches taken by democracies in policing speech (or not). Papers that are explicitly comparative are welcome, alongside those that consider cases from the US and particular European states. Papers that consider the changing nature of regulation in digital media spaces are especially encouraged.

We also welcome proposals beyond these themes, especially proposals for complete pre-arranged sessions related to religion and Europe, broadly interpreted. Successful sessions will

reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity, as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

"What is 'religion in Europe?' Roundtable: For this virtual summer roundtable, we're looking for several contributions that engage with a brief theoretical, methodological, or theological reflection on the assessment, definition or problematization of 'religion' in Europe (including specific national contexts or Europe otherwise conceived), including reflections on the relationship between 'religion' and secularism in European contexts. For this special short panel, we'll ask each participant to discuss a single image for approximately 5–7 minutes, before then engaging in a panel-wide exchange and discussion, followed by Q&A.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit is designed to serve as a forum for scholarly dialogue on religious issues related to the social, cultural, and political contexts of Eastern and Western Europe and beyond, seeking to help guide critical conversations about Europe and its global entanglements. Our guiding principles include a commitment to scholarly dialogue across disciplines, a comparative spirit sensitive to Europe's religious diversity, and a transhistorical appreciation of the full trajectory of European-related experiences.

## **Chairs**

- [Carol Ferrara, Emerson College](#)  
[carol\\_ferrara@emerson.edu](mailto:carol_ferrara@emerson.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [John McCormack, Aurora University](#)  
[jmccormack@aurora.edu](mailto:jmccormack@aurora.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Religion in Premodern Europe and the Mediterranean Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We welcome proposals on all topics related to the Unit's subject matter, broadly conceived. Proposals that are themselves comparative in nature or that present novel approaches to the study of premodern religion are particularly welcome. We encourage the submission of preformed panel proposals suitable for 90-minute time slots. We also encourage the submission of individual paper proposals for panels on the following subjects:

- Teach this object: This session is intended to focus on use of material objects in pedagogy. How can objects increase student engagement and effectively convey understanding of premodern religious history or religious studies concepts? For each paper, contributors should pick a material artifact or crafted object of some kind and aim to show the value of such pieces in teaching.
- Travelling objects and objects as mediators (co-sponsored by SBL Art and Religions of Antiquity Unit): Inspired by Georgia Frank's 2023 book *Unfinished Christians* (UPenn Press), esp. ch. 3, we invite papers that discuss portable and shifting objects in lived religion: e.g., that mediate between religious cultures or act as portable signifiers of religious identity, diversity, continuity, and / or transformation. Examples of portable mediating objects might include relics, reliquaries, amulets, icons, talismans, monstrances, elaborate vestments, jewelry such as episcopal rings, scrolls and codices, holy people, pilgrimage badges, lamps and censers, votive objects, spolia, and other "portabilia."
- Interreligious sharing, borrowing and accommodation: Papers will explore modes of interaction among religious traditions, with particular emphasis on accommodation of two or more religious groups sharing the same space. How do they accommodate their different needs? How is contestation (over resources, rights, use of sacred space) resolved? Emphasis should be on non-violent engagement.
- Co-produced magics: Jewish, Christian and Islamic exchange This session invites papers on interreligious collaboration and co-production of magic texts, books, and magical artifacts. We invite papers on topics such as translations of magical or sacred texts into other languages for use in other religious contexts; borrowing of alphabets or symbols from one to another religious or cultural context; cross cultural use of magicians, charms or spells; and collaboration in production of magical texts or artifacts.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit aims to bring together scholars working on premodern Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to create a venue in which religious phenomena can be considered comparatively. Individual papers may be embedded in a single tradition, but presenters should be interested in engaging this material comparatively during the discussion period.

## Chairs

- [Claire Fanger, Rice University](#)  
[claire@celestiscuria.org](mailto:claire@celestiscuria.org)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Lora Walsh, University of Arkansas](#)  
[ljwalsh@uark.edu](mailto:ljwalsh@uark.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Religion in Southeast Asia Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion in Southeast Asia Program Unit at the American Academy of Religion invites proposals for individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtables. For those interested in proposing organized paper sessions, we would encourage you to consider a 90-minute session.

We invite proposals on all topics. Here are some topics generated at our 2023 business meeting:

- Cosmologies of revolution
- Liberation movements / social movements
- How Gaza issue affects SEA
- Missing bodies
- ASEAN Politics and South China Seas
- Session on Faizah Zakaria's *The Camphor Tree and the Elephant: Religion and Ecological Change in Southeast Asia* (2023)
- Session on Briana L. Wong's *Cambodian Evangelicalism: Cosmological Hope and Diasporic Resilience* (2023)

### Statement of Purpose

Situated at the nexus of several civilizational influences—including Indian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern—Southeast Asia, as a region, remains understudied in terms of its relevance to the theoretical and methodological study of religion. This neglect is in part due to the tendency to reduce Southeast Asian religious systems to the named “world religions” often identified with other regions. As a result, indigenous practices are not viewed in terms of their conceptual and other linkages—and in some cases the dynamic interactions between those practices and the religious practices brought over by different classes of immigrants are frequently overlooked. However, and especially in the last fifteen years, exciting materials addressing different religious cultures in Southeast Asia have emerged. Hitherto, there has been little scholarly conversation at the AAR on Southeast Asia. And, perhaps even less commonly, are Southeast Asian religious cultures (e.g., Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, Hindu, “animist,” Chinese, and Pacific) put into conversation with one another. In light of this need in the field, we strive to provide a context for this conversation as well as to foster critical thinking about Southeast Asia as a region.

### Chairs

- [Etin Anwar, Hobart and William Smith Colleges  
anwar@hws.edu](mailto:anwar@hws.edu)

1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

- [David Thang Moe, Yale University](#)  
[david.moe@yale.edu](mailto:david.moe@yale.edu)

1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## **Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Religion, Affect, and Emotion program unit is primarily interested in proposals on two topics for the 2024 Annual Meeting, though we are also open to proposals outside of these themes that do work relevant to Religion, Affect, and Emotion.

Emotion and Affect in Black Theology

In *A Black Theology of Liberation*, James Cone declares that "Theological language is passionate language, the language of commitment,

because it is language which seeks to vindicate the afflicted and condemn the enforcers of evil" (pp. 17–18, 20th anniversary ed.). Taking seriously the ongoing need for such passionate language, we are interested in proposals that explore emotion and affect as they are:

- discussed in Black theological texts
- experienced in reading Black theological texts
- experienced in engaging in the broader political or ecclesial work of Black theology

Shadow Conference 2024

Our "shadow conference" sessions at the 2023 annual meeting brought theory and personal narrative together to consider the affective dimensions of academic labor. Importantly, these sessions pressed toward the need for practical responses to those aspects of our labor that challenge us. In hopes of continuing our shared exploration of what lies under, lurks behind, and bursts through our academic institutional lives, we invite proposals that explore, in an affective vein:

- individual–structural tensions of academic labor
- politically empowering affects amidst the Higher Ed Industrial Complex

- living and feeling "past the collapse" of academia as we had come to know it/believe it to be

In our "shadow conference," we once again welcome the playful bending of usual presentation norms and forms. Given this past year's lively conversation, we are once again particularly interested in constructing a "lightning session" of 8–10 minute presentations. Please indicate in your proposal if you are open to being included for consideration in this format.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides space for theoretically-informed discussion of the relationship between religion, affect, and emotion. The Unit serves as a meeting point for conversations on the affective, noncognitive, and passional dimensions of religion coming from diverse fields, including anthropology, comparative religion, psychology, decolonial theory, gender and sexuality studies, cultural studies, philosophy, and theology. Proposals drawing on these theoretical resources to examine specific religious traditions, shifting historical understandings of religion and affect/emotion, comparative work that looks at affective forms across traditions, and broader theoretical reflections are all welcome.

## Chairs

- [Maia Kotrosits, University of Waterloo](#)  
[maiakotrosits@gmail.com](mailto:maiakotrosits@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Marvin Wickware, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago](#)  
[marvin.wickware@lstc.edu](mailto:marvin.wickware@lstc.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

In addition to papers and proposals dealing with religion, colonialism, and post-colonialism more broadly, we invite papers on the following topics:

- Palestine, in particular the resonances between Black thought and Palestinian thought, and historical moments when the intellectual traditions intersect
- Borders, partitions, margins
- Colonialism and ecotheology



- Settler colonialism and Marxism, in particular the role of “primitive accumulation” and “commodity fetishism” in these debates
- Settler colonialism in the transpacific context
- Religion and militarism
- Theologies and philosophies of anti-historicism in colonial contexts
- [An "Author Meets Critic" session on An Yountae's book, \*The Coloniality of the Secular: Race, Religion, and Poetics of World Making\* \(Duke, 2024\).](#) (co-sponsored with the Philosophy of Religion Unit)
- [Race and Research \(co-sponsored with the Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit\)](#): Despite the field's storied emphasis on interdisciplinarity and methodological self-reflection, the field of Religious Studies has fallen short when it comes to critical reflection about the racialization of the discipline and its methods. This failure—and sometimes outright refusal—of critical engagement often happens simultaneously with official initiatives in which new ranks of scholars of color are recruited into the field. We invite proposals for papers, panels, or roundtables that engage the questions and contradictions emerging at the impasse of institutional diversity initiatives and anti-racist, anti-colonial critique. What is the relationship between them? What does it mean for specifically racialized scholars to adopt the study of religion and its various disciplinary forms—the archive, the field, the language seminar? To what extent does our presence in the guilds of religious studies confirm disciplinary integrity, create conditions for interdisciplinarity, or something else? What politics emanate from these spaces of racialized research?

Please note that the Religion, Colonialism and Postcolonialism Unit is deeply committed to inclusion and diversity. Please ensure that any full panel proposals are sensitive in their consideration of a plurality of gendered and racialized voices.

Thank you for considering sending a proposal to the Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit and we look forward to seeing you in San Diego.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit presents an opportunity for scholars in various subfields of religious studies to explore a topic whose relevance cuts across specializations. We bring together scholars treating different time periods, geographical regions, and traditions in working to strengthen our field's role in the study of empire, colonialism, and postcolonialism.

## Chairs

- [Kathy Chow, Yale University](#)  
[kathy.chow@yale.edu](mailto:kathy.chow@yale.edu)

1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

- [Adam Stern, University of Wisconsin, Madison](mailto:adam.stern@wisc.edu)  
[adam.stern@wisc.edu](mailto:adam.stern@wisc.edu)

1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit invites proposals on the following topics. We are committed to diversity and thus work to ensure attention to visual culture in a global context and to the gender, ethnic and geographic diversity of participants. Additionally, we expect presenters to incorporate visual media in presentations; authors should frame proposals such that they indicate their attention to the sensory factors of visual culture, including but not limited to visuals. Finally, we ask that authors be clear about their theoretical and methodological approaches and perspectives.

At the November 2024 Annual Meeting, we invite proposals that consider:

- The annual meeting theme, "**Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin**," and that demonstrate concern for how film and visual media intersect with contemporary areas of violence in our world;
- The visual and sensory medium of **photography** as it intersects with religion;
- **Key scholarly monographs** on the subject of religion, film, and visual culture published in 2023 or 2024. These panels can take the form of critical reviews, generative roundtables responses, prompts for further exploration, author dialogue, and more. Be sure to include a brief summary of the book and clearly delineate its significance and relevance for the study of religion, film, and visual culture. Outline how the participants will contribute to a broad conversation on the subject and advance the book's arguments and conclusions.
- **A World of Horror**: As the horror film genre is experiencing a kind of cultural moment, we invite papers and panels which go beyond the boundaries of American cinema and considers horror on a global scale. By "global horror," we mean international films and filmmakers creating horror films beyond the typical Hollywood system and genre, including (but not limited to) Asian, African, Oceanic, and Latin American horror. We wish to open up space for deeper considerations of Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu horror films, as well as horror's depictions of folk religions, new religious movements, and contemporary spiritualities. We are also interested in proposals which reconsider horror films through the lens of

transnational cinema, post-colonial and decolonial approaches, and intersectionality. How do horror films haunt a diversity of geographies and religious traditions as they raise questions about violence, trauma, alterity, grief, death, and the future of human life on this planet?

**Hip Hop, Religion, and Visual Culture, co-sponsored with the Critical Approaches to Hip Hop and Religion Unit; Religion and Popular Culture Unit; and Buddhism in the West Unit:**

Representing a generational blending of rap, visual culture, popular culture, and religion, including Buddhism and Five Percent / Five Percent Nation of Islam, “Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)” by the rap collective Wu-Tang Clan turned 30 in 2023. Combining inspiration from Kung-Fu films – including “Enter the Dragon (1973),” “Master of the Flying Guillotine (1976),” “Executioners from Shaolin (1977),” “The 36th Chamber of Shaolin (1978),” and “Shaolin and Wutang (1983)” – with the religious, political and socio-economic philosophies of Five Percent, “Enter the Wu-Tang” represents an intersectional expression of creative, theological, and cultural genius. We invite paper, panel, or roundtable proposals that address through an interdisciplinary lens these intersections of hip hop, religion, politics and visual culture. Among other possibilities, we are interested in proposals that engage this momentous work as a nascent music genre and / or a series of music videos, as it has rippled across three decades of Hip Hop and Five Percent philosophy, and as it continues to influence visual, popular, and religious culture today.

**Techno-Social Gaming Dynamics, co-sponsored with the Religion, Media, and Culture Unit:**

How do video games prompt its players to socialize? In what ways is said gaming sociology dependent on its accompanying technology? We invite pre-arranged panels or papers that investigate the means by which gaming culture is influenced by its “field of play,” the techno-social gaming dynamics made available through arcade amusement gaming centers, home video game consoles, and online competitive play. We welcome submissions that theorize the time spent in digital life, probe the implications of digital ethnography, and/or approach games as spaces of resistance and activism for LGBTQ+, immigrant/diasporic communities, and other politically marginalized groups.

**Cinematic Adaptations of Literature, co-sponsored with the Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit:**

How have works of literature been adapted or translated to the cinematic medium for religious purposes? What are the losses and gains of such transpositions, and how have they been utilized in religious contexts and communities? The Art, Literature, and Religion Unit and the

Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Unit invites pre-arranged panels or individual papers that investigate the adaptation, creation, and reception of such audiovisual works. We also strongly welcome panels which provide an in-depth consideration of a single cinematic artwork from a variety of methodologies and perspectives. "Cinematic" may include: film, television, advertisements, museum installations, graphic design, video curriculum, YouTube, online social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, etc.), digital communication, and other forms of audiovisual moving images—we're especially interested in exploring cinematic works which are outside the "Bible film" genre. We welcome submissions that theorize the adaptation and interpretation process and/or examine the implications of such cinematic works for various religious or socio-political groups, particularly marginalized communities.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit offers a forum for theory and methodology of the visual for those interested in the interdisciplinary study of religion, film, and visual culture. There is no single way to study religion and the visual, and we expect scholars to provide new perspectives on the way we understand visual culture and to provide this understanding through traditional and emerging methodologies.

## Chairs

- [Joel Mayward, George Fox University](#)  
[jmayward@gmail.com](mailto:jmayward@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Rebecca Moody, Worcester Polytechnic Institute](#)  
[rmood@wpi.edu](mailto:rmood@wpi.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity. Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate.

[For a co-sponsored with the Religion and Law Unit](#), we seek papers on issues of statelessness and lack of citizenship documentation, the violence of states (including their legal bureaucracies and processes thereof) as well as the understanding of statehood as a means of survival. The tensions between utopian, or even religious visions of the unstately and practical aspirations (among those most subject to violence) for the protections of the state will hopefully be addressed.

[For a co-sponsorship with Co-sponsored with the Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit](#), we welcome proposals that engage in discussions about genocide in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide. Proposals can include one or more of the following:

- Narratives and commemorations of genocides in Rwanda and Africa.
- The role of Western powers in the genocides "in the margins."
- Comparison and relations between genocides at "Centers" and in the "Margins."
- Interrogation peacebuilding and/or reconciliation in the Global South.
- The legacies of western colonialism in the genocides in Africa.
- The opportunity/problems of comparisons between the genocide in Rwanda and other genocides.
- Afro-American thought and genocides in the Caribbean and Africa.

Prompted by Esra Özyürek's 2023 book *Subcontractors of Guilt: Holocaust Memory and Muslim Belonging in Postwar Germany*, we invite proposals that consider genocide in relation to Muslim communities. With an eye to differing global contexts, proposals might address the situation of Muslim minorities or majorities, and may varyingly consider issues of memory or the ongoing experience and perpetration of mass violence.

We invite proposals that consider the politics of comparison related to genocide. In public discourse, the Holocaust has been many times cited (often controversially) in relation to other historical or contemporary phenomena, but we also encourage reflection on the politics of comparison concerning other genocides. Proposals might address the motivation and reception of comparisons, and questions of how to critically weigh up the (in)appropriateness of such comparison-making. The intersections between debates on comparison, notions of historical uniqueness, and the 'sacrality' of remembering in particular ways may be considered in this regard.

We seek proposals that address religion and indigenous genocide. Prompted by recent revelations concerning the Residential School system in Canada and their connections with

church institutions, we invite proposals that consider indigenous genocide in relation to religious factors among both victims and perpetrators.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We invite proposals on religion, genocide, and the moving image. Television series and films, such as *Holocaust* (1978) and *Schindler's List* (1993), were crucial events in developing public consciousness of the Holocaust, but alongside reflection on such classic works we seek proposals that address media representations of other genocides, as well as varied media forms such as gaming, VR, and the use of holograms. Attention may be given to the representation of religion through the moving image, or how perceptions of the sacred (and its transgression) feed into the reception of varied media forms.

## Statement of Purpose

The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, and in 1948 the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In this context, our Unit treats prominent atrocities of the twentieth century, but topics of interest extend before and after this period as well beyond the legal definition of genocide. This Unit addresses religious aspects of genocidal conflicts, other mass atrocities, and human rights abuses that have made a deep and lasting impact on society, politics, and international affairs. Unit interests also include instructive lessons and reflections that Holocaust and Genocide Studies can lend to illuminating other human rights violations and instances of mass violence and the construal of genocide within a human rights violation spectrum that allows for the study of neglected or ignored conflicts that include a salient religious element. Our work is interdisciplinary and includes scholars from fields including History, Ethics, Theology, Philosophy, Jewish Studies, Church History, Anthropology, Political Science, Gender Studies, and regional area studies of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

## Chairs

- [Benjamin Sax, Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies](#)  
[bsax@icjs.org](mailto:bsax@icjs.org)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [David Tollerton, University of Exeter](#)  
[d.c.tollerton@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:d.c.tollerton@exeter.ac.uk)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Religion, Media, and Culture Unit

## Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion, Media, and Culture Unit invites individual presentations, paper/multimedia research presentation sessions, and roundtable proposals on the following themes:

### 10 Years of God's Not Dead

We invite pre-arranged panels or papers that mark the 10th anniversary of the American Christian drama series *God's Not Dead*, in conversation with other examples of evangelical Christian media productions, and/or other popular culture related to the "Christian persecution complex" whereby evangelicals appropriate "oppression" rhetoric in their condemnation of the liberal university, secular state, public education system, and more.

### Religion and Trauma

For a 2022 Vox article, Lexi Pandell proposes an explanation for "how trauma became the word of the decade." "The very real psychiatric term," she writes, "has become so omnipresent in pop culture that some experts worry it's losing its meaning." We invite papers and pre-arranged panels that address the mediation of religious trauma online, including online survivor communities, religion and the #metoo movement, #igotout, the "ex religion" phenomenon on Twitter/X and TikTok, etc., as well as the growing intrigue in buzzwords like "intergenerational trauma" or "collective trauma."

### [Techno-Social Gaming Dynamics](#)

How do video games prompt its players to socialize? In what ways is said gaming sociology dependent on its accompanying technology? We invite pre-arranged panels or papers that investigate the means by which gaming culture is influenced by its "field of play," the techno-social gaming dynamics made available through arcade amusement gaming centers, home video game consoles, and online competitive play. We welcome submissions that theorize the time spent in digital life, probe the implications of digital ethnography, and/or approach games as spaces of resistance and activism for LGBTQ+, immigrant/diasporic communities, and other politically marginalized groups.

## Religion, Media, and the 2024 presidential election

We welcome submissions capable of addressing the concerns of either electoral outcome and/or papers or panels prepared to address religion and media (broadly construed) in the electoral campaigns leading to the election itself.

## Theorizing religion and media

We invite pre-arranged panels or papers that engage with theoretical and methodological questions in religion and media studies, including but not limited to: theorizing digital religion (Is all religion digital now?), digital archives and methods (How do scholars of religion and media do their work?), computational questions in the study of digital religion (e.g., data access, privacy and proprietary concerns), and interdisciplinary analyses of economics and digital media.

## Open Call

We welcome any and all proposals that are not specifically mentioned in the call for papers and we are specifically interested in topics and theoretical insights from outside North America. Topics may include:

- Digital hate, including online forms of Islamophobia and antisemitism
- Religion in the technosphere, the role of religious language in the development of new technologies, and/or the concept of time in digital life
- The study of religion and traditional/analog media (photography, print, radio, television, film, etc)

## [Co-Sponsored with Religion and Popular Culture](#)

What can memes tell us about religions, both digital and otherwise? Fast-moving, polyvocal, and densely referential, memes invite reflection on intertextuality, canonicity, metareferentiality, sincerity, and social authority. We invite papers or prearranged panels that reflect on the role of memes and meme cultures in religious life.

## [Co-Sponsored with New Religious Movements](#)



We invite prearranged panel and paper proposals that engage questions of digitality in new religious movements, or contrast the origins, practice, and study of digital vs. “traditional” NRMs, or NRMs “online” vs. “offline.” How does digitality shape new religious movements?

RMC is committed to diversity and inclusivity. Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate. We strongly prefer papers that include audio/visual media and ask that proposals make use of media clear. We are also particularly interested in session proposals and presentations that break from traditional paper-reading formats. We encourage panels that propose innovative ways to develop collaborative conversation, especially those that allow for timely analysis of current events.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Cyberhenge Revisited: We welcome paper submissions that discuss the academic impact of Douglas Cowan’s book *Cyberhenge: Modern Pagans on the Internet* (2004). We use its anniversary as an occasion to reevaluate the culture and digital religious practices of paganism over the last 20 years. This session would occur virtually during the June 2024 Online AAR Conference, with Cowan in attendance as a special honoree/respondent.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a multidisciplinary forum for exploring the intersections between media and religion. Areas of interest include the participation of religion in digital culture, mediation of religion, the interplay between religious and media communities and between religious and media practices, and the significance of both media and religion in the transformation of religious structures and practices.

### **Chairs**

- [William Chavez, Stetson University](mailto:wchavez@stetson.edu)  
[wchavez@stetson.edu](mailto:wchavez@stetson.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Kathryn Reklis, Fordham University](mailto:kathryn.reklis@aya.yale.edu)  
[kathryn.reklis@aya.yale.edu](mailto:kathryn.reklis@aya.yale.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Religion, Sport, and Play Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religion, Sport, and Play Unit seeks individual paper and complete panel proposals for two sessions at the 2024 annual conference.

### Religion and Sports Fandom

Sports fandom has frequently been associated with religious ways of being, even if tongue-in-cheek. A religious-like devotion is often used to describe sports fans' relationship to certain teams and athletes, and Durkheimian "collective effervescence" is frequently drawn upon to explain enduring tribalism amongst fans. These religious descriptors of sports fandom, however, do not capture the myriad ways in which religion and sports fandom can be theorized. To this end, the Religion, Sport, and Play Unit seeks papers offering analytical, methodological, or theoretical frameworks of religion and sport fandom.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Religion as a Type of Fandom
- Religion, Violence, and Sports Fandom (in accordance with this year's AAR theme)
- Sports Fandom at Religious Universities
- The Positionality of the Scholar/The Positionality of the Fan
- Sport Fandom as Scholarly Motivation
- Intersectionality and Sports Fandom
- Religion and/or Spirituality of the Global East/South in relation to Sports Fandom
- Sports Fandom and the Scholar-Activist
- Technology and Sports Fan Agency
- Materiality and Sports Fandom
- Media Expressions of Sports Fandom

Paper proposals will be considered for a Fall 2024 special issue of *The International Journal of Sport and Religion*

For the second session, any proposals addressing the interaction of religion and sport; religion and play; or religion, sport, and play will be considered.

### Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides an opportunity for scholars to engage in emerging research at the intersection of religion and sport, games, and play. We are interested in examining these topics across broad geographical areas, religious traditions, and historical eras. We encourage critical

reflection regarding relationships of religious institutions to sport, play, and games; theological and spiritual experiences of participants and spectators invested in these activities; and the cross-cultural applicability of the received categories.

## **Chairs**

- [Kimberly Diaz, University of California, Riverside](#)  
[kdiaz038@ucr.edu](mailto:kdiaz038@ucr.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jeffrey Scholes, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs](#)  
[jscholes@uccs.edu](mailto:jscholes@uccs.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Religions in the Latina/o Americas Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Religions in the Latina/o Americas invites proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels on any topic related to the interdisciplinary study of religion in Latin America and Latinx religion in North America. Related to this year's presidential theme on violence, non-violence, and the margins, we are particularly interested in proposals that challenge the concept of borders and the center-periphery dichotomy as static elements in the Americas. This includes an interest in how indigeneity, race, and diasporic identities are transformed by movement or displacement. With the recent flourishing of works in Latin American, Latinx, and Chicanx religion, we would also be excited to read proposals describing how you have been incorporating new research into your teaching.

### **Emerging Scholars Session**

Each year we try to dedicate one panel to emerging scholars, which includes advanced graduate students and recent PhDs who work in our field. Please do not hesitate to submit your work to our unit even if it is early in its development or exploratory; we provide a critical but encouraging environment for the professional development of early career scholars.

### **Co-Sponsored Sessions**

Please also see our co-sponsored calls with our colleagues in [the Sociology of Religion Unit](#) on shifts in Latinx Religiosity and with the [Secularism and Secularity Unit](#) on transformations in secularism in Latin America.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the June meeting, we encourage proposals that focus on the digital humanities and contemporary issues in online media. We are particularly interested in proposals that are not recitations of prepared papers but instead use the telemeeting format in intentional ways.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit fosters interdisciplinary and theoretically innovative analyses of Latina/o and Latin American religiosities and spiritualities in the Americas. We explore the richness and diversity of religious traditions in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, highlighting the complex and often explosive relations between religion and politics in the region, the centrality of religion in the Americas since pre-Conquest times, and the global significance of religious events and lived religion in the region. Our goal is to advance knowledge and ways of knowing that expand traditional areas of religious studies throughout the Americas, mindful of transnational and global realities. Thus, we encourage studies that explore non-Western beliefs and practices, including the indigenous, the African diasporic, Buddhist, and Islamic, as well as those that advance more complex understanding of culturally hybrid Christianities. We encourage feminist- and queer-centered perspectives as well as thought rooted in community experience. Diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives are highlighted in presentation of this scholarship.

## Chairs

- [Justin Doran, Middlebury College](#)  
[jmdoran@middlebury.edu](mailto:jmdoran@middlebury.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Daisy Vargas, University of Arizona](#)  
[daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu](mailto:daisyvargas@email.arizona.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## [Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit](#)

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit welcomes paper and/or panel proposals that explore specific intersections of religious and other healing traditions and practices. Proposals should address the social context of the topic, as well as theoretical and analytical frameworks, such as how this analysis helps us to understand religions, medicine, and healing in new ways. For 2024, we welcome any proposal that addresses our goals, and we have a particular interest in the following themes:

### [Sacred Plant Medicines & Resource Extraction in the Global Order \(possible co-sponsor with Psychology, Culture, & Religion\)](#)

This panel is open to submissions focused on critical studies of ethnobotany, hallucinogens, Indigenous medicine and sacred plants, and how these medicines can lead to extractivist commodification by those outside these communities. How have Indigenous sacred plants and medicinal knowledge been extracted and commodified to create modern medicine (e.g. psychedelics)? What have been the costs for Indigenous peoples: how have local communities been demonized, persecuted, or criminalized for their use of these plant medicines? How have locals fought against this knowledge theft and resource extractions? Topics may include healing and plant medicine as it pertains to: ethnobotany, hallucinogenic medicine, sacred mushrooms of Mexico (Maria Sabina), Mama Ayahuasca among Indigenous Amazon communities and its commodification among non-Indigenous communities, and the commodification of Cannabis and persecution of Rastafari communities. We are especially interested in papers that examine religious traditions, practices, rituals, worldviews, etc. as resources for analyzing potential reparations for extractivist commodification of the Indigenous knowledge of plant medicines.

### War is Not the Answer: Healing Amidst Religion & Conflict

This panel highlights the 2024 presidential theme of “Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margins.” The panel is open to a variety of submissions, including analyses of the intersection of religion with different forms of violence, conflict, and war. Topics may include: desecration of sacred sites during warfare; religious organizations either helping or supporting warfare; the ongoing genocide in Palestine; how religion can help heal from the trauma of war; how people find religious community during warfare; and displacement of religious communities due to conflict or war. We are especially interested in papers that examine religious traditions, practices, rituals, worldviews, etc., as resources for analyzing moral injury, healing, genocide, peace and self-inflicted as well as institutional violence.

## Music as a Healing Balm: Sound, Illness & Wellness

The late prophet Prince famously proclaimed that, “Music is healing. Music holds things together.” This session invites submissions that examine the intersection between music, sound, religion, and healing broadly understood. Proposals might investigate the growing practice of music and sound therapy and focus on how music can enhance meditative states and/or provide relief in settings of palliative and hospice care. Proposals could consider Indigenous traditions, such as the ceremonial chantways of the Dine (Navajo) nation, which uses oratory and songs to facilitate healing. Proposals could also explore religious music as nonviolent resistance, a vehicle for community building, or a means to process collective trauma. We encourage a variety of perspectives and critical methodologies but especially invite those that engage ethnomusicology.

## Graduate Student Award

Graduate students are the future of our profession and contribute substantially to the success of the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit by delivering papers based on original research. Through the RMH Graduate Student Paper Award, we recognize this contribution and encourage outstanding research by students. Papers will be evaluated for their originality, appropriate use of sources, and the quality of writing. Eligible students must:

- be actively enrolled in a doctoral program and pursuing a research topic in any discipline related to Religions, Medicines, and Healing;
- have had a paper accepted by the RMH Unit for presentation at the 2024 Annual Meeting;
- have indicated when submitting their proposal that they are applying for the award. Further instructions will be emailed after proposal acceptance.

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit is committed to the value of diversity, equity, and social justice in our standards of excellence. For pre-arranged panels, we especially welcome proposals that reflect diversity of gender, ethnicity, race, field, method, and scholarly rank and directly address such within the proposal.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the June online sessions, the Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit welcomes individual paper proposals for short presentations (5–10 minutes) that explore pedagogical approaches and examples related to teaching courses on religions, health, and healing, broadly imagined. We welcome a wide range of perspectives and institutional contexts, with the goal of addressing some of the current challenges, opportunities, and effective strategies for those teaching in this area.

## Statement of Purpose

The Religions, Medicines, and Healing Unit is committed to the value of diversity, equity, and social justice in our standards of excellence.

The study of religions, medicines, and healing is a growing field within religious studies that draws on the disciplines and scholarship of history, anthropology (particularly medical anthropology), phenomenology, psychology, sociology, ethnic studies, ritual studies, gender studies, theology, political and economic theory, public health, bioscientific epidemiology, history of science, comparative religion, and other interdisciplinary approaches to interpret meanings assigned to illness, affliction, and suffering; healing, health, and well-being; healing systems and traditions, their interactions, and the factors that influence them; and related topics and issues. As a broad area of inquiry, this field incorporates diverse theoretical orientations and methodological strategies in order to develop theories and methods specific to the study of illness, health, healing, and associated social relations from religious studies perspectives. Although religious texts serve as important resources in this endeavor, so do the many approaches to the study of lived religion, religious embodiment and material culture, and popular expressions of religiosity. Finally, like its sister field of medical anthropology, the field of religions, medicines, and healing encourages examination of how affliction and healing affect social bodies through fractured identities, political divides, structural violence, and colonialism. We support the work of graduate students, religion scholars, scholar-activists, and scholars in allied fields. We promote collaboration with other interdisciplinary Program Units and those focused on particular traditions and/or regions.

## Chairs

- [Kyrah Malika Daniels, Emory University](#)  
[kyrah.malika.daniels@emory.edu](mailto:kyrah.malika.daniels@emory.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Kristy Slominski, University of Arizona](#)  
[kristy.slominski@gmail.com](mailto:kristy.slominski@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Religions, Social Conflict, and Peace Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

[Panel I: The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit seeks co-sponsorship with the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Unit.](#) We welcome proposals that engage in discussions about

genocide in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide. Proposals can include one of the following:

- narratives and commemorations of genocides in Rwanda and Africa
- The role of Western powers in genocides 'in the margins' [presidential theme]
- comparison and relations between genocides at 'Centers' and 'Margins'
- interrogation of peacebuilding and reconciliation in the Global South
- the legacies of Western colonialism in the genocides in Africa
- the opportunity/problems of comparison" Holocaust, Kosovo, Gaza, Rwanda...
- Afro-American thought and genocides in the Caribbean and Africa

Panel II: we seek papers addressing the dynamics of religion, conflict, and peace from a global and international perspective, attentive to the legacies of coloniality/modernity. Topics can include

- Religion and American foreign policy
- Islamophobia and the analysis of religion's role in conflict
- religion and diplomacy
- religious and ethnic diasporas and the dynamics of violence and peacebuilding
- Manichean logic in framing conflicts
- religion and the disruption of civilizational discourse

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The Religion, Social Conflicts, and Peace Unit seeks proposals that will focus on queer identities and theologies in political conflicts and within contexts defined by political and cultural violence. Papers can include:

- pinkwashing and religion
- queerness as a site of struggle against White Christian supremacy
- global dimensions of anti-LGBTQI+ campaigns and their relevance to ethnoreligious exclusionary political visions
- queer theologies confronting political forms of violence
- queerness and resistance to anticolonial purism
- queer theologies as sources for disrupting binary narratives of conflicts

## **Statement of Purpose**

Relationships between religions and the causes and resolution of social conflict are complex. On the one hand, religion is a major source of discord in our world, but on the other, religious agents have often played a central role in developing and encouraging nonviolent means of



conflict resolution and sustainable peace. While religion as a factor in conflicts is often misunderstood by military and political leaders, it is also the case that the popular call for an end to injustice is quite often a religious voice. We seek to add a critical dimension to the understanding of how religion influences and resolves social conflict. We want to develop and expand the traditional categories of moral reflection and response to war and also to investigate kindred conflicts — terrorism, humanitarian armed intervention, cultural and governmental repression, ecological degradation, and all of the factors that inhibit human flourishing. We also hope to encourage theoretical and practical reflection on religious peace-building by examining the discourses, practices, and community and institutional structures that promote just peace. Through our work, we hope to promote understanding of the relationships between social conflict and religions in ways that are theoretically sophisticated and practically applicable in diverse cultural contexts.

## Chairs

- [Atalia Omer, University of Notre Dame](#)  
[aomer1@nd.edu](mailto:aomer1@nd.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Santiago H. Slabodsky, Hofstra University](#)  
[santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu](mailto:santiago.slabodsky@hofstra.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Religious Conversions Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Religious Conversions Unit welcomes individual paper or full paper/panel session proposals on any topic related to religious conversion (with a preference for fully formed panel proposals). We are particularly interested in papers and panels that challenge established understandings of the category of “conversion” and push the study of conversion in new directions. We are especially, but not exclusively, interested in featuring panels on the following topics at the 2024 annual meeting.

#### Alternative Spiritualities and Reframing of Conversion Discourses

In the academic study of religion, conversions and their associated experiences are often assumed to be centered around individuals and a transfer from one distinct status to another or

a shift from one set of social identity markers to another. Sometimes conversion narratives can center around special private or public praxis, such as baptism, making a public proclamation of the shahada or taking the amrit sanchar. Yet different traditions not only conceptualize discourses around conversion differently, but narratives and frameworks can change in response to larger cultural shifts and contexts. This joint session seeks proposals of how emergent traditions (re)frame or (re)conceptualize discourse around “conversion.” Inquires and proposals can engage expansion, additive and replacement models, texts, alchemical processes, homemaking, music, materiality, epiphanies or altered states of consciousness, shamanic encounters, or seduction, as examples. The session will investigate the ways the implicit models that shape how people engaged with alternative spiritualities conceptualize, narrativize and enframe both individual and collective spiritual change. This is a potential co-sponsored panel with the Contemporary Pagan Studies unit for the November meeting. Contact: Edith Szanto, [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu)

#### [Political extremism/radicalization as conversion](#)

There have been great shifts in the political sphere in recent years in the US, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. Some of these changes could be described as modes of conversion. Is there an overlap between the political and the religious and in what senses are political and religious radicalization different, or not? What conditions give rise to radical religio-political change? How do governments, media, and society construct, depict, and address changes in political extremism and/or radicalization in various contexts? In what ways does the lens of spiritual or religious conversion help in illuminating the ways in which these changes and shifts can be theorized? This is a potential co-sponsored panel with the Political Theologies Unit for November. Contact: Edith Szanto, [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu)

#### Conversion and abolition

How does conversion provide a context for the assertion of autonomy, or its denial, the granting of full humanity to persons, or its denial, particularly among enslaved persons, prisoners, and people subject to forced labor. Global in scope, this panel seeks to advance our understanding of conversion in prisons, plantations, and similar sites in order to explore the dynamics of conversion under duress or as resistance to confinement. This panel is envisioned as an extension of the Decolonization of Conversion panel from November 2023. Contact: Marc Pugliese, [marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu](mailto:marc.pugliese@saintleo.edu)

#### Queering Conversion Studies

Both coming out and transitioning involve profound change and could be viewed as a kind of conversion. Moreover, LGBTQ+ folks are moving in and out of faith traditions given both their own profound changes and familial and communal responses. The wave of anti-trans bills and rising queer- and transphobia across the country have, arguably, accelerated these dynamics, as many LGBTQ+ folks (especially trans people) are moving into and out of faith traditions as a result. To examine these dynamics, in the US and beyond, we encourage submissions from scholars exploring LGBTQ+ issues in conversion studies. Contact: Eliza Kent, [ekent@skidmore.edu](mailto:ekent@skidmore.edu)

## Deconversion

As part of the wider societal drift away from organized religion, one sees clergy and laypeople pulling back from active involvement with their churches and synagogues, mosques and temples, many of whom now identify as 'spiritual but not religious'. What catalyzes this process of stepping away, and what do de-converts move towards (new age religions, recovery movements, secular forms of enchantment, etc)? What changes in theological beliefs take place during deconversion? What changes in identity and community formation take place? This panel seeks papers that advance our understanding of deconversion in the contemporary moment. Contact: Linda Mercadante, [lindamercadante@healthybeliefs.org](mailto:lindamercadante@healthybeliefs.org)

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

Same as above.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit studies the full spectrum of issues related to religious conversions, in any historical or geographic context, encompassing different forms of religious belief and practice. The scope of the issues we cover is broad and wide-ranging. We consider investigations into the reasons for various types of religious conversions including, but not limited to intellectual, theological, philosophical, historical, experiential, psychological, social, cultural, political, and economic causes. We also study the consequences of religious conversions, both individually and socially, and their implications. We encourage the methodologies of multiple disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary approaches. More narrowly focused areas of inquiry suggested by interested scholars include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple conversions
- Group and individual conversions
- Forced conversions
- The narrative and/or literary aspects of conversions
- Deconversions
- Ecclesiological consequences of conversion
- The place and role of conversion in a specific religious tradition

- Theories of conversions
- Formulas of religious conversion (as step-by-step processes)

## **Chairs**

- [Eliza Kent, Skidmore College](#)  
[ekent@skidmore.edu](mailto:ekent@skidmore.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Edith Szanto, University of Alabama](#)  
[eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Ritual Studies Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Ritual Studies Unit invites individual papers and full panel proposals from a variety of religious and cultural traditions exploring ritual in various local and transnational contexts. Proposals should engage with ritual theory in some way. We are interested in sessions that experiment with new formats favoring increased interaction and discussion and we particularly encourage papers/presentations that involve actually doing ritual practices.

This year, for the in-person conference in November we especially invite individual papers and full panel proposals that explore the following themes:

- Ritual temporalities – We are looking for papers relating to the distinctive temporalities ritual performances put into effect: cyclical reiterations, ordered progressions, momentary accelerations, seemingly endless or unmeasurable states, events that embody unalterable traditions, temporal juxtapositions, and so forth.
- Political rituals – We are also interested in papers pertaining to the political or social uses of ritual as an aspect of political campaigning, protest activities, social movements, nationalism, the implementation of strategic initiatives, and so forth.
- Reevaluating seminal theorists – We welcome papers that propose new theoretical resources for ritual studies scholarship, and/or re-evaluate the work of a seminal ritual theorist.
- [Drugs, ritual, and religion](#) – We invite papers for a potential co-sponsored session with the Drugs and Religion Unit on the use of drugs in the context of ritual practices.

Whenever possible, our sessions will be formatted to encourage interaction and group discussion on the basis of concise, pre-circulated papers of no more than five pages submitted for circulation by October 15, 2024. Because at least 30 minutes of every session will be reserved for discussion, presentation times will vary in accordance with the number of speakers in the session.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the June 2024 online conference, we invite papers that interrogate ritual practice or theory. We are particularly interested in:

[Papers on the practice of an open table in Christian Eucharist for a possible co-sponsored session between Open and Relational Theology and the Ritual Studies Unit.](#) We seek papers that examine a wide range of communion practices, with a particular interest in papers that connect to the presidential theme's emphasis on marginality and/or that consider communion practices through the lens of ritual theory.

The internet/online space as a medium for ritual, requesting papers that can somehow incorporate the medium of delivery (virtual) as a form of ritual expression or experience.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides a unique venue for the interdisciplinary exploration of ritual — broadly understood to include rites, ceremonies, religious and secular performances, and other ritual processes — in their many and varied contexts, and from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

## Chairs

- [Michael Houseman, École Pratique Des Hautes Études](#)  
[jmichaelhouseman@gmail.com](mailto:jmichaelhouseman@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Joy Palacios, University of Calgary](#)  
[joypalacios@gmail.com](mailto:joypalacios@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## [Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit invites proposals from scholars and scholar-activists that closely analyze the use of sacred and foundational religious “texts” (broadly conceived)—e.g., scriptures and commentaries, images and rituals, performances and mass media—in ethical or political discourse (contemporary or historical). We welcome individual papers and panel proposals engaging all methodologies and religious traditions—e.g., Abrahamic, African(a), East Asian, South Asian, indigenous traditions, new religious movements—which involve constructive ethical reflection with a textual or media basis.

Proposals on all topics related to sacred texts/media and ethics are welcome. We are particularly interested in the following themes:

#### From Texts to Media

Sacred texts are typically understood as scriptures and their adjacent literature. But what if we were to expand the notion of sacred texts to include not only written artefacts but also images, rituals, films, and other media. Moving from sacred texts to sacred media opens new questions and analytical possibilities. Accordingly, we invite papers and sessions that help us think through any of the following questions: How is the study of sacred media similar/different to the study of sacred (written) texts? What do scholars gain/lose by expanding the framework of sacred texts to include non-textual media? How do non-textual sacred media shape the ethical self and its responsibilities in unique ways?

#### (Non)Violence and Hierarchies of Being

This year AAR President Jin Y. Park asks us to take up the theme of Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin, noting that “the use of violence is directly related to the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives.” Yet such hierarchies—e.g., God/human, human/animal, spirit/nature, insider/outsider, sage/disciple—are endemic to many (all?) religions, raising the question of whether non-violence is fully possible in a religious context. Accordingly, we invite papers and sessions that help us think through any of the following questions: How do religious leaders and believers appeal to sacred texts/media to support (non)violence? How is their appeal to sacred texts/media “directly [or indirectly] related to the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives”? Does (religious) hierarchy qua hierarchy devalue some lives in favor of others?

The Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Pre-arranged panels should reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity as well as diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank as appropriate. We especially welcome session proposals and presentations that

are comparative, collaborative, and engage the audience dialogically. Finally, we expressly welcome the participation of scholar-activists and scholar-clergy.

## Statement of Purpose

The Sacred Texts and Ethics Unit invites scholars and scholar-activists across the disciplines to critically consider (or re-consider) the complex and enduring role of scriptural and foundational religious texts and other media in the contemporary world as well as historically, and to theorize the roles these texts/media play in ethical reflection, lived religious practice, and political debate. We welcome participants engaging all methodologies and religious traditions.

## Chairs

- [R. Brian Siebeking, Gonzaga University](#)  
[siebeking@gonzaga.edu](mailto:siebeking@gonzaga.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Raissa Von Doetinchem De Rande, Rhodes College](#)  
[derander@rhodes.edu](mailto:derander@rhodes.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For 2024, the unit Sacred Texts, Theory and Theological Construction will be offering two themed and one “open” session. The first themed session will be an invited panel of scholars responding to the recently published book by Robert Seesengood, *American Standard: The Bible in U.S. Popular Culture*. This session is currently closed to submission.

STTTC will co-sponsor with the SBL section Religion, Theory and the Bible for an invited panel offering overview and celebration of the journal *Bible & Critical Theory* in recognition of its 20th year in publication. This session is closed to submission.

For our third, and final panel, we invite the submission of any papers (or even entire panels) which resonate with the general interests and mandate of STTTC. As always, Sacred Texts, Theory and Theological Construction is keenly interested in presenting innovative and exploratory work that engages Critical Theory (broadly defined) and Continental Philosophy intersecting with either Sacred Text (including, but by no means limited to Jewish and Christian writings) and Theology (ideally projects that touch on all these elements).

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit works with the unique intersection of sacred texts, contemporary theory, and theological construction. We call for papers engaged in contemporary constructive theology that think in innovative ways with sacred texts and contemporary biblical studies. We encourage dialogue between constructive theologians and biblical scholars from AAR and SBL, dealing with themes of interest to both academic disciplines in the wake of postmodernity. Topics range from theological hermeneutics to the value of theology, interrogations of our new theoretical contexts to constructive theological proposals, and from the use of sacred texts by contemporary theorists to the use of those contemporary theorists in constructive theology. This unit encourages and is receptive to creative proposals that work at the intersection of biblical studies, contemporary philosophy, theory, and theology.

## Chairs

- [Karen Bray, Wesleyan College](#)  
[karen.bray@gmail.com](mailto:karen.bray@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Robert Seesengood, Drew University](#)  
[rseesengood@albright.edu](mailto:rseesengood@albright.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Schleiermacher Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Schleiermacher's Speeches and the modern study of religion

Friedrich Schleiermacher's Speeches on religion is a classic text within the academic study of religion and theology. It also stands as one of the most debated texts in the field, generating contested understandings of religious feeling and intuition, the character of religious experience, the modern concept of religion, and the relation of religious piety to critical reflection and the public sphere. This session invites papers providing fresh engagements with this text, especially those that align with the 2024 AAR theme of Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin. Successful proposals might explore themes such as, but not limited to, the role of feeling and intuition in communicating religious experience, how affectivity both shapes and arises from spiritual and religious communities, the relationship of religion to metaphysics and ethics, instances of affective misalignment within and across communities, religious reflection and art, or religion in the public sphere.



(Co-sponsored with the Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, and possibly the Systematic Theology Unit)

Roundtable Discussion: The Oxford History of Modern German Theology, vol. I: 1781–1848

This roundtable discussion will consider the themes and approaches of the recent volume, *The Oxford History of Modern German Theology, Volume 1: 1781–1848*, edited by Grant Kaplan and Kevin M. Vander Schel. This volume is the first in a three-volume critical history of modern German theology from 1781 to 2000, edited by Johannes Zachhuber, David Lincicum, and Judith Wolfe. It provides the most comprehensive English language overview to date of the central debates, intellectual movements, and historical events that have shaped modern German theology from the late 1700s to the 1848 revolutions. Additionally, it pays attention to topics often neglected in earlier overviews of this period, such as the position of Judaism in modern German society, the intersection of race and religion, and the influence of social history on nineteenth-century theological debates.

This session will feature invited panelists who will critically discuss the methodologies, themes, and contributions of the volume.

(Co-sponsored with the Comparative Religious Ethics Unit)

Religious Nationalism

What kinds of contributions might Comparative Religious Ethics and contemporary theological scholarship make to discussions of religious nationalism? Specifically, how have religious traditions constructed militarism, violence, and the state in relation to nationalism? Contemporary or historical analyses are welcome.

The Schleiermacher Unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity. Pre-arranged sessions or panel proposals should reflect diversity of gender and/or race and ethnicity. Diversities of rank, method, and sub-discipline are also highly encouraged.

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

Art and Religion in Schleiermacher's Thought

While Friedrich Schleiermacher's place in early German Romanticism is well-established, his original contributions to aesthetics, and the close interconnections of art with religion in his writings, have received significantly less attention in English-language scholarship. Following upon the recent critical edition of Schleiermacher's writings on aesthetics (De Gruyter, 2021),

this session invites papers reflecting on Schleiermacher's distinctive understanding of art and aesthetics, and the various points of connection between his reflections on aesthetics and his broader thinking. Suitable proposal topics may cover a wide range, and might include themes such as the following: Schleiermacher's theory of art, as developed in lectures on aesthetics; "religion as art" (Kunstreligion); reflections on the role of artistic expression in the Speeches, Christmas Eve Dialogue, and Christian Faith; Schleiermacher's understanding of art in the context of early German Romanticism; the relation of aesthetics and anthropology; the role of artistic forms in worship or preaching; or artistic expression and affectivity.

## Statement of Purpose

The unit promotes scholarship – from specialists and non-specialists alike – that critically engage the thought and influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). We encourage constructive, historical, and textual analyses that open new lines of inquiry into Schleiermacher's oeuvre and contribution to contemporary discussions in theology, religious studies, philosophy, ethics, and hermeneutics.

## Chairs

- [Kevin Vander Schel, Gonzaga University](mailto:vanderschel@gonzaga.edu)  
[vanderschel@gonzaga.edu](mailto:vanderschel@gonzaga.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Taraneh Wilkinson, University of Cincinnati](mailto:trw28@georgetown.edu)  
[trw28@georgetown.edu](mailto:trw28@georgetown.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026

## Science, Technology, and Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Science, Technology, and Religion Unit is soliciting proposals on the following topics:

- Can religious or theological assumptions make a difference for scientific practice? What concrete examples can illustrate this?
- Does science have an implicit metaphysics? If science is not disenchanted, then how should one characterize it instead?
- [For possible co-sponsorship with the Bioethics and Religion Unit](#): we invite papers that interrogate matters of religion, spirituality, or the philosophy of religion as they intersect with brain-machine interfaces, neuroprosthetics, and neuroenhancement

and related technologies and enhancement processes through discursive or somatic modes. We especially welcome proposals that address these matters in light of the 2024 AAR Presidential theme which considers violence, nonviolence, and marginality.

- Science and violence: in response to the conference theme, we welcome panels that consider the ways violence is manifested in scientific inquiry
- The relationship between science policy and religion, with a focus on the necessity and potential form of ethical guidelines in science.
- Imagination as a bridge between science and religion. Different (especially non-western) social imaginaries of technology.
- Bruno Latour as a resource for thinking about “science and religion”.
- The durability of scientific knowledge
- Finally, STR is always open to paper proposals or panels that do not fit any of these particular parameters.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

Same as above.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit supports scholarship that explores the relationship of religion, theology, technology, and the natural sciences. We support research that attempts to bridge the gap between religious and scientific approaches to reality and encourage the development of constructive proposals that encourage engagement and dialogue with the sciences, along with a critical assessment of the meaning and impact of technologies for the human condition and the natural world.

## Chairs

- [Heather Mellquist Lehto, University of Toronto](#)  
[heather.mellquist@gmail.com](mailto:heather.mellquist@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Donovan Schaefer, University of Pennsylvania](#)  
[doschaef@upenn.edu](mailto:doschaef@upenn.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Scriptural Reasoning Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the 2024 meeting, the Scriptural Reasoning Unit will host two sessions related to the theme of this year's meeting: "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margins." The first session is co-sponsored with the Colloquium on Violence and Religion. It is an invited panel responding to Daniel Weiss' *Modern Jewish Philosophy and the Politics of Divine Violence* (2023). The second will be a Scriptural Reasoning Session on the theme of "margins."

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

For the 2024 June AAR online meeting, we will be hosting an invited panel to respond to Rebecca Epstein-Levi's groundbreaking work *When We Collide: Sex, Social Risk, and Jewish Ethics*.

## Statement of Purpose

Scriptural Reasoning (SR) is a practice of inter-religious text study in which participants from the three 'Abrahamic' religions (and increasingly, from other traditions as well) study short selections of their scriptures together in an open-ended but structured manner. When scholars read scripture across inter-religious difference, the effect is to put traditional wisdom and academic formation into play simultaneously. Over the years, this practice has proved effective at making familiar texts strange and offering a window into the deep patterns of reasoning and implicit logics of these different traditions. The Scriptural Reasoning Unit facilitates a unique mode of academic engagement within the setting of the AAR, rooted in this distinctive practice. It cultivates an approach to the academic study of scriptural traditions centered on the ways in which scriptures generate communities of religious practice: practices of study, of interpretation, of reflection, of ritual, and of social life. Its scholars seek to develop methods for analyzing aspects of this process and to offer philosophical or theological interventions in the ongoing life of the traditions.

## Chairs

- [Kelly Figueroa-Ray, Hamline University](mailto:chaplain@hamline.edu)  
[chaplain@hamline.edu](mailto:chaplain@hamline.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Laurie Zoloth, University of Chicago](mailto:lzoloth@uchicago.edu)  
[lzoloth@uchicago.edu](mailto:lzoloth@uchicago.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Secularism and Secularity Unit

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We welcome all types of proposals—including but not limited to individual papers, prearranged papers panels, roundtables, keyword sessions, and other creative and experimental formats.

Secular Economies – Socialism, Communism, Anarchy, Capitalism

We invite proposals that take up the intersection between formations of secularism and forms of economic organization, with a particular emphasis on socialist, communist, and/or anarchist modes. While much recent scholarship has probed the relationship between universalizing forms of neoliberal market secularism and Christianity, there has been comparatively less focus on other formations and intersections. From the legacies of Marxian critiques of religion for communist and socialist states, to instantiations of legal secularism in the context of trade and commerce, to mobilization of the secular in the context of worker movements, to the genealogies of the secular in specific geographies and political/economic systems, and beyond, we invite papers that complicate our collective understanding of economic secularism(s).

### Secularisms in Latin America and the Caribbean

With the political upheavals of Javier Milei in Argentina and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil as stark evidence, the traditional boundaries of public and private, religious and secular are rapidly transforming across Latin America. To that end, the Secularism and Secularity and the Religions in the Latina/o Americas Units invite proposals for individual papers and pre-arranged panels that examine contemporary reconfigurations and historical particularities in the unique formations of secularism and secularity in the Spanish, Portuguese, and French-speaking Americas.

Transpacific Secularisms

The Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Unit and the Secularism and Secularity Unit seek paper and panel proposals that address APIA religions and religious communities in relationship to secularism. For example, how have APIA communities navigated competing systems of secular discourse and state power between Asia and North America? How have disparate cultural dynamics or state institutions across the Pacific shaped APIA religions? Are

there ways that APIA religions shift our understanding of secularism(s)? We welcome analyses that explore how trans-Pacific religious communities encounter, contest, or conform to competing definitions of religion, race, science, nation, or liberty.

### Temporalities and Technocracies of the Secular

As new and emerging technologies are rapidly transforming experiences of time, space, and the human, we also invite papers critically interrogating these technologies and the secular epistemics underlying them. From developments in artificial intelligence (AI) to global social media networks and the contemporary “space race” among technocrats, how do these technologies reflect, trouble, and/or reify particularized conceptions of space, time, and identity as well as experiences of community, embodiment, and presence? What do the ideologies, politics, economics, and projects underlying these technological forms indicate about the state of contemporary secularism and secular metaphysics? What contradictions might studying them illuminate, and how should we theorize and historicize the ontologies they generate?

A possible pre-arranged panel on An Yountae's forthcoming book *The Coloniality of the Secular* (cosponsored with the Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit and the Philosophy of Religion Unit)

### Statement of Purpose

The Secularism and Secularity Unit explores a broad a set of questions associated with the secular, including its complex entanglements with religion and spirituality. This inquiry entails the study of political secularism and its role in the construction of religion, as well as the study of secular people, who can be described with a variety of labels including atheist, agnostic, humanist, and freethinker. It also includes an ongoing reappraisal of the historical transformations named by “secularization,” which signal the emergence of the modern and presuppose a break from the premodern. The group fosters new directions in secular studies by encouraging theoretically informed research that makes empirical contributions and engages with the subfield’s rapidly growing interdisciplinary literature.

### Chairs

- [Bradley Onishi, Skidmore College](#)  
[bradley.b.onishi@gmail.com](mailto:bradley.b.onishi@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Eric Stephen, Harvard University](#)  
[eric\\_stephen@mail.harvard.edu](mailto:eric_stephen@mail.harvard.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Sikh Studies Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The following are proposed panel titles for 2024. Additional panel proposals are welcomed. We especially welcome suggestions for panels to be co-sponsored with other units. The Sikh Studies unit exclusively uses the AAR PAPERS system for all submissions. Proposed panel titles are listed with contact information. If interested, please contact the listed person(s) directly:

- "Embodying the Sensuous: Sikh Poetry, Aesthetics, Ecology, and Feminisms" a panel in conversation with the work of Dr. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh.  
Contact [Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu](mailto:Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu)
- "Sovereignty, Militancy, and Empowerment of the Sikh Panth" a panel in conversation with the work of Dr. Pashaura Singh. Contact [Tejpaul.bainiwal@email.ucr.edu](mailto:Tejpaul.bainiwal@email.ucr.edu)

#### Co-Sponsorship Jain Studies Unit and Sikh Studies Unit:

"[Spiritual Warriors: Violence and Non Violence in the Jain and Sikh Traditions](#)" contact Jain Studies unit Co-Chair Greg Clines, [gclines@trinity.edu](mailto:gclines@trinity.edu); Sikh Studies unit Co-chair Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa-Baker, [Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu](mailto:Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu)

#### Co-Sponsorship Music and Religion and Sikh Studies Unit:

"Words of Protest, Words of Peace. Musical agency in Sikh activism and Beyond" contact Music and Religion unit Co-Chair Josh Busman, [Joshua.Busman@uncp.edu](mailto:Joshua.Busman@uncp.edu); Sikh Studies unit Co-chair Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa-Baker, [Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu](mailto:Nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu)

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

"Emerging Scholars in Sikh Studies"

This panel will showcase the latest research in Sikh Studies from emerging scholars, highlighting dynamic approaches and diverse themes. Papers are welcome which span history, literature, theology, sociology, and more, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on Sikh culture and identity. This online panel for emerging scholars looks to emphasise inclusivity and global relevance and aims to inspire collaboration and further research. Contact Jasjit Singh, [J.S.Singh@Leeds.ac.uk](mailto:J.S.Singh@Leeds.ac.uk)

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit provides a forum for highlighting the most recent and innovative scholarship in the area of Sikh studies. Our work draws from a broad range of methodological and theoretical approaches — history, postcolonial theory, performance theory, popular culture, philosophy, literary criticism, gender studies, etc. — by both established scholars as well as those new to the field. Seeking a balance between critical theory and substantive content, we seek to call into question key critical terms, challenge established frames of reference, and offer innovative and alternative ways in which Sikhs and Sikhism can be understood and studied in the academy.

## Chairs

- [Nirinjan Khalsa, Loyola Marymount University](mailto:nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu)  
[nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu](mailto:nirinjan.khalsa@lmu.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Jasjit Singh, University of Leeds](mailto:j.s.singh@leeds.ac.uk)  
[j.s.singh@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:j.s.singh@leeds.ac.uk)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Sociology of Religion Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The purpose of the Sociology of Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion is to generate cross-fertilization between the Sociology of Religion and Religious Studies. We are open to papers in all areas and therefore encourage submissions of any topic relevant to the sociology of religion. This year, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

Topics related to the AAR presidential theme of “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin” Including the sociology of violence within traditions and between traditions, religious nationalism, colonialism and nation states, symbolic violence, sexual abuse, discrimination, Israel–Palestine, the role of social media in religious violence and nonviolence, and sociological considerations of the conditions under which religions can lead to violence or nonviolence.

### Shifts in Latinx Religiosity (Co-sponsored with the Religion and the Latina/o Americas Unit)

For this session, we invite scholarship examining shifting religious affiliations, new developments within existing traditions, and the emergence of new religious movements among Latinx/a/os. We encourage proposals giving attention to trends such as, but not limited to, the following: shifting religious affiliations among Latinxs broadly; the rise of Latinx nones;



the growth of Latinx spiritual communities outside of traditional Catholic, Mainline, and Evangelical Christianity; Latinx involvement in, or responses to, the January 6 insurrection (and related politics) and its implications for Latinx religion and politics; emerging political discourses among Latinx religious communities.

#### Global and Transnational Religions

Including sociological research across nation–states within continents and across continents, such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and more.

#### Lived Religion

Including research on lived religion and everyday religion, genealogies of lived religion, critical analysis of the category of lived religion, comparison with folk religion, and more.

#### Religiously Unaffiliated

Including sociological research on atheists, agnostics, and other religiously unaffiliated people or groups, historical or contemporary, anywhere in the world.

#### Women Leaders and Gender in Religious Organizations

Including sociological research on women leaders of or within religious organizations, analyses of gender and leadership, intersectional analyses of women leaders, and more.

#### Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

Including sociological research on intersectional identities, religio–racial or religio–ethnic identifications, biracial or multiracial people and spaces, multiracial/multireligious social movements, and more.

#### Quantitative and Computational Research

Any research relying on quantitative or computational methods, including original mixed–methods research. Results must be complete and analyzed by the time the annual meeting begins.

#### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and inclusion are core values of the Sociology of Religion Unit. For this reason, we encourage organizers of pre–formed panels to invite participants that are diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, age, religion, region, discipline, methodology, professional status, and type of institution. In addition, we especially welcome proposals that focus on communities that have been historically underrepresented, including African, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and non–Christian communities, as well as on regions outside North America and Europe. In panel and paper proposals, we also welcome a diversity of methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, historical, and theoretical. When preparing your panel or roundtable proposal, please include the demographic data you provide to the AAR and explain how your panel's participants instantiate diversity.

## Review Process

All proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria: a descriptive title; a clearly formulated argument; clearly identified methodology and sources; engagement with relevant secondary literature; explicit articulation of an original contribution to the field; relevance to our unit's CFP; potential for co-sponsorships with other units. Further suggestions for AAR proposal writers can be found in Kecia Ali's "Writing a Successful Annual Meeting Proposal." Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during initial review, but visible prior to final acceptance or rejection.

## Publication

The Sociology of Religion Unit regularly co-sponsors panels with the peer-reviewed journal Critical Research on Religion (<http://crr.sagepub.com>), published by SAGE Publications. Presenters of promising papers in Sociology of Religion Unit panels may be invited to turn their papers into articles and submit them for peer review to Critical Research on Religion.

## Statement of Purpose

The Sociology of Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion serves as a bridge between religious studies and the subdiscipline of sociology of religion. It functions as a two-way conduit not only to import sociological research into religious studies but also to export the research of religious studies into both the subdiscipline and the broader field of sociology. Only through a cross-fertilization transgressing departmental boundaries can there be breakthroughs in research in both fields. The unit has a wide conception of sociology of religion. It is open to a multiplicity of paradigms and methodologies utilized in the subfield and sociology more broadly: theoretical as well as empirical, quantitative, qualitative, and historical. By liaising with other Program Units, the Sociology of Religion Unit is able to bring the rich diversity of critical and analytical perspectives that are housed in the American Academy of Religion into mainstream sociology of religion. Conversely, it aims to provide scholars of the study of religion with a deeper understanding of the landscape of sociology of religion.

## Chairs

- [Di Di, Santa Clara University](#)  
[ddi@scu.edu](mailto:ddi@scu.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Dusty Hoesly, University of California, Santa Barbara](#)  
[hoesly@ucsb.edu](mailto:hoesly@ucsb.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## South Asian Religions Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Steering Committee of the South Asian Religions (SARI) Unit invites colleagues to submit proposals for the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. SARI's mission is to provide a venue for new research on the many religious cultures, literatures, and histories of South Asia as they have developed in global contexts. We have a strong preference for sessions in which the papers cover a range of South Asian traditions, regions, and languages. Some themes already identified as potential papers sessions are listed below—please contact the associated colleagues for details about potential collaborations. Panels and papers are also encouraged that respond to the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme: "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin."

The SARI Steering Committee encourages full panel submissions (i.e., papers Sessions and roundtables rather than single papers) with the exception of papers for the New Directions panel (see below). For the 2024 Annual Meeting, SARI has a flexible allotment of panel formats: three 2-hour sessions and three 90-minute sessions. SARI can also sponsor one additional paper session if it is co-sponsored with another Unit. In your proposal, you may specify your preferred panel format (120 or 90 minutes) but the time allotted for accepted panels varies based on the overall programming needs. We especially encourage roundtables as they tend to create more dynamic conversations between participants and audience members. If relevant, list any potential co-sponsoring Unit with your proposal.

All Papers Session Panel Proposals must be submitted through the PAPERS system on the AAR website.

### New Directions in South Asian Religions:

The SARI Steering Committee accepts individual paper submissions for the "New Directions in South Asian Religions" to provide space for new scholarship in our field. To be eligible, applicants must (1) be ABD doctoral students (or recent graduates) from a Ph.D. program in South Asian religions and (2) never have presented at the national AAR meeting. Accepted panelists will be mentored by a senior colleague with appropriately specialized expertise. To apply, email your proposal (and any other queries) to Arun Brahmbhatt ([ajbrahmb@syracuse.edu](mailto:ajbrahmb@syracuse.edu)), Prea Persaud ([preakpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:preakpersaud@gmail.com)), and Aarti Patel ([abp6177@psu.edu](mailto:abp6177@psu.edu)) co-convenors of the panel for 2024 AND upload your individual paper proposal in the AAR's PAPERS system, labeled as a "New Directions" submission.

If you are looking for collaborators towards proposing a panel session, please feel free to reach out to colleagues on the SARI listservs and/or contact the SARI co-chairs SherAli Tareen ([SherAli.Tareen@fandm.edu](mailto:SherAli.Tareen@fandm.edu)) and Bhakti Mamtara ([mamtora@arizona.edu](mailto:mamtora@arizona.edu)) for assistance or to email the colleagues listed below if there is a topic that is interesting to you.

[Elections in India and the U.S. \(potentially co-sponsored with Hinduism Unit and North American Hinduism Unit\):](#)

Prea Persaud ([breakpersaud@gmail.com](mailto:breakpersaud@gmail.com)) and Shana Sippy ([shana.sippy@centre.edu](mailto:shana.sippy@centre.edu))

In both India and the US, 2024 promises to be a critical year for elections. It remains to be seen whether both the ruling BJP party and the Democratic Biden/Harris ticket will remain in power. No matter what happens, it is clear that religion will play a crucial role in setting the tone and the stakes of the various issues, agendas, and debates that occur among the vying parties. In the US, with two prominent South Asian Republican candidates for President—Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley— running for office, as well as Vice President Kamala Harris, we are seeing discourses about South Asian religion and identity take new forms. And, in India, Hindutva rhetoric and marginalization of religious minorities means that religion remains a core concern for anyone thinking about India's future. This panel seeks to explore how various players and parties are mobilizing religion in the 2024 elections, examining various contexts and iterations in the US and India.

Digital Humanities: Janani Comar ([j.mandayam@mail.toronto.ca](mailto:j.mandayam@mail.toronto.ca))

Teaching Minority Religions (a pedagogy roundtable): Elaine Fisher ([elaine.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:elaine.fisher@gmail.com))

Lived Religion: Jason Schwartz ([jasschwa@stanford.edu](mailto:jasschwa@stanford.edu))

Disability in South Asian Religions: Sarah Pierce Taylor ([sarahpiercetaylor@gmail.com](mailto:sarahpiercetaylor@gmail.com))

India and the War on Gaza:

Brian Pennington ([bpennington4@elon.edu](mailto:bpennington4@elon.edu))

In the forty years since India and Israel established diplomatic relationships, India has come to gradually embrace the Israeli state and to rely on advanced weaponry Israel has supplied to the Indian military. The BJP government's support for Israel has aligned with the Hindu nationalist government's alienation of Indian Muslims, many of whom have supported the Palestinian cause. This proposed session would examine those alignments and the responses of different religious actors and communities in India over time, with specific attention to the political discourse and engagements in the wake of October 7th and the war in Gaza.

Bhakti Practices from the Subaltern Margins:

Maharshi Vyas ([maharshi.m.vyas@gmail.com](mailto:maharshi.m.vyas@gmail.com))

This panel seeks to acknowledge and give voice to the role of bhakti/devotion, loosely defined as a set of affective religious practices of relating with gods and deities, within the marginalized communities of South Asia. It explores the concept of "subaltern" broadly, considering historical realities of marginalization. Panelists may indulge with issues of power, protest, and piety, although one could engage with bhakti in other creative ways.

Hindus, Muslims, and Contestations of Religion in Colonial India:

Ali Altaf Mian ([alimian@ufl.edu](mailto:alimian@ufl.edu)) and Francesca Chubb-Confer ([chubbcof@whitman.edu](mailto:chubbcof@whitman.edu))  
Stemming from conversations related to SherAli Tareen's recent book, *Perilous Intimacies: Debating Hindu-Muslim Friendship After Empire*, which brings together several conversations in South Asian Islam and South Asian religious studies more broadly, this panel considers the following questions: 1) How has new scholarship on Hindu-Muslim relations (Nair, Tareen) historicized and theorized the discursively porous yet sociologically stable categories of religious identification in early modern and colonial South Asia? 2) How do the concepts of sovereignty, translation, and friendship enable us to ask new questions about religious identity in colonial India? 3) What are the consequences of these answers for how we understand inter-religious strife in contemporary South Asia?

[A Cultural History of Hinduism: Strategies and Challenges \(co-sponsored with Hinduism Unit\):](#)

Karen Pechilis ([kpechili@drew.edu](mailto:kpechili@drew.edu))

A Cultural History of Hinduism is a six-volume study of Hinduism engaging 55 scholars from our field that will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in April 2024 (it is in press now). For a description please see <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/cultural-history-of-hinduism-9781350024434/> This roundtable panel brings together a group of volume editors, contributors and critics to discuss strategies and challenges in writing today about Hinduism in

its multireligious contexts past and present. Any academic in the field not involved in the CHH project who would like to serve as critic (who may focus on a specific area rather than the entire series) please contact Karen Pechilis at [kpechili@drew.edu](mailto:kpechili@drew.edu) with your expression of interest.

Roundtable discussion of a recent book:

SherAli Tareen ([sherali.tareen@famdm.edu](mailto:sherali.tareen@famdm.edu)) and Bhakti Mamtara ([mamtora@uarizona.edu](mailto:mamtora@uarizona.edu))

We are hoping to make this a more common feature of SARI annual offerings, with the stipulation that the book to be discussed should touch on the diversity of South Asian religious traditions and/or the complexity of religion as a category in relation to South Asian religions.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit's mission is to provide a venue for new and important research in the many religious cultures, texts, and histories of South Asia. Within the area of South Asia, all world religions exist in unique forms, from religions that originated in India — such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Tantra, and tribal religions — to religions that have taken on longstanding and distinctive forms in South Asia — such as Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. The focus of our work is thus on the religious, cultural, and intellectual traditions generated in South Asia, but not limited to that geographic region, and changes that have occurred in those traditions over several millennia. Scholars of South Asian religious traditions explore the distinctive manifestations of these traditions within and beyond the subcontinent, their interactions, and their movements to and expressions in other parts of the world. This Unit encourages contextualizing religion within debates on a broad array of parallel and intersecting issues, such as (but not limited to) politics, secularism, literature, philology, globalization, modernity, colonialism and postcolonialism, history, society, media, popular culture, material and visual culture, and economics. Our scholarship often emphasizes sessions and papers that look at more than one tradition and thus frequently entail some degree of comparative approach. Our website is <https://sari.arizona.edu>. We also have a listserv, which is essential to the work of our Unit. Information on joining the listserv can be found on our website.

## Chairs

- [Bhakti Mamtara, College of Wooster](mailto:mamtora@arizona.edu)  
[mamtora@arizona.edu](mailto:mamtora@arizona.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [SherAli Tareen, Franklin and Marshall College](mailto:stareen@famdm.edu)  
[stareen@famdm.edu](mailto:stareen@famdm.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Space, Place, and Religion Unit

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We welcome individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtable proposals for topics exploring space and place as they relate to religion. We are always interested in papers and sessions that employ theoretically or methodologically self-conscious and innovative approaches to understanding space and place as they relate to, condition, and constitute aspects of religious life including belief, ritual, meaning, aesthetics, and experience. We welcome ethnographically-informed studies of sites and historically-informed studies of texts that shed light on the role of space and place in religious traditions. Space, Place, and Religion dedicates one of its sessions to religious spaces in Asia. Our Unit is committed to diversity and inclusivity; pre-arranged panels and sessions should reflect gender, racial, and ethnic diversity as well as the diversity of field, method, and scholarly rank.

In addition, this year we are particularly interested in the following topics:

#### **Innovative and Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning about Religious Space and Place**

We are hoping for this panel to be divided into two sessions: one in June (on line) and one in November (in person). Though the sessions will stand alone, we intend them to be in conversation with one another, and to that end, we'll ask for papers to be pre-circulated in order to provide opportunities for dialogue between the two. The sessions will address innovative ways of teaching space, place and religion, whether face to face or in virtual environments. We encourage submissions on innovative teaching methods and technologies (virtual/augmented reality, other immersive environments, artificial intelligence, game-based learning, GIS and mapping technologies, to name a few examples) and especially ones that can be creatively presented in both the online and in person format.

#### **Imagined Religious Space(s) and Place(s)**

This session will explore the imagined space(s), place(s), and geographies religious practices and practitioners construct. Contributions might examine Vedic sacrificial space, the space of meditative practices and seances, or what Judith Weisenfeld calls "shadow maps," produced by Black and other historically subjugated people to both navigate violent landscapes and to chart imaginative spatial worlds.

## Marginal Geographies in Space Place and Religion

Marginal geographies blur the usual moral demarcation between the licit and the illicit. The margins afford space where the underserved and neglected must muster material, social, and spiritual resources to get things done. We are especially interested in papers that explore the violence of economic development by centering the voices on the margins of development projects. We are also interested in papers that explore the blurring of the boundaries between the licit and illicit, shedding new light on the ways legal structures, social forms, and spatial practices render morality or legality available to some but not others. This could include analyses of criminalized people and places, and the marginalized geographies they create, including (but not limited to) unhoused persons, participants in informal or extralegal economies, and migrant workers.

### [Marginal Spaces and Marginal Beings in Tibet and the Himalayas– Co-sponsored Panel with Tibet and Himalayan Religions Unit](#)

Panel Organizer – Brandon Dotson ([dotson.brandon@gmail.com](mailto:dotson.brandon@gmail.com))

Tibet has long conceived of itself as a frontier or a borderland of unruly human and non-human beings in need of taming, mostly by Indian Buddhism. Now absent from most maps, and facing the erasure of even the name "Tibet," per PRC mandate, Tibetan language and culture occupies an increasingly marginalized space. To put this contemporary space of the margin – and its dynamics of violence and non-violence – into perspective, this panel invites contributions that concern marginal spaces and marginal beings in Tibet and the Himalayas. Contributions might examine marginal figures such as butchers and morticians, zombies, wildmen, and revenants; interpersonal relations with beings such as sinpos, lumos, and dakinis; utopias ("non-places") such as hidden lands (beyul) and paradises; or liminal spaces of pilgrimage, crossroads, and rivers.

### [Theorizing Space and Place in Religion: Foucault's Heterotopias– Co-sponsored Panel with Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit](#)

Panel Organizer– Brooke Schedneck ([schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu))

Michel Foucault labeled counter-spaces that influence, contest, mirror, and invert as heterotopias, in contrast to utopias. Even though such places exist in reality, they are at the same time other and outside of mainstream society. Such spaces naturally align with religious practices such as asceticism, mysticism, and eschatology, which all contest authority and



orthodoxy, in sacred places such as deserts and mountains. We are seeking contributions on such heterotopias and reflections on its meaning for this panel.

#### [Sustaining Environmental Change for possible Co-sponsored Session with African Diaspora Unit](#)

Currently, the earth is in radical transition, resisting and responding to human impact in a myriad of tumultuous ways. This session will explore how we can make sense of climate change, survival of ourselves and the planet, and environmental justice in relation to African/Diaspora cosmology and cultural and spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices. Contributions might explore, for example, Yoruba indigenous culture's cosmological care for the ecology, the concept of Àṣẹ, which champions the power of rocks, trees, wind, thunder, waterfalls, and lightning as things, or how orixá constitute the indigenous ecologies that can support our lives and culture.

#### [Buddhism outside Asia and the transnational \(with a possible co-sponsorship with the Space, Place, and Religion Unit\)](#)

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

#### **Innovative and Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning about Religious Space and Place**

We are hoping for this panel to be divided into two sessions: one in June (online) and one in November (in person). Though the sessions will stand alone, we intend them to be in conversation with one another, and to that end, we'll ask for papers to be pre-circulated in order to provide opportunities for dialogue between the two. The sessions will address innovative ways of teaching space, place and religion, whether face to face or in virtual environments. We encourage submissions on innovative teaching methods and technologies (virtual/augmented reality, other immersive environments, artificial intelligence, game-based learning, GIS and mapping technologies, to name a few examples) and especially ones that can be creatively presented in both the online and in person format.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit is a forum for exploring religious sites and the spatial dimensions of religions. We feature ethnographically-informed studies of living sites, historically-informed studies of texts and artifacts, and analyses of architecture and landscape. Our work seeks to shed light on the role of space and place in religious traditions and communities or to examine religious activity (performance, ritual, and practice) in spatial contexts. This Unit recognizes that spaces and places, real and imagined/visionary, are constitutive elements in religious life; it is dedicated to investigating how they contribute to contemplative, ritualistic, artistic, economic, ethnic, or

political aspects of religious life using a variety of approaches and methods. We expect to include at least one session focused on spaces and places in Asia, in addition to sessions focused on other themes, regions, traditions or advancing the theoretical analysis of space and place.

## **Chairs**

- [Katie Oxx, Saint Joseph's University](#)  
[koxx@sju.edu](mailto:koxx@sju.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Brooke Schedneck, Rhodes College](#)  
[schedneckb@rhodes.edu](mailto:schedneckb@rhodes.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## **Study of Islam Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

This Unit encourages individual paper, paper session, and roundtable proposals in all areas of Islamic studies. Successful proposals will reflect theoretical and methodological sophistication and engagement with existing scholarship, along with innovative examination of Muslim practices, texts, and material culture in diverse contexts and geographies. We encourage the submission of coherent pre-arranged sessions involving multiple scholars, and these could include roundtable or other creative presentation formats.

As an explicit requirement of our Unit, a successful pre-arranged session or panel proposal must incorporate gender diversity. Diversity of race and ethnicity, theoretical method, and rank are also highly encouraged.

If your proposal is accepted and you agree to be on the program, we expect you to show up to participate in your session at the Annual Meeting, barring unforeseeable exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Islamic studies program Units have a policy according to which no-shows may be barred from the program for the following year.

For the 2024 meeting in San Diego, we are especially interested in paper and/or panel proposals on:

- Sound and music
- [Pedagogy, particularly feminist pedagogy](#) (see below for details on Co-sponsored session with the Islam, Gender, and Women unit)
- Borders, barzakh, liminal spaces – especially relating to the geography of the meeting in southern California
- Islam outside the Middle East
- Palestine
- Colonialism
- Islamophobia and anti-Semitism
- Non-profits, cultural preservation
- Muslim and non-Muslim relations
- Drugs and medicine
- Climate change
- Theory and method, especially how the field has developed in light of Orientalism
- Relationship between the seminary and academy

Graduate Student session: This special session will offer graduate students the opportunity to present for 5 minutes on their dissertation research, followed by short responses from other panelists and open discussion. If you are an advanced graduate student and interested in talking succinctly about your research in this session, please submit a paper proposal through the PAPERS system with the abstract and proposal the same text and length (maximum 150 words) and indicate that your submission is for this special session format at the top of the proposal.

For a special co-sponsored paper session with the Islam, Gender, Women program unit, we invite submissions that center on (1) tangible teaching methods, (2) assignments, (3) classroom activities, (4) curriculum design that foster a feminist pedagogical approach to the Islamic Studies classroom. We envision a session in which presenters share a specific pedagogical tool and discuss its application in the classroom, rather than presenting a traditional paper on feminist pedagogy in Islamic studies, followed by group discussions, thereby meeting our expectation of non-traditional session formats. Submissions should emphasize hands-on approaches, activities, and assignments that engage students in critical thinking and reflection while also paying attention to scholarship on teaching and learning. Proposal should explicitly demonstrate how your submission aligns with feminist pedagogical principles in Islamic Studies and contributes to creating an inclusive and empowering learning environment.

As always, we encourage submissions on topics of general interest, such as the Qur'an and hadith, law and ethics, philosophy and theology, mysticism, ritual, gender and sexuality, race and politics, modernity and globalization, and other areas. Furthermore, we encourage proposals dealing with Shi'ism within and across these areas, as well as other forms of Islam that have been rendered marginal or peripheral.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit is a home for the academic study of Islam within the AAR. This Unit encompasses various approaches and subjects, from Qur'anic studies to modern reform movements and from textual research to sociology. The Unit also has enduring interests in pedagogical issues associated with the teaching of Islam and prioritizes, through two signature sessions, mentoring of early-career scholars. The purpose of the Unit is both to provide a forum for dialogue among differing approaches and projects within Islamic studies and also to provide opportunities for the discussion of work that affects the overall field of the study of religion. We normally meet for five to seven sessions at each Annual Meeting. We often coordinate our work with other Islam-related AAR Program Units, including the Contemporary Islam Unit, the Islam, Gender, Women Unit, the Islamic Mysticism Unit, Teaching Islamophobia Unit, and the Qur'an Unit.

## Chairs

- [Zaid Adhami, Williams College](#)  
[za2@williams.edu](mailto:za2@williams.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Elliott Bazzano, Le Moyne College](#)  
[bazzanea@lemoyne.edu](mailto:bazzanea@lemoyne.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## [Study of Judaism Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This Unit welcomes proposals for individual papers, papers sessions, and roundtables dealing with Judaism, Jews, and Jewish studies broadly conceived — from late antiquity to the present, in multiple global settings, and employing various methodologies — that address topics of concern to the broader community of religious studies scholars. Pre-arranged session or panel proposals should represent a diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and academic rank.

We are open to any proposals related to the study of Judaism, although for 2024, we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- grief, memorialization, and the lachrymose
- Judaism and conceptions of the political
- unruliness, embodiment, and marginality
- the politics of Jewish studies: polemics, positionality, and publics
- [Jewish lesbian, feminist, queer, and/or trans theories, theologies, and activism, for a co-sponsored session with the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit](#)
- [religious studies and Jewish economic history in conversation, for a co-sponsored session with the Religion and Economy Unit](#)

## Statement of Purpose

The goal of this Unit is to develop and expand the relationship between the study of Judaism and the broader study of religion. We work to meet this goal in three primary ways: • Methodologically • Topically • By cosponsorship with other Program Units. We engage in active conversation with methodologies in the study of religion by exploring the historical, social, aesthetic, political, philosophical, and cultural aspects of Jewish religion in its various contexts.

## Chairs

- [Andrea Dara Cooper, University of North Carolina](#)  
[adcooper@email.unc.edu](mailto:adcooper@email.unc.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Shari Rabin, Oberlin College and Conservatory](#)  
[srabin@oberlin.edu](mailto:srabin@oberlin.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## [Tantric Studies Unit](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite papers on the following topics:

- Tantra and Indigeneity. Seth Ligo, [sethligo@gmail.com](mailto:sethligo@gmail.com)
- Tantra and the Mind. Loriliai Biernacki, [biernacki@colorado.edu](mailto:biernacki@colorado.edu)
- The Charnel Economy in Tantra: Rituals with/for the Dead. Julia Hirsch, [hirschj@stanford.edu](mailto:hirschj@stanford.edu)
- Conceptualizing Experience (for co-sponsorship with Hindu Philosophy Unit). Elaine Fisher, [emf@stanford.edu](mailto:emf@stanford.edu)

- Tantra and Non-Brahmin Identity. Jason Schwartz, [khecara36@gmail.com](mailto:khecara36@gmail.com)
- The roles of Yoginīs or ḍākinīs in Tantric Transmission, Revelation, and Initiation. Jackson Stephenson, [jbj@ucsb.edu](mailto:jbj@ucsb.edu)
- Rethinking Gender and Tantra: Texts, Praxes, Theories, Methods. Sundari Johansen, [sjohansen@ciis.edu](mailto:sjohansen@ciis.edu)
- [We also seek papers for a possible co-sponsored session with the Hindu Philosophy unit](#) on Loriliai Biernacki's recent book *The Matter of Wonder: Abhinavagupta's Panentheism and the New Materialism* (OUP 2023) and on Hindu philosophies of materiality more broadly. Michael Allen, [msa2b@virginia.edu](mailto:msa2b@virginia.edu)
- [A possible co-sponsorship with the Hindu Philosophy Unit, Conceptualizing Experience](#). Elaine Fisher, [emf@stanford.edu](mailto:emf@stanford.edu)

Preformed paper panels or roundtables are strongly encouraged and may be structured to fill 2.0-hour or 1.5-hour session meeting times. Panel proposals may engage any topic or concern, with the above being only some of the possibilities.

We encourage our members to consider the diversity of traditions, geographical areas, and disciplines as well as the diversity of participants, responders, and presiders when putting together panel proposals. Please also take into consideration whether your panel would benefit from being co-sponsored with another Unit or Units of the AAR.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit brings together scholars who utilize a range of methodological and theoretical perspectives in their studies of the complex religious, social, and cultural phenomena known collectively as tantra. “Tantra” refers to a range of esoteric religious traditions that developed in India and were disseminated throughout Asia during the first millennium CE. These diverse traditions have used mental and bodily disciplines, devotional and ritual practices, and gendered cosmologies, and have created elaborate artistic as well as sociopolitical systems. The collective study of tantra has led to several important conclusions: • The demonstrated diversity of tantric practices and ideologies demands a plurality of methods, theories, and interpretative strategies by scholars • These richly varied tantric traditions became, by the twelfth century CE, central to many Asian religious and sociopolitical systems, including those of India, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Cambodia, Japan, and China • Various traditional Asian forms of tantra have been brought to the Western world since the early twentieth century and are undergoing a vital process of reinterpretation and appropriation Our goal is to provide a venue for scholars of different areas of tantric studies to collaborate across traditional boundaries of religious traditions (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism), present-day nation-states, geography (e.g., India, Tibet, China, Japan), and academic disciplines (e.g., history of religions,

anthropology, art history, linguistics, sociology). We seek to be a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary enterprise. Tantra as a set of practices — a religious technology — and as a set of doctrines explaining, justifying, and rationalizing those practices, in fact, exists across religious, national, and geographical boundaries. For example, an adequate understanding of Japanese Tantric Buddhist practice and doctrine requires not only locating it in an East Asian Buddhist context but also in an Indian and South Asian context where the juxtaposition of Buddhist and Hindu tantras can fruitfully reveal aspects that might otherwise remain obscured. Similarly, by setting Buddhist materials in relation to Hindu traditions — both of which might otherwise be seen either as uniquely Hindu or Buddhist — will be highlighted as part of a broader, shared tantric discourse. This Unit will also allow scholars to present new methodologies for the study of tantra and help to bridge more traditional academic approaches, such as textual-based and fieldwork-based studies. We seek to further the study of tantra as a global, transnational phenomena and as an important new religious movement. Finally, the Unit will also explore new perspectives for studies of gender, power, identity, and sexuality that are so germane to modern religious scholarship.

## Chairs

- [Anya Golovkova, Lake Forest College](mailto:agolovkova@lakeforest.edu)  
[agolovkova@lakeforest.edu](mailto:agolovkova@lakeforest.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Glen Hayes, Bloomfield College](mailto:glen_hayes@bloomfield.edu)  
[glen\\_hayes@bloomfield.edu](mailto:glen_hayes@bloomfield.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Teaching Religion Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Teaching Religion Unit critically examines pedagogical theory and practice. We particularly value proposals that combine scholarship of teaching and learning \*and\* innovative teaching practices. For 2024, paper and panel proposals that address the following themes are especially welcome:

Teaching Tactics/Teaching Gift Exchange

The Teaching Religion Unit regularly hosts an annual session on “Teaching Tactics,” which features lightning-round presentations (5–7 minutes total) of a specific teaching technique, assignment, etc., followed by discussion. This year we are particularly interested in

presentations that not only describe a teaching tactic, but may: demonstrate an actual lesson; model engaged, interactive, and experiential pedagogy; and/or are accompanied by a printed or digital resource for audience members.

#### [Teaching Nonviolence \(co-sponsored by Teaching Religion Unit and Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit\)](#)

In line with the Presidential theme of “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin,” the Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit and Teaching Unit and the Teaching Religion Unit are seeking proposals for a possible co-sponsored session addressing the question: “what does nonviolent teaching look like?” We invite critical engagement around teaching non-violence as well as pedagogy that models nonviolence, especially in relation to the margin.

#### Graphic Novels, Zines, and More in the Teaching of Religion

Many instructors teaching courses on religion are beginning to incorporate graphic novels, zines, comics, and other new or non-traditional materials into their classes. We invite paper proposals that reflect on the teaching of religion using such materials and/or the creation of these materials by instructors or students. How can such materials be used effectively in the classroom? And, how can we understand the use of such materials in relation to scholarship of teaching and learning?

#### Teaching Religion Abroad

This pre-arranged roundtable will focus on best practices, innovative ideas, and resources available to AAR/SBL members interested in taking students on short-or long-term faculty-led study abroad programs. Participants will spend five minutes speaking to a specific component of their teaching abroad experiences (planning an itinerary, pros and cons of working with a provider company, tying learning objectives to site visits, successful assignments, challenges of pilgrimage vs. secular travel, fundraising, etc.) before breaking into small groups for discussion and consultation.

#### Teaching in the Study of Religion and Beyond

In this pre-arranged panel discussion, the Teaching Religion Unit will engage contributors to the new volume *Teaching in the Study of Religion and Beyond* (Bloomsbury, 2024). This panel is



specifically targeted to new teachers and reflects the experiences of professors teaching undergraduates primarily, but they also address many practical topics that emerge across the teaching career and in various contexts. More specifically, the panelists and book reflect a range of topics from digital humanities and critical thinking to more administrative tasks that affect teaching such as attendance, accommodations, and teaching in the general curriculum.

## Open Call

We invite proposals for individual papers and panel sessions that join innovative teaching practice with the scholarship of teaching and learning. Of particular interest this year are papers that might include teaching with/about AI (artificial intelligence), affect in teaching religion, new approaches to assessment, and strategies for addressing surging class sizes in general education courses. Preference will be given to presentation formats that model engaged, interactive, and experiential pedagogy.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

[Teaching through Conflict \(co-sponsored by Teaching Religion Unit and the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit\)](#)

The Teaching Religion Unit and the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit invite proposals for a roundtable discussion for the June online AAR session on teaching through conflict. Specifically, we invite proposals that wrestle with how critical theory/discourse might be a classroom tool to help navigate conflicts that arise on our campuses due to geopolitics and religious discourse.

## Statement of Purpose

The Teaching Religion Unit critically examines pedagogical theory and practice. We invite proposals that join innovative teaching practice with the scholarship of teaching and learning. Preference will be given to presentation formats that model engaged, interactive, and experiential pedagogy.

## Chairs

- [Kate DeConinck, Other](#)  
[kydeconinck@gmail.com](mailto:kydeconinck@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Indiana University – Purdue University, Indianapolis](#)  
[jtuckere@iupui.edu](mailto:jtuckere@iupui.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Theology and Continental Philosophy Unit invites individual paper proposals, panel proposals, and roundtables on any of the following topics, or any others within our unit's area of focus. We also encourage proposals to combine aspects of the topics listed below:

- Figures and figurality – especially in engagement with the work of Lee Edelman, Erich Auerbach, Gilles Deleuze, and David Marriott
- The 'Anthroposecular' – new critiques of the secular and secularism as found in the dialogue between anthropology and continental philosophy
- Plant-thinking – work engaging with continental philosophy, theology (as broadly understood) and recent work in environmental humanities, especially on human-plant relations
- Latin American phenomenology of religion in dialogue with and critique of Christian liberation theology and/or European philosophy)
- Recent work in continental philosophy and southeast asian studies
- Religion, violence, and the post-secular

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

It has been 20 years since the original publication of Gil Anidjar's *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy*. We invite proposals which consider the legacy of the book's argument as it relates to the themes of political theology, enmity, and the construction of inimical racial difference via religious difference today.

### Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to further discussions at the intersection of post-Kantian philosophy in its various permutations with historical and contemporary theological reflection. While we remain centered on continental European thought (even and especially beyond the borders of the continent) on the philosophical side, the term "theology" in our parlance extends to critical reflection on a range of religions worldwide, and we are particularly interested to expand our offerings in Judaism, Islam, and marginalized traditions (such as witchcraft) in coming years. Contact the Program Unit Chairs if you seek further information on the Unit's activities.

### Chairs

- [Marika Rose, University of Winchester](mailto:marika.rose@winchester.ac.uk)  
[marika.rose@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:marika.rose@winchester.ac.uk)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Anthony Paul Smith, La Salle University](mailto:anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com)  
[anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com](mailto:anthonypaul.smith@gmail.com)

## Theology and Religious Reflection Unit

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We are interested in papers, roundtables, and panel proposals dealing with any of the following, as well as any proposals offering theoretically sophisticated approaches to matters of religious reflection.

- Violence, non-violence, and the margins.
- The effects and affects of fragmentation, borders and partition.
- Theology/religion and spirituality.
- Trauma, especially (but not only) in relation to the ongoing war in Gaza and the global response. Doing constructive theology in trauma. The languages, possibilities and limits of religious trauma.
- We are especially interested in proposals dealing with Mariology beyond Christianity and icons of Our Lady of the Quran.

We are also interested in proposals for panels or Author–Meets–Critics sessions on exciting new work, including especially the following books:

- Thenmozhi Soundararajan, *The Trauma of Caste: A Dalit Feminist Meditation* (2022).
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Future is Disabled: Prophecies, Love Notes and Mourning Songs* (2022).
- Mark Jordan, *Queer Callings: Notes on Names and Desires* (2023).
- Carlos Ulises Decena, *Circuits of the Sacred: A Faggotology in the Black Latinx Caribbean* (2023).
- Paul Heck, *Political Theology and Islam: From the Birth of Empire to the Modern State* (2023).
- Mouchir Basile Aoun, *The Arab Christ: Towards an Arab Christian Theology of Conviviality* (2022).
- Eziaku Atuama Nwokocha, *Voodoo en Vogue: Fashioning Black Divinities in Haiti and the United States* (2023).
- Kameron Carter, *Anarchy of Black Religion: A Mystic Song* (2023).

### Statement of Purpose

The Theology and Religious Reflection Unit is committed to fostering broad, interdisciplinary conversations in the study of religion and theology. We aim to cultivate a site of intersection and engagement for scholars working in various religious contexts who also have interests in the wider aspects of mutual interest in our field (theological, theoretical, methodological,

political, ethical). Our Unit promotes constructive work that typically includes an emphasis on critical engagement as well as conceptual and social transformation.

## Chairs

- [Abdul Rahman Mustafa, University of Paderborn](#)  
[abdurahman.mustafa@googlemail.com](mailto:abdurahman.mustafa@googlemail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Linn Tonstad, Yale University](#)  
[linn.tonstad@yale.edu](mailto:linn.tonstad@yale.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Theology of Martin Luther King Jr. Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Author Meets Critics: AnnMarie Mingo, *Have You Got Good Religion? Black Women's Faith, Courage, and Moral Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement* (60 minutes)

The MLK Unit invites round table proposals that consider AnnMarie Mingo's 2024 University of Illinois Press publication, *Have you Got Good Religion? Black Women's Faith, Courage, and Moral Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement*. From the Publisher: "What compels a person to risk her life to change deeply rooted systems of injustice in ways that may not benefit her? The thousands of Black Churchwomen who took part in civil rights protests drew on faith, courage, and moral imagination to acquire the lived experiences at the heart of the answers to that question. AnneMarie Mingo brings these forgotten witnesses into the historical narrative to explore the moral and ethical world of a generation of Black Churchwomen and the extraordinary liberation theology they created." In this session, we invite panelists to engage and think with Mingo in relation to the argument of the text. AnnMarie Mingo will offer a response to the papers.

Civil Rights Act of 1964: Sixty Years Later (90 minutes)

In 1963 President John F. Kennedy announced to the United States his intent to back a sweeping piece of Civil Rights legislation. In the same address, Kennedy argued that the freedom of the Nation was inextricably tied to the freedom of all of its citizens. Martin Luther King Jr. supported and advocated for the Bill. Indeed, after the 1963 March on Washington, King wrote that "The hundreds of thousands who marched in Washington to level barriers...summed up

everything in a word – NOW. What is the content of NOW? Everything, not some things, in the President's civil rights bill is part of NOW" (King, "In a Word – Now").

The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. unit invites papers that critically take up the substance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in relation to the Theology/Ethics/Practice of Martin Luther King, Jr. We are interested in papers that both engage the history and that also demonstrate an attentiveness to the present struggles for Civil Rights. How might King offer a lens through which to meditate on the intersection between religion and civil rights? How might we adjudicate the present state of civil rights from the vantage point of the aims of the 1964 legislation? How do questions of religion, theology, gender, and race, complicate the question of civil rights and religion, broadly conceived? These and other questions animate the Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. unit's call for papers.

## Statement of Purpose

The work of this Unit is focused on creating conversations around the unique contributions of Martin Luther King Jr. to the Christian theological tradition in the twentieth century and to the religious, cultural, political, and economic consequences of his work. We are particularly interested in the many facets of the Civil Rights Movement, of which King was a significant part. These explorations have included a focus on the role of women in the movement, the economic dimensions of King's work, and his use of both the theological traditions and rhetoric of the Black Church. In all of our sessions we are interested in fostering inter- and multidisciplinary approaches to this project.

## Chairs

- [Leonard McKinnis, University of Illinois](mailto:leonardm@illinois.edu)  
[leonardm@illinois.edu](mailto:leonardm@illinois.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Montague Williams, Point Loma Nazarene University](mailto:montaguewilliams@pointloma.edu)  
[montaguewilliams@pointloma.edu](mailto:montaguewilliams@pointloma.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We are looking forward to another year of excellent THRU programming in 2024 in San Diego!

We are pleased to announce that the Travel Grant for Tibetan and Himalayan scholars will run again next year. Two attendees enjoyed full support in 2023, and we are able to support even more in 2024. If you are a Tibetan or Himalayan scholar, please apply. If you are forming a panel, consider reaching out to Tibetan and Himalayan scholars who might join your panel and attend the AAR in San Diego with the assistance of the grant funds. The grant is administered by the Initiative for Tibetan, Himalayan, and Buddhist Studies in the American Academy, supported by the Khyentse Foundation. Applications for the travel grant will require acceptance to an AAR panel. More information will follow in January 2024.

As a reminder, you do not need to be an AAR member to submit a proposal to the annual meeting; however, you do have to become a member to present at the annual meeting.

Proposals are welcome on any theme or topic related to Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit. The presidential theme for 2024, suggested by incoming president Jin Park, is "Violence, Non-Violence, and the Margin." Proposals do not need to relate to the presidential theme but the AAR will be particularly interested in panels that address it.

Please see below the proposed panel sessions we've received, and which we are now publicizing through this call for papers. Contact details of the organizers are below, and you should reach out to them to express your interest. And you are more than welcome to propose your own panel or paper outside of what is listed here.

#### Violent and Non-violent Interactions with Marginal Beings

Contact Bill McGrath, [wmcgrath@nyu.edu](mailto:wmcgrath@nyu.edu) Expanding upon the presidential theme of "Violence, Non-violence, and the Margin," this panel seeks to explore the relationships and sometimes violent interactions that take place between beings within and between the religious worlds of Tibet, the Himalayas, and beyond. Papers would ideally consider the boundaries and relationships between central and marginal beings (broadly conceived), and address themes, acts, and/or threats of violence in religious sources and contexts.

#### Tibetan Religion from the Margins: Approaches to the Study of Early Dzogchen

Contact Elaine Lai [elaine00@stanford.edu](mailto:elaine00@stanford.edu) and Devin Zuckerman [dcz3fj@virginia.edu](mailto:dcz3fj@virginia.edu) Dzogchen has been on the margins of Tibetan religions since its advent. Early Dzogchen studies from the 11th to 14th centuries have been on the margins of Tibetan Buddhist studies; only very recently

in the history of the discipline have scholars begun engaging with Dzogchen Heart Essence (Snying thig) materials from this period in an effort to better understand the early development of the tradition. Working from these margins, this panel seeks to engage larger questions about the ethics and methods involved in reconstructing histories of early Dzogchen communities and praxis. What approaches have we, as scholars, taken up in our analysis and emplotment of these early Dzogchen materials? In what ways do we risk doing violence to texts and histories through our analysis? How do our relationships with contemporary Dzogchen communities and praxis inform our scholarship? What happens when we encounter materials that are violent to our own sensibilities? We invite papers that approach these questions from diverse methodological and theoretical angles. We aim for the panel to unfold into a wider conversation with the audience, to reflect collectively upon the ethical frameworks in the work that we all do as scholars of religion.

#### Autobiographical Poetry in Translation

Contact either Gedun Rabsal ([grabsal@indiana.edu](mailto:grabsal@indiana.edu)) or Nicole Willock ([nwillock@odu.edu](mailto:nwillock@odu.edu)). We are looking for others to join a roundtable session on the theme of translating Tibetan autobiographical poetry. In advance of the AAR, we will share our own original translations of autobiographical poetry. At the AAR, we will have a roundtable session focusing on aspects of translation. To focus the discussion, the idea is to look at four different autobiographical writings in verse including figures such as Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Jamyang Chokyi Lodro (1893–1959).

#### Teaching with Buddhist Art and Material Culture

Contact Elena Pakhoutova [epakhoutova@rubinmuseum.org](mailto:epakhoutova@rubinmuseum.org) and Karl Debreczeny [kdebreczeny@rubinmuseum.org](mailto:kdebreczeny@rubinmuseum.org).

This roundtable aims to bring together people who are interested in engaging with art and material culture as the entry point for teaching about Buddhism. Rubin Museum's recently launched Project Himalayan Art is designed to provide resources for making connections across diverse regional expressions of Buddhist culture and expanding representation of the Himalayan and Inner Asian religious cultures' in classrooms. We are particularly interested in the critical analysis of these resources from the practical pedagogical standpoint, and welcome participation from faculty who either have used the Project Himalayan Art resources or focus on art and material culture in their teaching. In the course of this discussion, we intend to learn about resources for teaching religion that have proven effective in order to further the development of Project Himalayan Art and meet faculty and students' needs.

[Co-Sponsored Session with Space, Place, and Religion Unit "Marginal Spaces and Marginal Beings in Tibet and the Himalayas"](#)

Contact Brandon Dotson; [dotson.brandon@gmail.com](mailto:dotson.brandon@gmail.com) Tibet has long conceived of itself as a frontier or a borderland of unruly human and non-human beings in need of taming, mostly by Indian Buddhism. Now absent from most maps, and facing the erasure of even the name "Tibet," per PRC mandate, Tibetan language and culture occupies an increasingly marginalized space. To put this contemporary space of the margin – and its dynamics of violence and non-violence – into perspective, this panel invites contributions that concern marginal spaces and marginal beings in Tibet and the Himalayas. Contributions might examine marginal figures such as butchers and morticians, zombies, wildmen, and revenants; interpersonal relations with beings such as sinpos, lumos, and dakinis; utopias ("non-places") such as hidden lands (beyul) and paradises; or liminal spaces of pilgrimage, crossroads, and rivers.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit's mission is to create an environment that promotes discussion among scholars taking diverse approaches to the study of Tibetan and Himalayan religions. Our identity and cohesion derive from the fact that we deal with a delimited geocultural space, but the intellectual excitement comes from the fact that we are specialists in different historical periods and cultural areas, from the fact that we are interested in different religious traditions, and from the fact that we have different methodological approaches to the study of religion. In particular, we encourage scholarship that approaches Tibetan and Himalayan religions through a wide range of approaches:

Multidisciplinary focus — we are committed to methodological diversity and to promoting scholarship that challenges the traditional disciplinary dichotomies through which the field has defined itself, such as text/practice, written/oral, philology/ethnography, and humanistic/social scientific study.

Transregional focus — we encourage a holistic approach to the study of Tibet and the Himalaya as a region, albeit a diverse one. One of the most important features of religious traditions in our field — perhaps in every field — is the degree to which they are inextricably connected, and it is only through the exploration of such interconnections that the phenomenon of religion in the Tibeto-Himalayan region can be understood. Such interconnections often cut across ethnonational boundaries.

Focus on cultural history — in recent times, the study of Asian religions has taken a quite drastic cultural/historical turn. Nowhere is this more evident than in the study of Tibetan and Himalayan religions. A previous generation of scholars was concerned principally with elite religious institutions — and more specifically with their doctrinal/philosophical texts. Today scholarship is much more diverse. A new generation of scholars is concerned, for example, with folk religious practices, religion and material culture, the politics of religious institutions, the



representation of Tibetan religions in the media, and the historical construction of the field itself.

This Unit is committed to fostering such a multifaceted approach to the cultural history of Tibet and the Himalayas.

## Chairs

- [Brandon Dotson, Georgetown University](#)  
[brandon.dotson@wolfson.oxon.org](mailto:brandon.dotson@wolfson.oxon.org)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Jue Liang, Case Western Reserve University](#)  
[jl4nf@virginia.edu](mailto:jl4nf@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Traditions of Eastern Late Antiquity Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Pedagogy and Eastern Late Antiquity We invite paper proposals that explore pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies focused on eastern late antiquity, broadly conceived. We are particularly interested in proposals that showcase innovative teaching techniques in undergraduate classrooms and incorporate multidisciplinary perspectives. Possible teaching areas include (but are not limited to): late antique Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Mandaism, Manichaeism, and eastern Christianity. Co-sponsored with the SBL "John the Baptist" unit, Book Review Session on James F. McGrath's *John of History, Baptist of Faith* (Eerdmans 2023) and Edmondo Lupieri's *John of the Mandaeans* (Gorgias 2023) A book review session focused on James F. McGrath's *John of History, Baptist of Faith* (Eerdmans 2023) and Edmondo Lupieri's *John of the Mandaeans* (Gorgias 2023). While the panel will be assembled by invitation, expressions of interest to the program unit chairs are welcome. Open Call An open session for which papers on any topic germane to the subject area of the Program Unit may be proposed. We particularly encourage papers from graduate students, new AAR members, and minoritized scholars.

### Statement of Purpose

This program unit focused on Late Antiquity in the East aims to provide a home for the study of religious traditions that are rooted in Mesopotamia, Persia, and western Asia, particularly those parts that were outside the Roman cultural reach such as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Mandaism. While the unit will focus on late antiquity, many of these traditions, and particularly their extant texts come to us from much later periods, and this scholarly issue will be part of

our discussions. In addition, many of the traditions that were born in this time and place also spread to other parts of the world, and the study of them in those forms and contexts also has a place within this program unit, as does investigation of their response to the rise of Islam in the region. In addition, this unit's focus is not exclusively on those traditions that developed uniquely in this region, but also those which, when transplanted there, had significant evolutions in that milieu that differ from their counterparts in other times and places (e.g. Christianity, Judaism). We likewise encourage research which focuses on the interaction between the various communities and traditions of this place and time.

## Chairs

- [Abby Kulisz, McMaster University](#)  
[alkulisz@iu.edu](mailto:alkulisz@iu.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [James McGrath, Butler University](#)  
[jfmcgrat@butler.edu](mailto:jfmcgrat@butler.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

"Teaching Against The State"

Over half of all U.S. states have enacted legislation banning the teaching of critical race theory, LGBTQ content, or boycott, divestment, & sanctions (BDS) discussions in higher education. This panel invites creative and critical reflections on how religion educators can teach against the state under such politically hostile circumstances. Are educators ethically obligated to defy state and institutional prohibitions, even when it threatens their personal security? What innovative tactics might allow religion scholars to continue pushing transformative education when colleges, universities, and theological institutions are intent on minimizing legal liability? How might research in the study of religion support these efforts to teach against the state?

### "Teaching Nonviolence" Co-sponsored with the Teaching Religion Unit

In line with the Presidential theme of "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," this panel invites papers that reflect on "what does nonviolent teaching look like?" We invite critical engagement

around teaching non-violence as well as pedagogy that models nonviolence, especially in relation to the margin.

### "Cultivating Democratic Practices in and around the Classroom" Co-Sponsored with the Pragmatism and Empiricism in American Religious Thought Unit

A common defense of the humanities is that it prepares students for democratic citizenship by teaching skills like critical thinking, self-reflection, open-mindedness, and civil discourse. Relative to these core tenets, at a time where both democracy and higher education appear to be under attack, we invite papers that highlight the practical work educators can do in the classroom to cultivate critical thinking and democratic habits in our students.

Informed by thought leaders such as Dewey, Freire, hooks and others, we invite papers that address how we might enact spaces in our classrooms that help mitigate the challenges posed to both our democracy and our educational institutions.

We welcome papers that frame the classroom as a training ground for democracy and address how educators can equip students to navigate a diversity of thought, integrate new and challenging ideas, and understand themselves to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning. We encourage presentations that “show” rather than “tell” by engaging the audience in demonstrations or participatory activities. Additionally, we are open to critiques and reassessments of the idea of the classroom as a training ground for democracy.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit seeks to provide a forum for exploring transformative scholarship and pedagogy across religious traditions and scholarly disciplines, challenging the traditional boundaries between scholarship and activism while experimenting with alternative approaches to teaching and the production of knowledge.

## **Chairs**

- [Peter Capretto, Phillips Theological Seminary](#)  
[peter.capretto@ptstulsa.edu](mailto:peter.capretto@ptstulsa.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Michael R. Fisher Jr., The Ohio State University](#)  
[fisherjr.1@osu.edu](mailto:fisherjr.1@osu.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Vatican II Studies Unit

## Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

A Fresh Reception of the Council?: Synodality and the Global Church

In his 2023 article, “Synodality and the Francis Pontificate: A Fresh Reception of Vatican II,” the late Catholic ecclesiolgist Richard R. Gaillardetz notes that the great gift that Pope Francis has given to the Church is a fresh and coherent reception of the Second Vatican Council, and at “the heart of that reception, serving as its unifying center, is the theme of synodality.” As we reflect on the period between the opening of the Catholic synod on synodality in October 2021 and its projected close in October 2024, this session will explore the extent to which Gaillardetz’ claim is accurately reflected in the life of the global church. In what ways does synodality advance the teachings of the Council? Does synodality go beyond the Council? What may be the limitations of synodality in light of the Council? Does synodality successfully achieve what Gaillardetz called a ‘noncompetitive theology of church’ inaugurated by the council?

Lay Voices Taking the Stage at Vatican II: Unveiling a Sixty-Year Legacy and Ongoing Reception

Sixty years ago, women first stepped into the council hall and for the first time during a session, a lay auditor – the Secretary General of the World Movement of Catholic Workers, Patrick Keegan – addressed the Council Fathers. Together with the other lay auditors and with the involvement of other members of the laity, they ensured the integration of decades of experience with the lay apostolate and their engagement in the public sphere, including with international organizations. This session seeks contributions to reassess the laity’s impact on Vatican II, explore their legacy in responding to and challenging the council, and discuss their ongoing influence on church teaching. What characterized the profile and role of the laity at Vatican II, did these aspects evolve in the post-Vatican II era, and how can their advocacy and identity be comprehended? How have they advanced notions such as the People of God, co-responsibility, active participation, the universal call to holiness, or the ‘see-judge-act’ method? How has the expansion of laypeople’s roles in the church specifically impacted women? How did the laity and lay groups shape or resist the council’s reception and how do they interact with conciliar teaching in today’s local and international synodal processes or in other contexts, such as social media?

### Statement of Purpose

This Unit gives scholarly attention to the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), one of the most significant events in the history of the Catholic Church — an event that had wide-ranging implications for other faiths, other Christian churches, and for the wider world alike. This Unit

has a double focus: first, deepening the understanding of the history of Vatican II, its link with movements of renewal in Catholic theology and in the Church in the decades prior to Vatican II, and the history of the reception of the Council, and the redaction history of the different documents of the Council; second, a strong theological one both to the hermeneutical issues connected to methods of interpreting conciliar teaching and its ongoing reception in a changing context. By looking more closely at the past, our Unit hopes to promote greater conciliarity and synodality in the Christian churches in the present. In this second mandate of its presence within the American Academy of Religion, the Vatican II Studies Unit turns its attention to the reception of Vatican II within the various social and cultural contexts of the Americas and elsewhere, and to its continuing influence in the changing context of twenty-first century global Christianity.

## Chairs

- [Dries Bosschaert, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven](#)  
[dries.bosschaert@kuleuven.be](mailto:dries.bosschaert@kuleuven.be)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Jaisy Joseph, Villanova University](#)  
[jaisy.joseph@villanova.edu](mailto:jaisy.joseph@villanova.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

“Methodism before the Wesleys.”

John and Charles Wesley saw the eighteenth-century Wesleyan revival as a restoration of primitive Christianity, as well as ‘true Christianity’ throughout the ages. If Methodism is viewed within the context of such continuity, there is a sense in which the Wesleys are not the sole founders of Wesleyan Methodism. This session invites scholarly analyses of where “Methodism” can be perceived in the history of Christianity before the Wesleys. Where can we see “Methodism” in the global history of the church prior to the eighteenth century, even if no direct genealogical connection can be drawn? This question can be explored in particular movements or churches, the lives, ministries, and writings of Christians, and in devotional practices. The question can be framed as an exercise in *ressourcement*—a return to the varied sources of Methodism—with the goal of renewal of the tradition today.

We welcome historical and theological and other disciplinary and methodological approaches to this topic.

The unit is particularly interested in proposals that provide global perspectives on the theme.

This session is linked to our unit's session on "The Reception History of the Wesleys," which will examine how their ministries and writings have been received in the Wesleyan/Methodist traditions and beyond.

"The Reception History of the Wesleys." The unit is interested in papers that explore:

- how ministries and writings of John and Charles Wesley have been received in the Wesleyan/Methodist traditions and beyond.
- how the Wesleys have been received in different parts of the world and different denominations.
- evidence of Charles Wesleys' influence on liturgical theology of other traditions.
- various ways in which the Wesleys' celebrity shows up and is shaped by various artistic media.
- how different traditions, Pan-Methodists and Non-Methodists, have interpreted and employed the Wesleys' practical theology.

We welcome theological and historical, as well as other disciplinary and methodological approaches to this topic.

The unit is particularly interested in proposals that provide global perspectives on the theme, including postcolonial and anti-colonial emphases.

This session is linked to our unit's session on "Methodism before the Wesleys," which will explore where we can see Methodism in the global history of the church prior to the eighteenth century, even if no direct genealogical connection can be drawn.

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to promote the critical understanding and appropriation of Wesleyan and Methodist traditions. Our sessions are purposefully structured to encourage not only historical/sociological studies, but also theological reflection, critique, and extension. We understand Wesleyan traditions to include Methodist, Holiness, and other related strands of Christian tradition.

## Chairs

- [Natalya Cherry, Brite Divinity School](#)  
[natalyacherry@gmail.com](mailto:natalyacherry@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Jung Choi, Duke University](#)

## **Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Unit**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

The Womanist Approaches to Religion & Society Unit welcomes papers that highlight one or more of the following topics:

Theme: Weary Throats & New Songs– 20th Anniversary Commemoration of Teresa Fry Brown's publication and contemporary challenges for Black preaching women

Integrating women's voices in proclamation, exhortation, and rhetorical methods, including "the work of exegeting lies." This session seeks to highlight the power of women's voices in light of the national gaze on the milestone of sermonic delivery of Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart, pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church as the first invited female preacher in the 129– year existence of the National Baptist Convention and the ramifications of the responses heard globally.

Theme: Embodied Leadership – Womanist Approaches to Leadership Thriving & Surviving

This session aims to focus on Womanist ways of leading including consideration of ways to embody our call and vocation in ordination and non–ordination paths. Survival in academia requires strategic navigation of tenure track politics amid conservative drives to scapegoat black female leaders. The discourse about modes to survive invites shared narratives to develop counter–hegemonic strategies amid theological oppression of church hurt, moral injury, and trauma to persist in an ontological call to thrive.

Theme: Mining the Prophetic Wisdom of Womanist Scholar Jacquelyn Grant

On the 35th Anniversary of womanist scholar Jacquelyn Grant's teaching career, a look at the constructive theological contributions in the seminal text, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Responses* (1989), *Perspectives on Womanist Theology* (1995). Grant has been featured in many publications and media tributes, served on numerous international and national organizations as a noted pioneer in the first generation of self–identified Womanists matriculating from Union Theological Seminary.

Womanist Approaches welcomes compelling papers that utilize womanist methodologies and engage womanist topics beyond the themes presented above.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This Unit provides a forum for religious scholarship that engages theoretically and methodologically the four-part definition of a Womanist as defined by Alice Walker. We nurture interdisciplinary scholarship, encourage interfaith dialogue, and seek to engage scholars and practitioners in fields outside the study of religion. We are particularly concerned with fostering scholarship that bridges theory and practice and addresses issues of public policy in church and society.

## **Chairs**

- [Melanie Jones, Union Presbyterian Seminary](#)  
[melaniechantejones@gmail.com](mailto:melaniechantejones@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Valerie Miles-Tribble, Berkeley School of Theology](#)  
[macsvmt@gmail.com](mailto:macsvmt@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Women and Religion Unit**

### **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

While all submissions are welcome, we are particularly interested in paper and panel proposals that respond to the following topic.

Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin

In response to the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme “Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin”, the Women and Religion Unit invites panel and paper proposals that critically analyze the intersection of gender, violence, nonviolence and religion in any geographical location. Proposals may engage with the following questions: How do scholars of religion engage with gender and sexuality as an analytical tool when studying and responding to violence and nonviolence? In what ways does precarity relegate certain populations to the margins and result in them being differentially exposed to injury, violence, and even death? We are particularly interested in the lived experiences of women and women-identifying people in diverse global contexts.

Religion, Sacred “Texts” and Gender-based Violence



We invite panel and paper proposals that critically engage with the question of how religion can be considered as a factor in gender-based violence – including domestic and family violence, interpersonal violence, violence against minoritized women and women-identifying people, and reproductive violence. Proposed panels and papers may engage with the following topics: How does gender and religion interact to make some populations more precarious and exposed to gender-based violence than others? How are theologies, and sacred texts and symbols being weaponized to incite and uptick gender-based violence and discriminations? How are theologies, and sacred texts and symbols providing avenues for agency and resistance? We are particularly interested in how violence manifests in the experiences of women and women identifying people in diverse religious and global settings.

#### Women, Militarization, War and Colonialism

In the context of two major wars and other ongoing militarized conflicts throughout the world we seek paper and panel proposals that explore the impact of war, militarization and colonialism on women, women identifying people, and children. We welcome proposals that examine the impact of violence on women who are also acting as caretakers of people, place, and land. Of particular interest are the ways in which women mother through violence and create communities of care and agency. Beyond the caregiver role we invite papers to consider the active role women play in nonviolence and in bringing an end to violence, militarisation, and settler colonialism.

#### Strategies for Survival and Collective Care

Often care has been considered an individualistic act of survival. We challenge that notion as women, women identifying people and marginalised communities demonstrate care as a communal act. We invite proposals for papers, panels, and round tables that explore the concepts and strategies of survival and collective care in the face of violence. Of interest is what intersectionality brings to pedagogies of care and collective action in religious contexts. Proposals might consider relational autonomy, sacred practices and memory.

#### Feminist Religious Discourse on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

We invite proposals for panels and round tables that explore the intersection of feminist religious perspectives and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), particularly focusing on women in minoritized communities. As the DEI has now become a litmus test to pass for liberal institutions with often industry-generated canned curricula geared for the dominant group in race, ethnicity, gender, and class, it has become another tool to perpetuate white supremacist

heteropatriarchy. We invite proposals that foster meaningful dialogue, share insights, and develop strategies to address the complex challenges faced by women and women-identifying people, particularly those within non-dominant communities in race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. We encourage contributions that critically examine the intersections of gender, race, religion, and culture while promoting inclusive and equitable practices within religious contexts.

#### [Emerging Scholars \(with AAR/SBL Women's Caucus\)](#)

The Women and Religion Unit and AAR/SBL Women's Caucus invite submissions from graduate students and early career scholars of any age to present innovative research asking questions of gender and religion and its juncture with the conference theme "Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin". Scholars might want to examine connections between precarity and women's experiences of all the various forms of physical and non-physical violence embedded in our societies, in our thinking, and in the language we use. We ask proposals to consider the following questions: How can women and women identifying people respond to violence? How are women currently dealing with gendered violence legitimated by religion? Are there new approaches to resistance? Can responding to violence with violence solve the problems women face? And how can women envision nonviolence in the midst of such rampant violence? How are women bringing their faith or spirituality to nonviolent praxis? Intersectional approaches incorporating class, race, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexuality are highly encouraged.

[Feminist Theory Unit, Body & Religion Unit, and Women & Religion Unit Co-Sponsor Session](#)  
[For a possible co-sponsored session, the Women and Religion, Body and Religion, and Class, Religion, and Theology units](#) invite proposals addressing reproductive labor broadly defined (including the many labors of social reproduction, such as caring labor and emotional labor). We are particularly interested in understanding such labors as embodied practices/experiences within gendered, classed, and racialized structures of inequality and religious traditions. We are open to individual paper proposals, panel/roundtable proposals, or innovative interactive formats.

### **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

While all submissions are welcome, we are particularly interested in paper and panel proposals that respond to the following topic.

Violence, Nonviolence and the Margin

In response to the current year's theme, "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin," the Women and Religion Unit welcomes proposals that offer a critical examination of the intersection

between gender, violence, nonviolence, and religion across various geographical locations. Proposed papers may delve into inquiries such as: How do scholars of religion employ gender and sexuality as analytical tools in the examination and response to instances of violence and nonviolence? In what manner does precarity relegate certain populations to the margins, resulting in varied exposure to harm, violence, and potentially death? Are there new approaches to resistance? Of particular interest are the lived experiences of women and women-identifying people in diverse global contexts.

## Statement of Purpose

The Women and Religion Unit seeks to promote inclusivity and excellence in scholarship. We have been intentional about including participants/presenters from interdisciplinary approaches and encouraging non-traditional ways of sharing scholarly work on the intersection of women's and gender studies and religious and theological studies. In making selections for the annual sessions, we work collaboratively with other program units of AAR to promote scholarly conversations across fields and methodologies. We are committed to providing an inclusive scholarly environment where new voices can be heard, and critical analyses of women and religion can be advanced.

## Chairs

- [Boyung Lee, Iliff School of Theology](#)  
[blee@iliff.edu](mailto:blee@iliff.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Tracy McEwan, University of Newcastle, Australia](#)  
[tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au](mailto:tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Women of Color Scholarship, Teaching, and Activism Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

WOCSTA welcomes submissions of individual presentations, organized panels, and roundtable discussions that are in keeping with the Unit's purpose. We encourage non-traditional formats that foster conversation and engagement. In keeping with the Presidential Theme "Violence, Non-violence, and the Margin," possible topics may include:

Self-care, Softness, and Systems: Subverting Violence by Centering Self

We welcome papers that address self-care, the soft life, and/or critical responses to systems and the violences they accommodate.

- Self care: How should minoritized women imagine embodied pedagogies of care, self-compassion, self-generosity and self-love that are generative? How can we teach and bring care into our practice of teaching? How can we address the dissonance between articulated ethics of care that we teach and what we actually model?
- Softness: What can minoritized women gain from the wisdom of the soft life? There is wisdom from Gen. Z and Gen. A that can speak to older generational women What might a cross-generational conversation between these women sound like? What might intergenerational mentorship look like?
- Systems: What does it look like to disrupt the practice/habits of minoritized women reinscribing violence against each other that allows systems of discrimination and violence to be perpetuated? How are we perpetuating harm and violence towards each other while using language of solidarity and self-care? What is needed/required to resist such perpetuation?

### Making a Home in the Margins

We welcome papers that speak to the following areas concerning marginality or beyond.

- bell hooks' notion of the margin as a space of openness and possibility
- What possibilities does chosen marginality offer for addressing violence?

### Violence and its Multiforms

We welcome papers that speak to violence and its multiforms including but not limited to:

- Rage and its appropriateness as a response to what minoritized women and marginalized people experience;
- Constructive violence – violence towards justice/righteousness;
- Religious responses to violence against minoritized women;
- Women and violence in the academy – breaking the cycle of institutional violence;
- Gendered violence and institutional responsibility and rescue;
- Finding other language – countering how violence is situated and normalized (how does violence not beget violence?);
- Pushing back against/resisting violence that shapes our world and thinking;
- Interrogating the evolution of violence in our culture and what it has done to us;
- Naming and calling out the international/global impact of violence;

- Asking what are the rhetorics of non-violence and passivity that are deployed onto women, especially minoritized women (docility, domesticity, etc.)?
- Violence and reproductive justice;
- Violence and collapse: how to speak about and speak to systems of violence collapsing in on themselves?

## Borders, Violence, and the Margin

Keeping in mind our location in San Diego, we invite papers that consider the following:

Margins as site of violence and the legality of bodies

- The popular saying "we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us" reminds us of the porousness of borders and demarcation. What are sites of resistance when borders cross people and how is it a countermeasure to the legality/illegality of people crossing borders?

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We invite papers and presentations that consider the following (with priority given to international voices, graduate students/PhDs, etc.):

Proposals that lend themselves to the format of an online meeting and reflect the priorities of WOCSTA as outlined in our statement of purpose.

We especially encourage submissions of vlogs or other formats that reflect diverse modalities for sharing the work that Women Of Color are doing in the academy and the community (including religious communities).

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit fosters intellectual exchange in the fields of religious studies and theology as they are developing in diverse communities of color from a gendered analysis. While the AAR features Program Units from diverse communities of color, we provide a space for conversation between communities of color. This Unit does not assume a prior "women of color" identity, but centers a woman of color analytic that deconstructs the intersecting logics of gender and race. At the same time, we do not hold to a "post-identity" framework and are also concerned with the status of women of color in the academy, the politics of pedagogy, and the relationship between women-of-color-centered activism and scholarship. Understanding identity as performative and shifting, we make the very category of "women of color" itself a site for political and intellectual engagement.

## Chairs

- [Oluwatomisin Oredein, Brite Divinity School  
tomioredein@gmail.com](mailto:tomioredein@gmail.com)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Deborah Rogers, Other  
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1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## World Christianity Unit

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Our contemporary world is currently being re-configured by violence in two catastrophic ways. First, we are witnessing the unprecedented movement of people driven by violence, armed conflict, civil wars, genocide and other forms of violence against specific communities or groups. Second, many countries in our world are grappling with the “destruction the climate crisis is wreaking on lives, livelihoods and infrastructure” (The Guardian Cop28: highlights and lowlights so far, 2023). In examining these twin calamities, two things come to the fore, one, many of the sites for the violence is located within the Global South; two, religion and particularly Christianity is involved in either fueling (theological interpretation and ideologies, etc.) these conflicts are or mitigating them (activism). Given Jin Y. Park’s Presidential Theme for 2024, “Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin,” our unit is seeking to critically engage what it means to grapple with violence and nonviolence in marginal spaces and what is the role of faith in these processes.

We invite proposals that will address the following distinct, even if overlapping, topics:

- Trajectories of violence and non-violence in Christian communities in the Global South;
- Migration, violence, memory, and home making – centering the importance of faith in this dynamic process;
- Violence and politics in World Christianity, especially with respect to issues of Christian violence and masculinity in relation to militarism and/or abuse in the church and the wider society;
- The intersection of World Christianity and climate devastation, specifically given attention to areas of activism and creation care

As a unit committed to cutting-edge research pertaining to the phenomenon of Christianity as a world religion, and to theory and methodology concerning the multidisciplinary field of World Christianity we also solicit methodologically-oriented papers addressing the role of “orthodoxies” in World Christianity. Orthodoxies are not just theological, but can be found in all disciplines (e.g. anthropology, history) and in sociopolitical expression (e.g. racism, nationalism, sexism). We are particularly interested in proposals that investigate the use of orthodoxies within the field, and the ways in which they have weakened or invigorated World Christianity discourse. How might our respective understandings of what constitutes methodological orthodoxy inform how we envision the ultimate goal(s) of our work as researchers and educators within the field?

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to explore the intercultural, interconfessional, and interreligious dynamics of Christianity as a world religion, bringing into conversation scholars in the disciplines of history, mission studies, ecumenical studies, theology, sociology of religion, anthropology of religion, and religious studies.

## Chairs

- [Janice McLean-Farrell, New Brunswick Theological Seminary](#)  
[jmclean-farrell@nbts.edu](mailto:jmclean-farrell@nbts.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Briana Wong, Phillips Theological Seminary](#)  
[briana.lynn.wong@gmail.com](mailto:briana.lynn.wong@gmail.com)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Yoga in Theory and Practice Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite proposals on the following topics. Please contact the organizing scholar listed next to each topic for more information (if you feel your work might fit into more than one category, please feel free to contact organizers together):

- Yoga and Sleep – Meera Kachroo ([Meera.kachroo@usask.ca](mailto:Meera.kachroo@usask.ca))

- [Yoga and Esotericism \(for possible co-sponsorship with AAR's Esotericism Unit\)](#) – Anya Foxen ([afoxen@calpoly.edu](mailto:afoxen@calpoly.edu))
- Yoga as a Site of and Response to Trauma – Amanda Lucia ([amanda.lucia@ucr.edu](mailto:amanda.lucia@ucr.edu)) and Paul Bramadat ([bramadat@uvic.ca](mailto:bramadat@uvic.ca))
- Yoga and Psychedelics – Patricia Sauthoff ([sauthoff@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:sauthoff@hkbu.edu.hk))
- Yoga in the Dharma Traditions (for possible co-sponsorship with DĀNAM) – Stephanie Corigliano ([stephanie@embodiedphilosophy.com](mailto:stephanie@embodiedphilosophy.com))
- New Books in Yoga Studies – Christopher Jain Miller ([christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org](mailto:christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org))
- Ethics in Yoga – Alba Rodriguez ([alba.rodriguezjuan@email.ucr.edu](mailto:alba.rodriguezjuan@email.ucr.edu))

We are also open to full-panel proposals on any other topic falling under the purview of Yoga Studies.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We invite proposals on the following topics. Please contact the organizing scholar listed next to each topic for more information (if you feel your work might fit into more than one category, please feel free to contact organizers together):

Entrepreneurial Scholars in Yoga Studies: A Guide to Non-Conventional Career Pathways for Graduate Students and Junior Scholars – Allyson Huval ([allysonhuval@gmail.com](mailto:allysonhuval@gmail.com)) and Christopher Jain Miller ([christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org](mailto:christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org))

## Statement of Purpose

This Unit seeks to elucidate the religious and sectarian representations of yoga in South Asian history and the profoundly fascinating contemporary yoga culture that has emerged in the past century. Among other topics that are addressed in our Unit is the emergence of modern yoga out of the encounter between Indian and European cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In connection with this, it examines the relative pervasiveness of spiritual and religious ideologies in manifest or latent forms within the contemporary yoga scene, and the overarching sociological relevance of yoga within global culture. We also examine changing paradigms with respect to the nature and function of yoga in the larger South Asian religious context. Our goal is to provide a venue in which the body of scholars working in this area can collectively evaluate this extremely timely material. We actively pursue scholars from Europe, Asia, and other areas that have worked at length on these issues, so as to bring an important international component to the Unit.

## Chairs

- [Anya Foxen, California Polytechnic State University](#)



[afoxen@calpoly.edu](mailto:afoxen@calpoly.edu)

1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

- [Christopher Jain Miller, Arihanta Institute](mailto:christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org)  
[christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org](mailto:christopher.miller@arihantainstitute.org)

1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Yogācāra Studies Unit

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Our CFP outlines a set of panel topics that we are particularly interested in soliciting proposals for. If you would like to participate in a panel on one of these topics, please contact the person listed. Anyone is also welcome to propose a panel or a paper on a topic in Yogācāra Studies that is not listed here. Panel proposals are much more likely to be accepted than individual paper proposals, so it is best to try to find other scholars and to jointly make a panel proposal on your topic. Feel free to contact the unit co-chairs (Douglas Duckworth, [duckworth@temple.edu](mailto:duckworth@temple.edu) or Jingjing Li, [j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl)) with any questions about proposals.

- Text panel: We are looking for proposals from groups of scholars to lead the assembled group in a discussion of a selected passage from a key text. The text can be extant in just one or in any combination of Buddhist languages. The ideal proposal is from a team of scholars working on the text, and the ideal panel format involves a combination of comments from the presenters and discussion with the audience. The following are some proposal ideas that have already been generated, but scholars working on other texts are very welcome to submit a text panel proposal. Anyone with questions about how a text panel should be structured is free to contact unit co-chairs Douglas Duckworth ([duckworth@temple.edu](mailto:duckworth@temple.edu)) and Jingjing Li ([j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl)).
  - On Sakya Paṇḍita's Treasury of Epistemology (tshad ma'i rigs gter). Contact Douglas Duckworth ([duckworth@temple.edu](mailto:duckworth@temple.edu)) if you are interested in participating.
  - On the Laṅkāvatara Sūtra. Contact Ching Keng ([ching.keng@gmail.com](mailto:ching.keng@gmail.com)) if you are interested in participating.
  - On Dharmapāla's commentary on Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka. Contact Chih-ying Wu ([chiying\\_wu@berkeley.edu](mailto:chiying_wu@berkeley.edu)) or Billy Brewster ([ernestbrewster@gmail.com](mailto:ernestbrewster@gmail.com)) if you are interested in participating.
- Paper panel: On Abhidharma and Yogācāra gender metaphysics. Contact Jingjing Li ([j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl)) if you are interested in presenting a paper on this panel.

- [Paper panel: Yogācāra non-dualism and its Hindu critics \(a potential co-sponsor with the Hindu Philosophy Unit\)](#). Contact Davey Tomlinson ([david.tomlinson@villanova.edu](mailto:david.tomlinson@villanova.edu)) if you are interested in presenting a paper on this panel.
- Paper panel: What is the Buddha's mind like? Contact Ching Keng ([ching.keng@gmail.com](mailto:ching.keng@gmail.com)) or Davey Tomlinson ([david.tomlinson@villanova.edu](mailto:david.tomlinson@villanova.edu)) if you are interested in presenting a paper on this panel.
- Paper panel: Yogācāra and Abhidharma. Contact Laura Guerrero ([lpguerrero@wm.edu](mailto:lpguerrero@wm.edu)) if you are interested in presenting a paper on this panel.
- Paper panel: On Kuiji's "Essays on the Forest of Meanings in the Mahāyāna Dharma Garden." Contact Ronald Green ([rgreen@coastal.edu](mailto:rgreen@coastal.edu))

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

As our Unit hopes to sponsor a session during the June 2024 virtual meeting of the AAR, this general CFP calls for proposals on any Yogācāra related topics. The best proposals are panel proposals from multiple scholars on a single theme or topic of interest, but we will consider individual paper proposals as well. In addition, we are open to receiving proposals with novel formats beyond the traditional paper presentation format.

The virtual conference is an excellent way for those who may have difficulties travelling to the November in person meeting to present their work and stay in contact with others in the field. Please contact unit co-chair Jingjing ([j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.li@phil.leidenuniv.nl)) with any questions about making or submitting a proposal.

## Statement of Purpose

The Yogācāra tradition within Buddhism provides the seminal basis for many forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Yogācāra was the preeminent Buddhist school for many centuries in India, East Asia, and Tibet. Even after its relative decline as a distinct tradition, its teachings continued to provide the basis for both the theory and practice of subsequent Buddhist Mahāyāna schools throughout Asia, and it has seen a resurgence in the 20th and 21st century in Asia, including in China, Hong Kong, Japan, and among Tibetans.

## Chairs

- [Douglas S. Duckworth, Temple University](#)  
[douglas.duckworth@temple.edu](mailto:douglas.duckworth@temple.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Jingjing Li, Leiden University](#)  
[j.li@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.li@hum.leidenuniv.nl)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## SEMINARS

### [Anglican Studies Seminar](#)

#### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

#### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Following our discussion of a provocative set of papers in Year 1 that focused on the historical legacies shaping Anglican ecclesiologies in various contexts and, in Year 2, a set that investigated their theological factors, we invite for Year 3 of this five-year initiative papers that surface missiological currents within Anglicanism, past and present, that contribute to the development of processes of Anglican identity formation and the ecclesiologies that arise alongside those identities. The complicated and fraught history of missionizing goes far beyond the typical account of how the non-European “peripheries” have been the recipient of colonializing mission work from the imperial “center” in England. This is only a part of a much larger story that extends through Anglican history to the present in a more complicated manner, one that finds, for example, various African churches with active, ongoing mission to churches in the industrialized world, which are perceived to have strayed from the truths that the earlier missionaries from those regions brought to them through the work of several Anglican missionary societies based in the United Kingdom, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This complex tangle of forces demands nuanced scholarly treatment with special attention paid to how it impacts Anglican self-understanding and practice in different ways throughout the Communion. Papers that emphasize de- and postcolonial dynamics at work in forming and maintaining “operative ecclesiologies,” particularly in understudied regions of the Communion, are especially welcome.

Please note that those whose proposals are accepted must commit to submitting their paper for pre-circulation by Monday, October 14, 2024. Seminar members and others wishing to attend will have access to these papers, which will be briefly summarized at the meeting but will not be presented by their authors. Instead, they will be discussed among the panelists, seminar members, and session attendees. Please note that, due to AAR/SBL policies pertaining to participation, those whose proposals are accepted must commit to attending the 2024 Annual Meeting in San Diego.

#### Statement of Purpose

The Anglican Studies Seminar holds that Anglican Studies requires a sustained study of the intersections of post- and de-colonialism, imperial legacies, and globalization with the ongoing evolution of Anglican identity in specific locations marked by their particular economic, social,

cultural, and historical conditions. The Seminar pays detailed attention to context; its work disrupts extant assumptions about the Anglican tradition being a monolithic, monocultural entity. Accordingly, the Seminar focuses on the “operative ecclesiologies” of Anglican churches at the national or provincial level. That is, we are interested in how the contextual realities of Anglicans in concrete locales shape the ways in which church is practiced by Anglicans, whether they answer to standard ecclesial and theological conceptualizations or not.

Seminar members are committed to a globalized study of Anglicanism, conceived broadly, and to investigating various operative ecclesiologies, locally and contextually. We foster interdisciplinary conversations that enable scholars to speak to multiple aspects of Anglicanism. The seminar’s findings will be of interest to scholars working in a range of disciplines. Moreover, close examination of the processes of decolonization that inform lived Anglicanisms will supply the wider field of religious studies with a set of thickly described case studies of post-colonial decolonization. It is the intention of the Steering Committee to publish research resulting from the Seminar and make it accessible to an interdisciplinary audience.

## Chairs

- [Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, Claremont School of Theology](#)  
[skujawa-holbrook@cst.edu](mailto:skujawa-holbrook@cst.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Scott MacDougall, Church Divinity School of the Pacific](#)  
[turasoir@gmail.com](mailto:turasoir@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar welcomes papers on any aspect of pedagogy for teaching Buddhism in a semester-long course or as part of a world religions class. For our last seminar, we would like to solicit roundtable proposals as well as individual paper proposals. The roundtable moderator/organizer will send one proposal that includes the discussion topic and each discussant’s subject. The discussants do not need to send individual proposals.

Aligned with the 2024 AAR presidential theme, we particularly would like to investigate teaching strategies that concern engaging with students about Buddhist responses to violence

and nonviolence. The forms of violence can be physical, emotional, psychological, ritual, or from other relevant contexts.

## Statement of Purpose

The mission of the Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar is to promote critical reflection on how our teaching and presentation of Buddhism enhances understanding of Buddhist traditions, practices, and values. Our seminar will facilitate discussion and support research about pedagogically effective approaches to teaching Buddhism. We will focus on a variety of pedagogical challenges within the field over the course of five years, including but not limited to, the religious or secularized use of Buddhist meditation practices in everyday life, modern public understanding of Buddhism shaped through current events, hotly debated ethical issues, and scholarship about teaching Buddhism. This seminar invites discussion about teaching Buddhism in today's classroom, how Buddhism has been taught historically, how different media about Buddhism can supplement classroom instruction, and how insights from Buddhist traditions can enrich pedagogy in other fields. Although we envision the seminar appealing primarily to those in Buddhist Studies, we believe it will be beneficial for instructors and scholars outside of the field who teach about Buddhism in their courses. We are committed to supporting important work in the nascent field of Buddhist pedagogy. Our goal is to grow this field and provide it with a robust arena in which scholars engage in dynamic conversations.

## Chairs

- [Trung Huynh, University of Houston](mailto:hthich@ius.edu)  
[hthich@ius.edu](mailto:hthich@ius.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Beverly McGuire, University of North Carolina, Wilmington](mailto:mcquireb@uncw.edu)  
[mcquireb@uncw.edu](mailto:mcquireb@uncw.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Collective Karma and Karmic Collectives: Conversations without Borders Seminar

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Year two–Karma cluster concepts in religious narratives (oral and literary)

This year's seminar seeks to amplify the voices of marginalized groups by looking into non-canonical sources, especially genres that are known for their rootedness in local cultures such

as theaters, plays, transformation texts (Ch: bianwen), bāul songs. Equally important, to gain a well-rounded picture of indigenous ways of doing philosophy and conducting moral reasoning, Year two also aims to explore new approaches and methods that could attend to both local nuances and trans-local connections.

More specifically, based on themes proposed during our business meeting at AAR 2023, scholars interested in the following themes are invited to email the contact person for each theme as follows:

- How karmic story-telling makes society: An interreligious dialogue (Greg Snyder, [gsnyder@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:gsnyder@uts.columbia.edu))
- Karma & interreligious relations (Rohit Singh, [rohitsingh5@gmail.com](mailto:rohitsingh5@gmail.com))
- Karma of time (Brandon Dotson proposed, contact person Jessica Zu [xzu@usc.edu](mailto:xzu@usc.edu))
- Karma and socio-political theory (Rohit proposed, contact person Jessica Zu [xzu@usc.edu](mailto:xzu@usc.edu))--potential co-sponsor with BPU\
- The potential and limits of karma as transformative justice (Ann Thuy-Ling Thran, [ann.tran@csulb.edu](mailto:ann.tran@csulb.edu))

Scholars interested in themes other than the above-mentioned ones are welcome! If you have further questions and/or suggestions for new topics, feel free to contact the co-chairs, Jessica Zu ([xzu@usc.edu](mailto:xzu@usc.edu)) and Susanne Kerekes ([susanne.kerekes@trincoll.edu](mailto:susanne.kerekes@trincoll.edu))

## Statement of Purpose

This Seminar investigates karma as shared or communal. Past scholarship has uncritically privileged an individualist approach to karma and has overlooked the centrality of sociokarma in non-canonical sources and lived experiences. Thus, we invite scholars to work together to uncover these marginalized voices “without borders” (across religious traditions, regions, disciplines, and methods). So, how do we bridge conversations without borders? Through a perspective that we call “karma-cluster concepts,” i.e., karma and its related terms in diverse socio-historical contexts.

We invite scholars who can contribute to a fuller picture of the following questions: (1) when, how, and why the debates about individual and collective karma arose in canonical sources and in scholarship; (2) how karma is interpreted in noncanonical texts such as minor commentaries, code of conducts, poetry, theatre, plays, and other forms of storytelling; (3) how collective karma is employed as tools of social engagement (e.g., eco-karma, racial karma, national karma); (4) how karma animates the spiritual practices of marginalized groups such as low-rank ascetic women, working-class lay followers including elderly women, gender and sexual minorities, and people with disabilities; (5) how karma weaves together a world of *relations*, where spirits, ancestors, animals, trees, rocks, rivers ... are agentive; (6) when, how, and why karma drops out of the moral repertoire of a group or a culture; and (7) assessing contemporary philosophical and tradition-based advancements of collective karma as responses to urgent issues.

## Chairs

- [Susanne Kerekes, Trinity College](#)  
[skerekes@trincoll.edu](mailto:skerekes@trincoll.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jessica Zu, University of Southern California](#)  
[pureoneness@gmail.com](mailto:pureoneness@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the Constructive Muslim Thought and Engaged Scholarship Seminar will be organizing two pre-arranged sessions. The steering committee will invite a number of scholars to participate in two roundtable discussions. Following the five-year plan of the unit, the seminar will dedicate one session to "Constructive Muslim thought in contexts of crisis and catastrophe" and another on "The Politics of Engaged Muslim Scholarship." Nevertheless, if a scholar is interested in joining the seminar as a roundtable discussant, the steering committee would encourage them to contact the unit chairs with an expression of interest and demonstration of past and/or current work in the field of constructive Muslim thought and engaged scholarship.

### Statement of Purpose

This seminar is aimed at exploring the developing academic discourse of constructive Muslim thought as a disciplinary field. Constructive Muslim thought is a broad and rich field of critical inquiry that involves both knowledge production and praxis. The constructive Muslim discourse is the cumulative result of the pioneering work of Muslim feminist scholars, postcolonial thinkers, decolonial thinkers, ethicists, scholars of Islam and critical race theory, among many others. Structural critique, ethical discernment, and community engagement are integral aspects of this broad body of scholarship. The organizers of this seminar argue that this expansive array of work can be construed as constituting an emergent new field within the academy, namely "constructive Muslim thought," which runs parallels with, but is distinct from the study of Islam and Muslims.

The seminar is envisioned as a space for scholars of the study of Islam and Muslims and academic practitioners of engaged scholarship from out of the Islamic tradition (broadly conceived) to share and develop their research in conversation with one another. Specifically,

over the course of five years, the seminar will critically examine two key topics at length: 1) the methodological directions and epistemological interventions that are emerging within the constructive Muslim discourse, and 2) the systemic and institutional challenges that the constructive Muslim discourse faces within academe broadly and between the disciplinary categories of theology and religious studies, more specifically. By providing a scholarly space to meet, the seminar aims to support the discourse conceptually and to grow the discipline structurally.

## **Chairs**

- [Martin Nguyen, Fairfield University](#)  
[alakhira@gmail.com](mailto:alakhira@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Najeeba Syeed-Miller, Chicago Theological Seminary](#)  
[najeebasyeed@gmail.com](mailto:najeebasyeed@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis Seminar**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Sexuality, Violence, and Marginality

For our meeting in San Diego, the seminar seeks papers (re)thinking the study of religion and sexual abuse with attention to sexuality, violence, and marginality. Proposals engaging any of these three areas will be appreciably considered, including papers that are comparative in approach, papers that theorize one or more of these key terms, or papers that consider their entanglements. We also invite research exploring these terms within or beyond Catholic contexts, across multiple religious traditions, or by drawing upon interdisciplinary methodologies. To elaborate on the importance of each of these terms to our seminar:

**Sexuality.** Early research on clergy sexual abuse has made clear that we need to attend more broadly to gender, sex, and sexuality. Abuse cases are embedded, for example, in the sex lives of both religious leaders and laypersons. Abusive behavior constitutes only a corner of these lives, and they are more varied and complicated than acknowledged in extant literature. Areas we need to know more about include: children's sexuality, moral and aesthetic understandings of "good" and "bad" sex, LGBT+ and queer religiosities, and the sex lives of religious leaders.



We also ask: what are the consequences of using “abuse” as our entry point for considering sexuality and sex in these rich and varied forms?

**Violence.** Sexual abuse is entwined with other forms of violence. It converges with these other forms of violence in the realm of theology, and in places, bodies, and practices. Within Catholicism, for example, theologies of suffering have imagined and inscribed violence onto certain bodies (e.g. women, children, martyrs, Indigenous populations), while ascribing power over those persons’ bodies to others (e.g. men, priests, missionaries, the state). These theologies have also produced certain spaces as sites of violence (e.g. seminaries, Magdalene laundries, orphanages, boarding schools). Whether in a Catholic or non-Catholic setting, how do other patterns of religion and violence intersect with sexual abuse?

**Marginality.** As the 2024 AAR Presidential Theme recognizes, “The use of violence is directly related to the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives.” Towards this end, is religious abuse more acute in marginalized communities? How should studies of abuse incorporate the margins into future research? Does the value of studying within and even advocating for marginalized communities outweigh the risks these communities take on when opening up about their experiences of sexual violence?

Accepted proposals will lead to short papers (approx. 10 – 15 pages) due by October 30, 2024.

If you have additional questions about next year’s seminar, please reach out to the seminar co-chairs.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Contextualizing the Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis is a five-year AAR seminar (2019 – 2024) working towards greater understanding about clergy sexual abuse and the range of questions that it raises. Attention to clergy abuse must become normative for any treatment of modern Catholicism to not itself be complicit in the abuse and its concealment.

Please note the following guidelines on our values and norms:

- Seminar presenters are required to submit their full papers by the middle of October, to be pre-circulated to all attendees via the AAR Papers system. This allows for more conversation and deeper reflection at the conference.
- Proposals should be made with an eye towards publishable work.

- The seminar seeks collaborative and multidisciplinary research, including through historical, ethnographic, theological, legal, political, psychological, and ethical frameworks.
- We are especially interested in proposals that press consideration into new anti-racist, anti-colonial, feminist, or queer directions.
- We encourage methodologies that uplift the voices of survivors, especially victims from African American, indigenous, and non-Anglo parishes.
- Over the full five years of sessions, the seminar will also examine sexual abuse in contexts beyond the Catholic church, both in other religious communities and secular institutions.
- We are committed to supporting research from scholars at all career stages, including doctoral candidates and independent scholars.
- The seminar encourages all of its members to participate in and propose papers to related program units, including Roman Catholic Studies, Religion and Sexuality, Childhood Studies, Ecclesiological Investigations, Religion and Violence, North American Religions, Religion in Europe, and Ethics.

## Chairs

- [Brian Clites, Case Western Reserve University](#)  
[brian.clites@case.edu](mailto:brian.clites@case.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Kathleen Holscher, University of New Mexico](#)  
[kholscher@unm.edu](mailto:kholscher@unm.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## Foucault and the Study of Religion Seminar

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite papers for the third year of our seminar on Foucault and the Study of Religion. Following our first two Foucault Seminars in 2022–23 and exploratory session in 2021 on Michel Foucault’s posthumously published *Confessions of the Flesh* (2018), we seek to gather scholars engaging the work of Foucault and the study of religion from a number of approaches and traditions.

Methodologically, this can include critical analyses of Foucault’s use of religious sources, including his engagement (or lack thereof) with primary or secondary literature in his published

works. It may include analyses or approaches to particular forms of religious thought and practice from Foucault's theoretical and philosophical perspectives, as well as research carried out in a critical-genealogical spirit in the same or adjacent religious sources that Foucault takes up.

We encourage submissions that raise questions around Foucault's engagement with traditions beyond Catholic Christianity including: Jewish traditions, Foucault's brief engagements with Islam in Iran, parallels and discontinuities between the "ethics of the care of the self" in western antiquity and South- and East-Asian traditions, among other possibilities. We are interested in exploring the ways that Foucault may help us challenge notions of "tradition" and "religion" that have been so central to both the study of religion and religious life more broadly.

2024 Call for Papers include (but are not limited to):

- Foucault and methodology in the study of religion: how does the study of religion offer methods by which we can better understand the work of Michel Foucault, and vice versa? How can we use Foucault's concepts and genealogies both with and against him, by engaging other religious practices and contexts than those he took up? Consider traditions across the Silk Road, in Latin American liberatory practices, in relation to technology & biopolitics in the 21st century. We want to problematize what his genealogy of "western subjectivity" offers and occludes.
- How has Foucault influenced your fields of inquiry (be it through historical studies, discourse analysis, social analysis, political problematizations, philosophical critique) ?
- How has Foucault been a cultural problem — as maligned or glorified across the ideological spectrum — and how do you evaluate these diagnostics for their merits and faults?
- Foucault and comparative monasticisms, perhaps in relation to Buddhist, Hindu, or other Asian traditions
- Foucault, Islam, Iran, and Beyond: What do we make of Foucault's Iranian intervention over 40 years later? How do those texts and the controversy around them help us understand Foucault himself, post-revolutionary Iran, and broader questions around religion, spirituality, mass-movements, and political transformation? What do we make of Foucault's interventions on the other side of the Masa Amini protests? What, if anything, can Foucault contribute to understand that movement, and what can such recent movements contribute to our critique and understand of Foucault? Proposals that overlap or are in dialogue with more general questions of "Foucault and Islam" may be combined into one meeting/

- Religion, Enlightenment, and critique, including the construction of “religion” in critical philosophy and theology from the modern period to the present, or in relation to Foucault’s use of parrhesia.
- Religion and the early Foucault, including early engagements with phenomenology and psychoanalysis, or material from the “archeological” period of the 1960s.
- Foucault and/as Queer Experience.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We invite papers for the Online session of the AAR in June on the theme of "Foucault And ...". Specifically, we are in focused engagements with Foucault and either specific religious traditions and subtraditions, or central themes in the study of religion. This may include, for example, "Foucault and Islam," "Foucault and the Reformation," "Foucault and Evangelicalism," "Foucault and the Politics of Religion," and so on. It may also include examples like "Foucault and Religious Experience," "Foucault and Functionalism in the Study of Religion," or other methodological themes. Proposals may be constructive, bringing Foucault to bear on given traditions, or challenging and expanding Foucault's resources by approaching his work from the perspective of given traditions. They may also be exegetical, engaging, for example, Foucault's very brief comments on events like the reformation, or his short engagements with Buddhism, and so on. Other proposals may bring Foucault and religion to bear on other themes, such as sexual politics.

This session is intended as a very tentative plenary or testing ground for the possibility of gathering materials for a reader in Foucault and Religious Studies. We seek short, clear, and focused papers that say something new about Foucault and raise productive questions.

## Statement of Purpose

The Foucault and the Study of Religion Seminar is dedicated to collaborative research in a public setting, gathering scholars of religion whose research engages theoretical and historical approaches to the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault's work has been transformative for scholarship in the humanities and social sciences over the last fifty years. We aim to continue Foucault's tradition of public intellectual discourse in a way that illuminates the importance of the study of religion for understanding and critiquing his work on questions of gender, race, sexuality, and class. We hope to convene scholars of various religious practices and traditions to expand Foucault's critical approach and enliven the contributions of this research for the public domain.

We understand this work to be ongoing, developing the complex questions that emerge from Foucault's analytics of power, knowledge, and subjectivity central to many disciplines. The 2018 posthumous publication of his *History of Sexuality* volume on early Christian sexual ethics

(*Confessions of the Flesh*) foregrounds the need for such critical and constructive engagement by scholars with expertise across religious traditions and methodologies. We hope to bring together scholars within the AAR and SBL—particularly those in philosophy of religion, queer theory, black studies, feminist theory, religion and literature, diasporic studies, affect studies, African American religion, religion and ecology, and the histories of differing religious traditions (ancient and early modern)—in order to pursue work that is historically and theoretically rigorous, reflecting Foucault’s own interdisciplinarity and the relevance his work has had across fields.

## Chairs

- [Niki Clements, Rice University](#)  
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1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Daniel Wyche, University of Chicago](#)  
[daniel.wyche@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.wyche@gmail.com)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Energy, Extraction, and Religion Seminar

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

We invite proposals around two themes: Slippage, flow, and water/oceanic extraction & the fetish

Slippage, flow, oceanic extraction, water extraction

In *As Long As the Grass Grows*, Dina Gilio-Whitaker discusses the fraught relationships between (white) environmentalisms and Indigenous water protectors, tracing slippages and incongruences between the discursive frames of conventional environmental ethics, Indigenous sovereignty, and environmental justice. Relatedly, Max Liboiron’s *Pollution is Colonialism* shows how the scientific frameworks developed to understand “pollution” are grounded in the idea that water and land are endowed with an innate capacity to absorb the violence of settler chemical effluents. In relation to land and water, extractivist/colonial systems of knowledge are like oil and water. Recognizing the coastal location of the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting, and following Gilio-Whitaker and Liboiron, we invite papers on water and extractivism, especially those that attend to slippages and flows between culturally particular epistemologies, ontologies, and ethics of water.

We welcome paper proposals that consider the confluences of religion/theology with the blue humanities, seafloor mining, or the exploitation of fisheries. In keeping with the annual meeting theme, we especially invite proposals that reflect on violence, non-violence, and marginality in aqueous extractive zones. Though oceanic topics will be front of mind—in a conference center mere kilometers from the second largest US naval base and an influential institution of oceanography with a military history—extractivism involves freshwater, too, including water privatization, aquifer depletion, and the impact of mining and industrial agriculture on the substance most fundamental to life itself.

## Fetish

While Marx's theory of the commodity fetish is frequently cited by scholars of mining and extractivism, the term “fetish” originated in the 16th century when Portuguese merchants sought to describe the purported misvaluation of material goods by West African peoples they encountered. In addition to playing a key role in economic discourses, the fetish also played an important part in the beginning of modern religious studies. In contrast to the Portuguese merchants who associated the fetish with a kind of witchcraft, EB Tylor's *Primitive Culture* theorized the fetish in terms of animism and framed it as a less developed form of religion on a scale ranging from primitive to fully developed monotheism. The fetish, then, is a conceptual tool that humanists and social scientists deployed for racialization in colonial systems of knowing and classifying “religion.” That fossil fuels and precious metals are ‘fetishized’ commodities is an irony that has not escaped energy and extraction humanities scholars (e.g. Huber 2013, Malm 2017, Szeman 2023). But with regard to the fetish, commodity fetishism, and the binding together of matter and value, scholars of religion and theology have insight to contribute to transdisciplinary conversations on this topic.

We invite papers critically engaging the employment of the fetish in energy and extraction humanities. What modes of discourse and material practice in extractive zones are obscured in discourses of the Enlightenment fetish? What violence is incited, justified, or undermined? What might be illuminated by employment of the fetish more broadly? In what ways does the study of religion help attend more closely to modes of racialization in extractive zones following the wake of the fetish?

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

In the third year of our seminar we would like to focus on interdisciplinary conversations and connections. Specifically, what insights do discourses like energy/extraction humanities or

petroculture studies bring to the study of religion? Conversely, what do religion and theological studies bring to these discourses and modes of analysis that have been generally overlooked? How can connections between religious / theological studies and other areas of environmental humanities be approached as opportunities for exchange and mutual benefit, rather than extractive transaction?

With this overarching theme in mind, our June online session will focus on conversations around key energy/extraction humanities texts. The session will include breakout room discussions, each focused on a different text that will be distributed prior to the meeting for pre-reading. Presiders will introduce texts and lead discussions, summarizing insights when breakout groups reconvene.

We invite proposals of key texts that would be generative for the Energy, Extractivism, and Religion Seminar. Proposals might include:

- a text with important insights for religion scholars to build from, like a key text for energy humanities discourses;
- a commonly cited text within energy humanities/petroculture studies that needs the critical engagement of religion scholars;
- a text from religious studies or theology that is fecund for energy/environmental humanities.

Because proposed texts will be distributed to participants before the session, they should be digitally accessible (the seminar steering committee can assist with this) and relatively brief (e.g. a chapter or journal article of ~ 20–30 pgs.).

In the proposal, explain what the text is and why you think religion scholars should know of and engage this text; and

why you are the person to give some informed framing of the text and lead constructive discussion of it.

#### Review Process

Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

## Statement of Purpose

This seminar provides an intellectual space to foreground relations, dynamics, and critiques among religion, energy, and extraction. For scholars in a variety of humanistic and social scientific disciplines, extractivism provides a conceptual rubric through which to re-conjoin analyses of racialization and exploitation with concerns about ecology and sustainability. This is particularly the case in the environmental and energy humanities. In light of multidisciplinary scholarly discourses on extractivism, this seminar aims to conscientiously link social and ecological justice questions as a matter of theoretical and methodological rigor; to explicitly and directly attend to racial capitalism and coloniality as constitutive of environmental crises; to facilitate and improve dialogue between religion scholars and the environmental humanities, focusing attention on the religious dimensions of energy intensive and extractive cultures; and engage in reflexive analyses of the study and constructions of religion in, with, and through cultures of energy and extractivism.

## Chairs

- [Evan Berry, Arizona State University](#)  
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1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Terra Schwerin Rowe, University of North Texas](#)  
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1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## [Hagiology Seminar](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Hagiology Seminar is engaged in a multi-year call for contributions to a field-defining reference work for Comparative Hagiology. This volume, *A Companion to Comparative Hagiology*, introduces the field, its comparative and collaborative ethos, issues in theory and method, and provides a series of case studies on key themes. This year the Hagiology Seminar invites proposals to join roundtables on the following themes:

Power and transgression

Extraordinary individuals (saints, sages, heroes, etc.) are often transgressors. They cross boundaries (actual and imagined), they break rules (sacred and profane), and they challenge



norms (about sex, gender, class, etc.). How does the extraordinary status (or sanctity) of these individuals endow them with the power to transgress, for better and/or worse? How do those who honor such personages make sense of their transgressive power? What can this power tell us about the role of the extraordinary individual for the community that gathers in their wake?

In keeping with the collaborative ethos of the Hagiology Seminar, this roundtable will involve participation in three virtual conversations leading up to an in-person session at the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting. The roundtable will be headed by Jon Keune (Michigan State University).

### Violence and translation

Media about extraordinary individuals (saints, sages, heroes, etc.) often entails the work of translation. The lives of such personages translate the values of their community; disciples translate and transmit their story; sometimes devotees even translate the body from one place to another. Moreover, those studying such media are frequently faced with the need to translate ideas from one linguistic and conceptual world to another. But do these acts of translation entail violence? Do devotees and/or scholars disfigure the extraordinary individual when they carry (compel?) them across cultures, traditions, moral frameworks, and contemporary understandings of identity (race, sex, gender, religion, secularity, etc.)? As scholars, what are our ethical responsibilities in the face of such (alleged) violence?

In keeping with the collaborative ethos of the Hagiology Seminar, this roundtable will involve participation in three virtual conversations leading up to an in-person session at the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting. The roundtable will be headed by Reyhan Durmaz (University of Pennsylvania).

### Statement of Purpose

This seminar is dedicated to exploring the “hagiographical” as a category that transcends the particular contextual boundaries of religious traditions, while functioning as a focused and sustained site of collaboration, pedagogical exploration, and theoretical foundation for better refining the Study of Religion. It takes up the question of “hagiography,” and, using a comparative method, interrogates its broad analytical utility. By inviting a wide-range of traditions and types of scholarship (textual, materially-oriented, ritually-conceived, oral, historical, and contemporary) into a diverse scholarly conversation and collaborative community, we seek to challenge the normative, Christian rendering of the term. We place the growing need for cross-fertilization at the center of our methodological approach, building it into our theme and function. Hagiology is an inquiry that has been marked by a range of

interpretive strategies and vectors of influence, from early practitioners and emulators, to authors and compilers, to commentators and historians, to societies and contemporary practitioners, to re–imagined historical prominence. It has finally emerged as a dynamic area for comparative studies. Ultimately, this seminar will foster dialogue among scholars from a range of institutions and intellectual traditions. Its aim is to use the collaborative and comparative methods to resituate hagiology within the current religious studies context, and to explore how this field can best support, articulate, and inform the broader field regarding the importance of doing Hagiology in a productive manner that is commensurate with the prevalence of its material forms.

## **Chairs**

- [Todd French, Rollins College](#)  
[tfrench@rollins.edu](mailto:tfrench@rollins.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [R. Brian Siebeking, Gonzaga University](#)  
[siebeking@gonzaga.edu](mailto:siebeking@gonzaga.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## **Intersectional Hindu Studies: Feminist and Critical Race Approaches to Research and Teaching Seminar**

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

There will not be an open call for papers this year; rather, we will be pre–organizing a session on Islamophobia in Hindu Studies, that will directly tie to the Presidential theme of violence and non–violence, given the violence of Islamophobia perpetuated by many Hindu communities that claim the mantle of non–violence.

## **Statement of Purpose**

This seminar centers the work of racialized researchers and teachers of Hinduism who use critical race theory (CRT) and intersectional feminist theory in our own work, and who are committed to challenging systemic inequality in academic spaces. We have three objectives: 1. To develop an intersectional critique of the formation and institutionalization of Hindu Studies as a field 2. To challenge the prevailing narratives about Hindus and Hindu Studies in the academy and in the global public sphere 3. To create a space for racialized scholars in Hindu Studies (and connected fields) to examine and share our own experiences in academia

## **Chairs**

- [Shreena Gandhi, Michigan State University](#)

[shreenaniketa@gmail.com](mailto:shreenaniketa@gmail.com)

1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

- [Harshita Kamath, Emory University](mailto:harshita.kamath@emory.edu)

[harshita.kamath@emory.edu](mailto:harshita.kamath@emory.edu)

1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Language, Poiesis, and Buddhist Experiments with the Possible Seminar

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Our seminar investigates, over the course of five years, the poiesis of language—its capacity to create, bring into existence, and shape worlds, selves, and our shared sense of reality. To better grasp this potential of language, we approach Buddhist textual engagement foremost in terms of experiments with the possibilities of language (rather than under given textual categories, genre distinction, tropes, etc.) and examine how these have contributed to making the form and content of Buddhism itself, along with adjacent traditions. In doing so we emphasize that both content and modes of expression should be examined as inextricably involved in the process by which Buddhism has taken on its distinctive character as well as its sense of what is possible. We approach literary forms as an environment that enables Buddhists to find their voice, subject matter, style, and self-representation.

For the 2024 AAR Annual Meeting we invite proposals on the theme: Buddhist Poetry and Poetics. This year, we will investigate the role and meaning of language and its forms of expression—poetic foremost—as a foundational aspect of Buddhist thought in early and medieval South Asia and beyond.

Our focus will be on poetic language from its earliest manifestations up to and including kāvya, the courtly Sanskrit poetic tradition that flourished in South Asia for more than a millennium and was adapted and translated throughout much of the Buddhist world across Asia, in a variety of languages.

We invite proposals for papers on this broad topic with preference for the following questions:

- The historical emergence of Buddhist poetical forms of expression, and how were these related to their broad – not necessarily Buddhist – poetical and literary, social, practical, and doctrinal contexts. In particular, how do these forms of expression stand in relation to Buddhist world views, to monastic and ritualistic contexts, and to linguistic and literary practices during this formative period?
- The role and function of poetic language in respect to Buddhist doctrines and world views. Here one may refer, among other issues, to the question of the possible tension between the latter and poetical expression and/or to poetical techniques as a means of artful persuasion or suggestion, as a transformative mode of experiencing reality, or as a performative utterance that can generate potent material and salutary effects, etc.
- Theorizing poetic language: how did Buddhists attempt to theorize and normatively understand poetic language, its effects, and its related practices? Here one may refer to formal poetics; to a Buddhist understanding of the process of poetic composition, of its performance, of hearing or reciting poetic language, or of style, taste, and genre; or to forms of literary and linguistic craftsmanship, techniques, and training.

Papers may be single or co-authored; they will be pre-circulated among this year's roundtable participants and orally presented at one of our sessions. We aim to have short papers (up to 20 minutes) with a plan to have one or more respondents as well as an extended discussion facilitated by a steering committee member and including the audience.

Our seminar is committed to fostering diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, rank, institutions, geography, etc. and these issues will be given special consideration.

## Statement of Purpose

The overwhelming capacity of language to shape our shared sense of reality for better or for worse has long been recognized by Buddhists, who have considered it both an obstacle and an opportunity for transformation and liberation. Such Buddhist approaches harbor the potential to help us rethink the potency of language in the interest of collective flourishing. Our seminar investigates how Buddhists have engaged with the *poiesis* of language—its ability to create anew and shape worlds and selves—and how this engagement, as a constitutive aspect of Buddhist thought and practice, has contributed to making the form and content of Buddhism itself. We explore a broad range of Buddhist language use, taking poetics as the exemplary but not exclusive ground where language is made poetic, while accommodating overlapping and contiguous forms of language, for instance, ritual utterance, gesture, linguistic patterns, etc. Our mode of inquiry approaches Buddhist language use in terms of *experiments with the possibilities of language*. We emphasize that Buddhist content and modes of expression alike should be examined as inextricably involved in the process by which Buddhism took on its

distinctive character and formed its sense of the possible; and we approach Buddhist literary forms as an *environment* that enables Buddhists to find their voice, subject matter, style, and self-representation. Attuned to how Buddhists have formulated their views on these issues, the seminar aims therefore to develop a conceptual toolkit for the rigorous, ethical interpretation of Buddhist language as a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary endeavor.

## Chairs

- [Nancy Lin, Institute of Buddhist Studies](mailto:nlin@shin-ibs.edu)  
[nlin@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:nlin@shin-ibs.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Roy Tzohar, Tel-Aviv University](mailto:roytzo@tauex.tau.ac.il)  
[roytzo@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:roytzo@tauex.tau.ac.il)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## Mahabharata and Classical Hinduism Seminar

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The President's theme is an opportunity to reflect upon one of the *Mahābhārata's* most consuming preoccupations: violence and non-violence. Papers might address questions of practicality and philosophy, narrative and history, ethics and aesthetics, centre and margin. We invite papers from a broad range of source materials and methodologies. In accordance with the internal theme of the Seminar, we particularly encourage proposals related to structural features of the text, as well as commentaries, appendices, and adaptations.

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

Same as above.

### Statement of Purpose

The Mahābhārata and Classical Hinduism Seminar seeks to facilitate the academic exchange so necessary to progress through a format similar to a workshop, with pre-circulated papers. This seminar will bring together philologists, Indologists, ethnographers, scholars of performance theory and practices, and generalists taking on the daunting task of incorporating India's great epic into their coursework on Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, or Yoga. Over the course of the five-year seminar, we hope that these varied approaches will prove mutually illuminating and

raise new questions. The seminar's scope includes not only the Sanskrit text, but also dramatic and fictional retellings, regional and vernacular versions, etc. We will select papers by asking the following four questions, which will change somewhat according to each year's topic: Does the paper shine a new light on some previously underappreciated aspect, episode, character, or form of the epic? Does the paper either represent or respond to the most current trends and arguments in Mahābhārata studies? Does the paper help to demystify the Mahābhārata, helping non-specialists who are intimidated by its length and complexity to incorporate it into their teaching or scholarship? Does the paper provide a model for interdisciplinary practice (e.g., Does it bridge the gap between philology and new forms of critical textual analysis or between ethnography and history of religions?).

## Chairs

- [Arti Dhand, University of Toronto](#)  
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1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Bruce M. Sullivan, Northern Arizona University](#)  
[bruce.sullivan@nau.edu](mailto:bruce.sullivan@nau.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Seminar

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For its fifth and final year, the Seminar on New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous invites individual paper proposals related to pedagogy and the monstrous. How can we teach monstrosity in constructive ways in our courses? How do we appeal to students' love of monstrosity while not diluting scholarly rigor? How can we teach the world we live in – past and present – through a monstrous lens? Selected papers will be part of a planned two-hour panel. Topics may include, but are not limited to, classroom exercises or pedagogical design surrounding monstrous figures from global religious traditions, strategies for student in-class "monsterizing" of hypothetical others, tackling current events in the classroom through a Monster Studies angle, and monsters as cultural ambassadors.

All submissions are welcome. We especially encourage submissions that address issues of racial, economic, and cultural diversity; student-led and student-centered pedagogy; and teaching in a post-pandemic world.

## Statement of Purpose

The Mission of the New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Five-Year Seminar is to facilitate dialogue between different areas and methodologies within religious studies to arrive at a better theory of the intersection of religion, monsters, and the monstrous. Due to the diverse nature of our topic, we encourage proposals from any tradition or theoretical perspective. Each year of the seminar will focus on a different theoretical problem as follows:

Year One -- Taxonomy. The first task of the seminar will be to explore the taxonomy of “monsters” as a second-order category. What defines a “monster” and what are we talking about when we talk about monsters?

Year Two -- Theodicy: What role do monsters serve in explaining misfortune? Are monsters a source of injustice or do they create justice as agents of punishment?

Year Three -- Cosmology: How do monsters function to map out reality, including time and space?

Year Four -- Monstrification and humanization: When, how, and why are other people and their gods “monstrified?” How does racism intersect with the discourse of the monstrous? Conversely, when, how, and why are monsters humanized?

Year Five -- Phenomenology: How should we interpret narratives of encounters with fantastic beings? To what extent are reductionist readings of these narratives appropriate and helpful? Are there viable approaches beyond reductionism?

At the conclusion of the seminar, our findings will be published as an edited volume or otherwise disseminated to the scholarly community.

## Chairs

- [Natasha Mikles, Texas State University](#)  
[n.mikles@txstate.edu](mailto:n.mikles@txstate.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024
- [Kelly Murphy, Central Michigan University](#)  
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1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

# Publicly Engaged Scholarship in the Study of Religion Seminar

## Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

Politics of Knowledge Production: Shifting Commitments in the Academy

We invite paper and panel proposals focused on the politics of knowledge production, with a specific focus on publicly or community engaged research. Current global socio-political tensions and the ongoing anthropogenic climate crisis require us to think critically about the need for research that is community engaged and socially and politically committed. Yet in the academy, much of this work has historically been framed as “activism” rather than “scholarship.” Reflecting on the foundational work of activist-oriented transnational, Black, queer, Indigenous, and critical feminist approaches prompts deeper questions about the communities and histories that scholarship is accountable to (Alexander 2005; Allen and Jobson 2016; Beliso-De Jesús 2018; Harrison 1995; Perry 2013; Pierre 2012; Smith 2016a). Moreover, these approaches help us begin to re-envision the academy as a partner and collaborator, rather than the sole source of knowledge production (Kimmerer 2013). This work is imperative if our collective and cross-disciplinary academic fields are to remain relevant to twenty-first century problems.

These conversations are already underway in religious studies and the environmental humanities, and they aim to disrupt and displace the privileging of scholarship that is presented as politically neutral and non-engaged. Part of the process of engaged scholarship is taking on new orientations toward research. Instead of focusing on what can be extracted from communities as research subjects or what is valuable for a publication, engaged scholarship emphasizes respect, responsibility, and reciprocity as integral parts of doing research.

We invite paper and panel proposals that address a broad array of topics, including but not limited to the following:

- Re-envisioning knowledge production processes through critical lenses, including Black, queer, Indigenous, and feminist approaches, specifically in the study of religion;
- Community-level responses to environmental and social justice issues that reflect, especially, on the values, differences, challenges, and benefits of this type of work;
- Theoretical and methodological reflections on the politics of knowledge production that focus on relevance of the academy to 21st century problems;
- Reflections on how the politics of knowledge production has been reinvisioned at specific institutions or through specific groups, organizations, or efforts;

We welcome proposals from scholars working in historical and contemporary perspectives across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Similarly, we welcome scholars doing



archival research, work on digital communities, or auto-ethnography that reflect on the needs of the moment, are attuned toward public-facing outcomes or implications, and incorporate community concerns into their research questions and processes.

## **Chairs**

- [Rebecca Bartel, San Diego State University](#)  
[rbartel@sdsu.edu](mailto:rbartel@sdsu.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Lucas Johnston, Wake Forest University](#)  
[johnstlf@wfu.edu](mailto:johnstlf@wfu.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## **Religions, Borders, and Immigration Seminar**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Religions, Borders, and Immigration seminar invites papers for AAR 2024 – for our seminar's final year – with three primary foci:

- How do gender and age (especially children and the elderly) impact those participating in forced migrations across diverse regions of the planet in the context of robust interreligious exploration? What constructive religious, theological, psycho-spiritual and socio-ethical implications can be drawn from exploring such intersections?
- How might placelessness be understood and valued from (inter)religious/theological perspectives in migratory contexts where being “at home” is impossible or constantly deferred in situations where a permanent connection to “the land” or “place” is not a universal experience for persons on the move?
- What are the possible impacts of praxis-focused interreligious networks for supporting those experiencing forced migration in the present climate where traditional institutional interreligious dialogue organizations are becoming ineffective?

In light of the Presidential Theme for 2024, we also invite contributors to reflect on the above three foci in the context of the following questions presented to the AAR membership by the President of the AAR: "The use of violence is directly related to the hierarchical understanding of beings and valuation of their lives. Has religion stood with those who are at the center or at the margin? Are the margin and the center dualistically fixed in our lives?"

## Statement of Purpose

The overall purpose of this seminar is to promote interreligious and interdisciplinary collaboration on global migration from theological perspectives and how it begins to reshape the interpretations of the Ultimate reality, as it is envisioned in various religious traditions in dialogue with diverse traditions of ethics and pastoral responses to the refugee crisis. This seminar's focus or theme is on the intersection of borders, migration, religious practices and how all of those are being reenvisioned and reinterpreted through dialogical theological reflection in interfaith perspectives. The work of the seminar addresses one of most critical issues of our time, and we believe that religion plays an essential role in understanding the meaning of these changes. This new seminar will continue to encourage different and creative approaches, such as comparative theology and theologies of religious diversity, to explore the meaning of our times.

## Chairs

- [Loye Ashton, Aoyama Gakuin University](#)  
[loyeashton@gmail.com](mailto:loyeashton@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Kristine Suna-Koro, Xavier University](#)  
[sunakorok@xavier.edu](mailto:sunakorok@xavier.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Religious Reflections on Friendship Seminar

### Meeting

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

For the fifth year of Religious Reflections on Friendship (RRF), our focus will be most specifically on the study of friendship from interreligious/interfaith perspectives. The following themes, amongst others, may be engaged:

- Friendship, peacebuilding, and politics
- Friendship, activism, and the pursuit of the common good
- Religious practice, decolonization, and the honoring of covenantal friendship treaties
- Religion and nonhuman friendships, friendship and the land, friendship and nature
- Friendship, spirituality, suffering, caregiving, health, and healing
- Religion and utilitarian friendships: the use and misuse of friendship
- Friendship and gender, sex, and sexuality

- Friendship across boundaries, whether geographical, generational, professional, ecclesial, power differentials

We invite proposals for papers and panel presentations that address the intersection of religion/s and friendship from any scholarly perspective and religious tradition. We welcome papers that broaden contemporary perspectives on friendship and challenge or enrich dominant perceptions of friendship, as they bring friendship and religion into dialogue with contemporary issues, needs, and challenges.

### Religion, Friendship, and (Non)Violence

Echoing the 2024 presidential theme—Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin—we also invite papers that explore the intersection of friendship with these themes. Scholars have long emphasized the inherently relational dimensions of religion and violence. Friendship—as a voluntary interpersonal relationship shaped by culture and, possibly, universal cognitive and biosensory processes—has important implications for the scholarly examination of these matters. RRF invites papers that explore the intersection of religion, friendship, and violence. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Theological discussions of friendship and (non-)violence in religion/s.
- Role/s of peace and friendship treaties in promoting coexistence and kinship-like relationships between or among groups.
- Religious dimensions of peace and friendship treaties between Indigenous Peoples and colonizing powers; the violence of dishonoring treaties and possible remedies.
- Role/s of rituals (religious or otherwise) in promoting friendship and nonviolence
- Role/s of persecution in response to relationships between or among people or groups of different religious traditions; the role/s of persecution in promoting various forms of friendship and solidarity.
- LGBTQIA2S+, youth, and/or minoritized/marginalized communities at the intersection of religion, friendship, and violence.
- Complications and ambiguities surrounding religion, friendship, and violence: Do religions promote or discourage friendship, and to what ends? What if practices of friendship violate traditional religious rules or provoke the “paradox of using violence to stop violence”?

### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

We invite proposals for papers and panel presentations that address the intersection of religion/s and friendship from any scholarly perspective and religious tradition. We welcome

papers that broaden contemporary perspectives on friendship and challenge or enrich dominant perceptions of friendship, as they bring friendship and religion into dialogue with contemporary issues, needs, and challenges. Echoing 2024's presidential theme "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Margin" we most specifically invite papers that consider:

- Theological discussions of friendship and (non-)violence in religion/s.
- Religious visions of friendship and the re-envisioning of relationships between margins and centers
- Peace and friendship treaties: religious dimensions, visions and practices of coexistence, the violence of dishonoring treaties, possible remedies to the dishonoring of treaties
- The role of relational practices, interfaith dialogue, and/or friendship studies in practicing nonviolence and promoting mutual flourishing

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Seminar is to provide a broad forum in which the important but under-studied relationship of friendship can be studied, discussed, challenged, and ultimately enriched from a variety of religious perspectives. Friendship is a relationship that is essential for flourishing. In times characterized by division, conflict, and various forms of othering, we assert that friendship studies contribute towards furthering religious understanding and dialogue. Friendship as a religious topic, broadly and creatively defined, touches on matters of faith, ecclesiology, anthropology, history, politics, philosophy, ethics, race, gender, sex, class, and economics, among others. We welcome papers that explore friendship from diverse disciplines and theological/religious perspectives and are open to a variety of methodological approaches.

*Multireligious Perspectives on Friendship: Becoming Ourselves in Community*— the first volume emerging from this seminar—was published in 2023, in Lexington Books Religion and Borders Series. Seminar papers are eligible to be considered for inclusion in a subsequent published volume focused on interreligious reflections.

## Chairs

- [Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, Vancouver School of Theology](mailto:aellithorpe@vst.edu)  
[aellithorpe@vst.edu](mailto:aellithorpe@vst.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Hussam S. Timani, Christopher Newport University](mailto:hussam.timani@cnu.edu)  
[hussam.timani@cnu.edu](mailto:hussam.timani@cnu.edu)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Teaching against Islamophobia Seminar

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## Call for Proposals for November Meeting

This seminar invites individual papers, paper sessions, and roundtable proposals on any topics related to the theme of Teaching Against Islamophobia. The TAG seminar is pedagogically focused and should center practical methods and strategies for understanding and combatting Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism and discrimination in and outside of the classroom.

For the 2024 meeting in San Diego, we are especially interested in papers and/or panel proposals on the following topics:

- Contending with Islamophobia when teaching About Palestine
- Institutional biases and teaching against Islamophobia
- Teaching against Islamophobia outside of the classroom
- Teaching against Islamophobia via public scholarship
- Teaching against Islamophobia: “scholarship,” “activism,” and the myth of “objectivity”
- Teaching against Islamophobia via film, music, and other forms of media.

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Teaching against Islamophobia Seminar is to widen the network of scholars engaged in critical reflection about pedagogical and discursive praxes that address the global rise of anti-Muslim sentiment. This seminar thus focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by engaged scholars combating Islamophobia. We invite critical and creative reflection on (1) the differences between teaching about Islam and teaching about Islamophobia in both the classroom and wider publics; (2) pedagogical strategies for such teaching should be tailored to different contexts; (3) specific challenges of teaching ‘against’ a concept instead of teaching ‘toward’ a more positive end; and (4) the ways in which Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry function as a form of racism and why naming this bigotry as racism is important. As such, we encourage discussion not only on the transmission of new content knowledge about Islamophobia, but also on the transmission of interpersonal and leadership skills necessary to engage in public life to resist bias, bigotry, and racism.

## Chairs

- [Sajida Jalalzai, Trinity University](#)  
[sajidajalalzai@gmail.com](mailto:sajidajalalzai@gmail.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

# Theological, Pedagogical, and Ethical Approaches to Israel/Palestine Seminar

## **Meeting**

Online June Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

## **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

We are looking for papers on the following topics that examine pedagogical and ethical approaches:

- Israel/Palestine: Academic Limits to Censorship and Free Speech
- Remember Amalek: Weaponizing Religion, Critical Perspectives on Israel/Palestine
- Pedagogy and Israel/Palestine Studies in the Religious Studies Classroom
- Christian Zionism: Catholic, Protestant and Global Perspectives
- Globalizing the Nakba: Transnational Solidarities
- Settler-Colonialism, Indigenous Struggles, Israel/Palestine, and Religion from 1492–1948
- Compulsory Zionism: The New Humanism in the Academy
- Israel/Palestine in the Study of Religion in North America

## **Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting**

The online session permits us to focus on issues that will bring together international scholars to engage in conversations about Israel/Palestine in a global context:

Christian Zionism: Catholic, Protestant and Global Perspectives

Globalizing the Nakba: Transnational Solidarities

Settler-Colonialism, Indigenous Struggles, Israel/Palestine, and Religion from 1492–1948

## **Statement of Purpose**

This seminar is designed to bring a religious studies dimension to the emergent theological, pedagogical, ethical, and social scientific inquiry on Israel/Palestine that is developing in a variety of subfields across academia. We intend to contribute to a number of cutting-edge discourses that create interdependencies among Islamic, Christian, Jewish and secular conversations. Our focus will be on **ethical** questions raised by the century-old conflict in Israel/Palestine, including, for example, the political uses of archeological programs, religious tours, and the participation of international organizations. We will survey **theological** questions that emerge from interactions, both pacific and conflictual. The seminar will engage

mainstream theological discourses, and also those emerging from collectives that are pushed aside or subsumed by reigning discourses. Because Israel/Palestine has been a subject causing major controversy in academia and especially in our Religious Studies classrooms we will interrogate **pedagogical** questions and strategies to discover how we can create educational frameworks that respect multiple identities and contribute to social justice. Finally, the seminar will explore **anthropological and sociological** frameworks that focus on multiple nationalisms, modern capitalistic and socialist development, imperialisms, critique of political economy, settler colonialism, interfaith dialogue and modernity/coloniality to examine their connections to the religious studies analysis of the conflict. The seminar will welcome all AAR members who write, teach, and think about these subjects and welcome respectful encounters with scholars with opposing views that will benefit the development of new approaches to Israel/Palestine Studies.

### **Chairs**

- [Rebecca Alpert, Temple University](#)  
[ralpert@temple.edu](mailto:ralpert@temple.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Jason Springs, University of Notre Dame](#)  
[jspring1@nd.edu](mailto:jspring1@nd.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## **Vernacular Landscapes and Global Dialogues: Understanding Buddhist Monasticism Seminar**

### **Meeting**

In-Person November Meeting

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Vernacular Landscapes and Global Dialogues: Understanding Buddhist Monasticism Seminar aims to advance the scholarly and public understandings of Buddhism monasticism beyond the textual while acknowledging the importance of monasticism as a defining aspect of Buddhist traditions across the globe. This five-year seminar will explore the intersection of Buddhism with modernity, education, gender, and social institutions, among other themes. Our inaugural gathering will chart out the lay of the land with the theme “Defining Modern Buddhist Monasticism Globally.” We invite roundtable presentations that consider the various definitions and emanations of Buddhist monasticism in today’s world, the unique challenges to the identity of Buddhist monastic communities, and the many innovative responses created by these communities. We particularly invite early-career scholars and scholars from underrepresented groups to apply.

## Chairs

- [Jue Liang, Case Western Reserve University](mailto:jl4nf@virginia.edu)  
[jl4nf@virginia.edu](mailto:jl4nf@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Manuel Lopez, New College of Florida](mailto:mlopezzafra@ncf.edu)  
[mlopezzafra@ncf.edu](mailto:mlopezzafra@ncf.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## RELATED SCHOLARLY ORGANIZATIONS

### [Colloquium on Violence and Religion](#)

#### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Colloquium on Violence & Religion welcomes both individual paper proposals and panel proposals addressed to the following topics:

- Responses to the intricacies of Girard's life and thought as presented in Benoit Chantre's recent biography. We welcome analytical responses, critical evaluations, and discussions expanding upon Chantre's portrayal.
- Responses to Christopher Haw's book *Monotheism, Intolerance, and the Path to Pluralistic Politics*
- Proposals that explore how violence is communicated in various contexts. Papers may address theoretical frameworks, case studies, or propose new methods for understanding and communicating about violence.
- Proposals that address the experiences, challenges, and innovative approaches in teaching Mimetic Theory. We seek papers that discuss pedagogical strategies, curriculum development, and student engagement.
- Proposals that bring Mimetic Theory into dialogue with other disciplines. Papers might explore intersections with psychology, sociology, literature, or other fields.
- Proposals that engage with the concept of epistemic violence within post-colonial discourse, examining its relationship with Mimetic Theory. Contributions may focus on theoretical analysis or specific case studies.

#### Statement of Purpose

The Colloquium on Violence and Religion is an international association of scholars founded in 1990. It is dedicated to the exploration, criticism, and development of René Girard's mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture. In promoting research in mimetic theory, COVandR welcomes scholars and others from diverse fields and theoretical orientations who are interested in the foundational role of imitation in individual human lives and cultures. In addition to gathering at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the Colloquium meets each summer, alternating between



North American and European venues. COVandR's publications include a website(<http://violenceandreligion.com>), a book series, Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture, published by Michigan State University Press, the journal Contagion and a biannual newsletter, Bulletin of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion.

## Chairs

- [Chelsea King, Sacred Heart University](#)  
[kingc2@sacredheart.edu](mailto:kingc2@sacredheart.edu)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## [Hagiography Society](#)

### Meeting

In-Person November Meeting

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Hagiography Society looks forward to proposals for paper sessions as well as proposals for individual papers. We welcome proposals on research from across the disciplines that focuses on holy people and their cults in all eras, cultures, and religious traditions.

## Chairs

- [Laura Ackerman Smoller, University of Rochester](#)  
[laura.smoller@rochester.edu](mailto:laura.smoller@rochester.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Anna Harrison, Loyola Marymount University](#)  
[annaharrison@lmu.edu](mailto:annaharrison@lmu.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Amy Ogden, University of Virginia](#)  
[avo2n@virginia.edu](mailto:avo2n@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

## Method

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

## [Karl Barth Society of North America](#)

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

The Karl Barth Society of North America invites proposals for papers that engage the topics of nationalism, politics, and Christian witness. While proposals should directly reckon with the

work of Karl Barth, the topics may be engaged in diverse ways. Scholars might consider Barth's work in its own context (including but not limited to Barth's relationship to various forms of socialism, Barth's work during the Weimar Republic and the Nazi era, and Barth's writing and political activity during the Cold War); equally, scholars might put Barth's work in critical/constructive conversation with ongoing discussions in Christian thought, religious ethics, political theology (broadly construed), political theory, Black Studies, feminist/womanist studies, border studies, post- and decolonial thought, etc. Proposals that connect the topics of nationalism, politics, and Christian witness to the doctrine of providence—the focus of another session held by the KBSNA in November—are welcome.

## Statement of Purpose

Founded in 1972, the [Karl Barth Society of North America](#) (KBSNA) exists to encourage exploration of—and critical and constructive engagement with—the theological legacy of Karl Barth, one of the most important and influential figures in twentieth century Christian theology. The Society typically hosts two public sessions during the AAR/SBL meeting each year, with the first often scheduled on the Friday afternoon before the official start of the annual meeting. In addition, the Society works in close collaboration with the [Center for Barth Studies](#) at Princeton Theological Seminary to foster engagement with Karl Barth's life and work. Membership is open to all those interested in and supportive of the Society's aims and is secured by an inexpensive [annual subscription](#); a discounted student rate is available. Enquiries can be directed to the Society's general secretary, Philip Ziegler (University of Aberdeen, [p.ziegler@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:p.ziegler@abdn.ac.uk)).

## Chairs

- [Paul Dafydd Jones, University of Virginia](#)  
[pdj5c@virginia.edu](mailto:pdj5c@virginia.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Cambria Kaltwasser, Northwestern College, Orange City](#)  
[cambria.kaltwasser@nwciova.edu](mailto:cambria.kaltwasser@nwciova.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## [North American Paul Tillich Society](#)

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

2023 marked the 60th anniversary of the completion of Paul Tillich's three-volume Systematic Theology. In this monumental project, Tillich devised and deployed a system of categories to correlate the truth of Christian theology with the contemporary religious situation. Although Tillich framed his project as a Christian theological project, his system of categories also provides fruitful resources for comparative theological inquiry and responses to religious pluralism, as Tillich himself realized and sketched in his Christianity and the Encounter of World

Religions. Tillich's strategy also required the engagement of existential and theological questions raised outside of Christian communities and across various disciplinary boundaries, including the arts, metaphysics, ethics, and the natural sciences.

For the 2024 Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society, the Society seeks papers organized generally around the theme of Employing and Revising Paul Tillich's System of Categories for the Present Religious Situation.

Three main questions shape this theme:

- How are Tillich's categories currently used to guide inquiry?
- How should Tillich's categories be revised in light of the findings of such inquiries?
- What new theological claims are enabled by such uses and revisions?

The Society is particularly interested in how Tillich's major categories in Systematic Theology (e.g., ultimate reality, ultimate concern, the human condition—including predicaments and ecstatic fulfillments) might be used, revised, and refined, based on the past 60 years of inquiry. The following areas of inquiry are of special interest (but other lines of inquiry are also welcomed):

- Tillich's System of Categories for Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology
- Political Theory, Teaching, Analysis, Action, and Overcoming Polar Oppositions
- The Natural Sciences
- Fine Arts

The Society will hold a book panel on Robert Cummings Neville's 2024 book *Strange, Surprising, and Sure* (State University of New York Press).

In this book, Neville provides a theory of ultimate reality, indebted to Tillich's theory of the ground of being; an account of the human condition, building on and revising Tillich's, and an account of religion, moving beyond Tillich's connection of the Holy Spirit with the Christian church to a global account of religiosity. Additionally, the volume contains artistic works of poetry and sophisticated sermons. The Society invites papers on Neville's book as a whole or papers that deal with the following themes, topics, or questions:

- How would Tillich respond to Neville's "strange" account of the ground of being as an ontological creative act?

- Neville's analysis of the human condition as a "surprising," arbitrary, and gratuitous gift
- Comparisons of Neville and Tillich's alternative analyses of the relationship between human predicaments and ecstatic fulfillments
- The relationship between Tillich and Neville's homiletical approaches
- How might Tillich's theory of art criticism analyze Neville's poetry?

Apart from the theme of contemporary uses and revisions of Tillich's system of categories, papers on other generic themes which are timely and intended to advance the contemporary development of Tillichian studies are also welcomed.

To propose a paper for one of these panels, please submit an abstract of approximately 350 words and a current CV to Greylyn R. Hydinger at [tillichsociety@gmail.com](mailto:tillichsociety@gmail.com) no later than May 1, 2024.

Authors of accepted papers will be notified by June 1, 2024. Submissions of a proposal indicates agreement to submit a full paper draft by November 1, 2024 for pre-circulation among the panelists. Panel presentation durations will be limited in order to privilege time for Q&A and discussion of the papers.

## Statement of Purpose

Founded in 1975, the 250-member [NAPTS](#) is concerned with Paul Tillich's (1886–1965) philosophical–theological thought, with its analysis, critique, and revision; with the implications and the use of this thought in political, social, psychotherapeutic, scientific, artistic, and ethico–religious spheres; the application of Tillich's thought to questions he himself could never have imagined in his lifetime; finally, with the impact and the creative extension of Tillich's legacy. The Society meets annually in conjunction with AAR, organizes international conferences, collaborates with the German, French speaking, and several other Tillich societies, awards an annual student paper prize, and sponsors publications. The quarterly Bulletin carries papers from meetings and other information on Tillich, publication, letters, et al. If you are interested in membership, contact Dr. Verna Marina Ehret at [vehret@mercyhurst.edu](mailto:vehret@mercyhurst.edu).

## Chairs

- [Benjamin Chicka, Curry College](#)  
[benjamin.chicka@gmail.com](mailto:benjamin.chicka@gmail.com)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028
- [Greylyn Hydinger, Boston University School of Theology](#)  
[grhyding@bu.edu](mailto:grhyding@bu.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029

- [Kirk MacGregor, McPherson College](mailto:macgregk@mcpherson.edu)  
[macgregk@mcpherson.edu](mailto:macgregk@mcpherson.edu)  
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2029
- [Ilona Nord, University of Würzburg](mailto:ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de)  
[ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:ilona.nord@uni-wuerzburg.de)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025

## Method

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

## Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts

### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

SCRIPT invites proposals on any aspect of iconic and performative texts. Examples include but are not limited to their display as cultural artifacts, their ritual use in religious and political ceremonies, their performance by recitation and theater, their depiction in art, and their display in museums.

### Statement of Purpose

The Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT) encourages new scholarship on iconic and performative texts. Our goal is to foster academic discourse about the social functions of books and texts that exceed their semantic meaning and interpretation, such as their display as cultural artifacts, their ritual use in religious and political ceremonies, their performance by recitation and theater, and their depiction in art.

### Chairs

- [David Dault, Sandburg Media LLC](mailto:sandburg.media@gmail.com)  
[sandburg.media@gmail.com](mailto:sandburg.media@gmail.com)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [James W. Watts, Syracuse University](mailto:jwwatts@syr.edu)  
[jwwatts@syr.edu](mailto:jwwatts@syr.edu)  
1/1/2019 – 12/31/2024

## Method

PAPERS

E-mail without Attachment (proposal appears in body of e-mail)

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

## COMMITTEES

### Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee

#### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

A co-sponsorship with the Religion and Disability Studies Unit: A roundtable discussion of the absence of brown bodies in conversations about disability and the all-too-common treatment of BIPOC perspectives as an afterthought. This session is closed, and we won't be accepting proposals for it.

#### Chairs

- [Angela Parker, Mercer University](#)  
[parker\\_an@mercer.edu](mailto:parker_an@mercer.edu)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Jacob Robinson, American Academy of Religion](#)  
[jrobinson@aarweb.org](mailto:jrobinson@aarweb.org)  
1/1/2023 – 12/31/2028

## OTHER

### Exploratory Session

#### Call for Proposals for November Meeting

All proposals for new Units must begin as Exploratory Sessions. An exploratory session is a complete prearranged session that provides a platform for a group of members to announce a line of inquiry new to the AAR program and to seek out others interested in pursuing it further. The proposal can be for a paper, panel, or other creative type of session format. Exploratory sessions are submitted through the PAPERS system and must be submitted before **March 1, 2024**. Notification of program acceptance will be announced in early April 2024.

To establish a new program unit, the unit proposers must normally be approved by the Program Committee to hold an exploratory session two years in a row. After the second exploratory session, the unit proposers may submit their proposal for a new unit, which the Program Committee can approve, deny, or — in very rare circumstances — return for revision and resubmission after a third, final exploratory session. More detailed information can be found on our webpage about [Proposing a New Program Unit](#).

#### Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Program Committee encourages proposals for exploratory sessions during our Online June Sessions of the Annual Meetings.

## **Chairs**

- [Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida](#)  
[ann.gleig@ucf.edu](mailto:ann.gleig@ucf.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026
- [Amy Defibaugh, American Academy of Religion](#)  
[adehibaugh@aarweb.org](mailto:adehibaugh@aarweb.org)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Films**

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

Every year the AAR screens films at the Annual Meeting, ranging from documentaries made by members as part of their research to blockbuster Hollywood films which impact the public understanding of religion. If you wish to screen a film at the Annual Meeting, please submit your proposal as a Roundtable Session and include a short description of the film, runtime, name of the director, and year it was released. Please include yourself as the presider of the session and as a panelist (as the system requires both for a roundtable session). If you wish to have a panel discussion after the film, submit the names of those panelists as well.

Preference will be given to films that tie into AAR Program Unit sessions, relate to the Presidential theme, or the Annual Meeting locale.

For any questions, please contact [annualmeeting@aarweb.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aarweb.org).

## **Chairs**

- [Whitney Bauman, Florida International University](#)  
[whitneyabauman@mac.com](mailto:whitneyabauman@mac.com)  
1/1/2020 – 12/31/2025
- [Amy Defibaugh, American Academy of Religion](#)  
[adehibaugh@aarweb.org](mailto:adehibaugh@aarweb.org)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027

## **Special Session**

### **Call for Proposals for November Meeting**

A limited number of special sessions are approved by the Program Committee each year. These are intended to be experimental, creative, or timely sessions that address an area of interest that does not naturally fall within the purview of one or more existing Program Units OR that

address a current issue/event of interest to multiple AAR constituencies. The Program Committee occasionally approves special sessions for sessions that would be one-time only or special to the year or location. Special Sessions may only be submitted through PAPERS by **March 1, 2024**. Under exceptional circumstances, special sessions may also be proposed to address a pressing issue that arises after the proposal deadline.

Guidelines for special sessions:

- Special sessions are accepted through PAPERS only.
- Special session proposals must provide a rationale based on the criteria above.
- Special sessions must use one of the prearranged session proposal formats (papers session or roundtable).
- Make sure the special session does not cover an area already covered by an existing program unit. If a proposal fits within an established program unit's mission, the proposal will be forwarded to that unit. If a proposal is submitted both as a special session and also to a program unit, it will be eliminated from consideration as a special session.

The Program Committee evaluates all Special Session proposals. Notification of program acceptance will be announced by early April.

## Call for Proposals for Online June Meeting

The Program Committee encourages proposals for special sessions to the Online June Sessions of the Annual Meetings.

### Chairs

- [Amy Defibaugh, American Academy of Religion](mailto:adefibaugh@aarweb.org)  
[adefibaugh@aarweb.org](mailto:adefibaugh@aarweb.org)  
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2027
- [Ann Gleig, University of Central Florida](mailto:ann.gleig@ucf.edu)  
[ann.gleig@ucf.edu](mailto:ann.gleig@ucf.edu)  
1/1/2021 – 12/31/2026